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Belonging and integrating Migrants and Refugees within Higher Education  
system. A case of Cavendish University Uganda.

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Dedicated to all Migrants and Refugees in Higher Education in Uganda

May you feel at home and pursue your dreams.

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores the complex issue of integration and belonging of Migrants and Refugees in Higher Education. The aim is to discover more about the challenges and opportunities of integration and belonging of Migrants and Refugees pursuing Higher Education in Cavendish, a Ugandan University. Through a mainly qualitative approach, the paper suggests that knowledge of English as a dominant language used at the University, the self-belief of an individual, individual and effort to adapt into a new society's demands are all important factors in the success of Migrants and Refugees in gaining a sense of belonging within Cavendish University. The research findings suggest that differences in terms of gender, class and age can influence Migrants and Refugees in their sense of belonging at Cavendish University, as well as their academic performance. Still students' prejudice against each other has also been an important factor in undermining effective social interaction as well as their sense of belong. In the conclusion, the paper argues that there is good reason to believe that whatever the efforts made by individual Refugees and Migrants, integration and belonging within the University are more likely when academic institution and the broader society also take some share of responsibility for making integration work.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

Studies on belonging and integration of Migrants and Refugees within Higher Education are limited not only in developing countries but also in the western worlds. This paper makes small contribution to the understanding of the challenges that Migrants and Refugees encounter in their efforts to get integrated and belong within Higher Education. The findings in this paper are relevant experiences to inform migration and refugee studies more broadly. The study is rooted from the perspective of human right violation that has caused many people to vacate their homes and be categorized as refugees in another country. Issues of human right and non-discrimination especially in areas of education are essential and central to development studies particularly in social justice perspective.

**Key words:** Belonging, Integration, Refugees, Self-settled Refugees and Migrants.

# Chapter 1: Setting the scene

## 1.0 Introduction

Aysa-Lastra (2001:277) has noted that contemporary conflicts no longer take place in the battlefield but in people's homes. This automatically has affected people's livelihood strategies within the country and beyond, both during and after conflict especially in the developing world due to forced human mobility (Bartlett & Ghaffar-Kucher 2013:1, Hugo et al 2012:261). Managing educational services for forced migrant populations has become a priority in many parts of the world as it provides a durable solution for success of Migrants, especially for Refugees (Bartlett & Ghaffar-Kucher 2013:1; Dryden-Peterson 2003:3). However, research done in Europe shows that migrant students – broadly defined to include refugees – are underprivileged in the education system (Griga and Hadjar 2014: 275). This was attributed to factors such as their immigration status, socio-cultural origins and the situation back home. Within the studies that I have explored from European countries explain the challenges of migrant students, however, little attention has been put on variations amongst themselves (Griga and Hadjar 2014: 275, Taylor & Sidhu 2012:42).

This paper is specifically interested in self-settled Refugees, some of whom have official refugee status and have left camps elsewhere in Uganda to settle in urban areas (Hovil 2007:601-602, Okell et al 2005:1, Bagenda and Hovil 2003:16). A second group of informants were Migrant students from war-torn countries who moved to Uganda to pursue Higher Education. These two groups do overlap, and for short we called them Migrants and Refugees. The study is based on the assumption that understanding their needs may help these students achieve their academic goals as argued by Leung (2001:151).

This study centers on the socio-cultural, psychological and educational challenges of 'belonging' and integration of a sample group of Migrant and Refugee students within Higher Education in Uganda. The focus is on just one University institution, Cavendish, and students were contacted during their

studies in this institution even though other private Universities in Uganda also have many Migrants and Refugees. But since this research needed a certain degree of trust between the researcher and the respondents, the researcher decided to choose Cavendish where she has been working as a teaching assistant before. The research explored the challenges and opportunities that these students have encountered in Uganda during their studies at this institution. Dryden-Peterson (2003:4) has pointed out that Refugee and Migrant students need not only to have access to education but also need to be able to succeed and benefit from it. Although life after and beyond education was not the main focus of this study, understanding how this group of students performed and felt about Higher Education at Cavendish required looking outside the institution, at times and looking at life of some of them who have managed to complete their studies at Cavendish.

This paper adapted its own model, drawing on the ‘integration approach’<sup>1</sup> of Ager and Strang (2008:166) and elaborating on this with elements of Kuhlman’s (1991:2) approach to integration<sup>2</sup> in order to elaborate a framework, which is presented in Chapter 3. The aim is to explain the experiences of Migrants and Refugees studying in one Ugandan Higher Education institution. This paper focused on just a few selected aspects of a wider refugee integration model, focusing less on citizenship and rights, and more on education, social connections, language and cultural knowledge, as well as adding elements on non-discrimination. The reason these aspects were chosen, not the other is that

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<sup>1</sup> Ager and Strang integration approach proposes four essential domains of integration, these include; Markers and Means (employment, housing, education and health), Social connections (social bonds, social bridges, social links), Facilitators (language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability) and Foundations (Rights and citizenship) (Ager and Strang 2008:170).

<sup>2</sup> Kuhlman identifies the following features of integration of refugees: the socio-cultural change that refugees undergo should allow them to maintain their identity as well as psychologically adjusting to the new situation, conflict between refugees and native population should not be worse than conflict within the host community and refugees do not face discrimination than what exists between different groups previously living in a host community (Kuhlman 1991:3).

these aspects have a direct connection in answering my research questions and they are important variables in explaining the differences in well-being and academic achievement between the natives and Migrant and Refugee students within Cavendish.

This paper has been built on three key assumptions, namely;

1. First, most Migrant and Refugee students face integration challenges within higher academic institutions. The research hopes to find out whether this first assumption is or is not justified.
2. Second, it is assumed that home country experiences of Migrant and Refugee students can adversely affect their academic performance. This second assumption is explored and questioned, through analyzing Interviews and other forms of data collected.
3. Thirdly, it is assumed that integrating Migrant and Refugee students within a higher academic institution will facilitate their sense of 'belonging' and improve their academic performance. This third assumption requires contextualizing the students' situation within the wider Ugandan society and raises the whole question of how to promote their educational achievement within Cavendish as an institution, whilst understanding their situation more generally also outside and beyond the University.

### **1.1 What is the Problem?**

This paper is specifically interested in Migrants and Refugees within Higher Education in Uganda, some of whom have official refugee status and have left camps elsewhere in Uganda to settle in urban areas (Hovil 2007:601-602, Okell et al 2005:1, Bagenda and Hovil 2003:16). Many of them look at education as the only alternative to secure their own future. However, the question of how to integrate them within the University remains a challenge (Yahoni 2014:37). This has resulted into prejudice and discrimination against Migrants and Refugee students not only by their fellow students but also their teachers as has been argued by McBrien (2005:230) in US context. The result may be a feeling of not

'belonging' in the institution, and in the wider society. But is this true in Cavendish University Uganda? This study explored this dilemma.

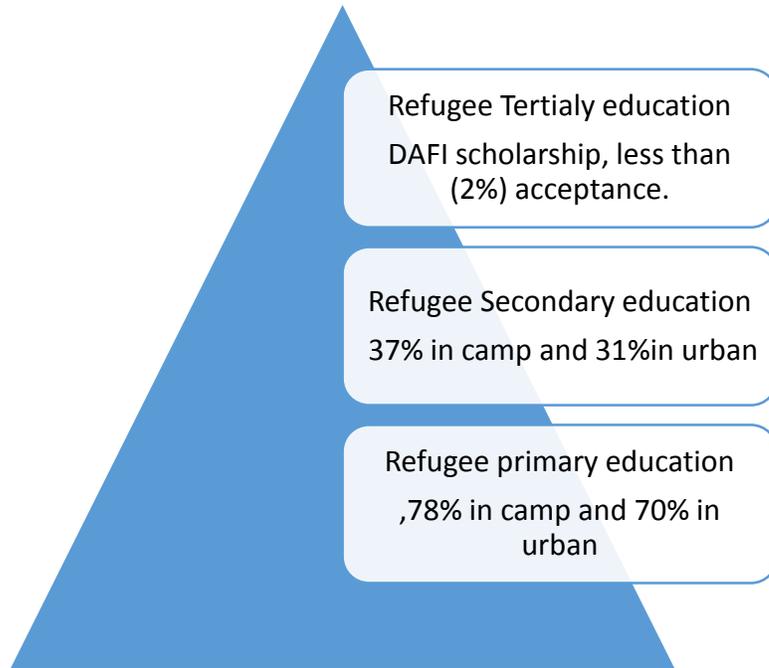
The focus on the example of Cavendish University Uganda facilitates taking into consideration different aspects of integration, including the cultural, social, psychological and academic dimensions, as well as questions of language.

## **1.2. Placing the research problem in Context**

A lot of economic and social complexities and dynamics are affecting the lives of Migrant and Refugee students in Uganda and the world over (Hovil 2007:599). This is due the fact that the Ugandan policy on matters concerning Refugees only recognizes a refugee who is under the custody of the government (Hovil 2007:600). However, due to many problems associated with living in camps, many Refugees have left camps and self -settled in other parts of the country especially in cities. Others have decided to enter the country as Migrant students and enroll for Higher Education as a means to run away from insecurities in their own countries and remain more or less happily in Uganda.

Education has been identified as an essential aspect for the psychological healing of Migrant and Refugees who have often suffered from traumatic experiences (McBrien 2005:329, Hirano 2014:37, Dryden-Peterson 2003:29). However, Dryden-Peterson & Giles (2011:12) pointed out that Refugees participation in Higher Education is low in Uganda and the world over. They indicated the increased scholarship of Refugees by UNHCR in primary, secondary and vocational education in subsequent years, however Higher Education is not mentioned (Dryden-Peterson & Giles 2011:13) an indication of low priority. UNHCR little focus can be attributed to donor reluctance to fund Higher Education for Refugees especially in countries where access to Higher Education is a challenge to even nationals due to a combination of factors not limited to corruption and poverty (see figure1).

Figure 3: Showing global estimate of Refugee enrollment in Higher Education



**Source: Extracted from (Dryden-Peterson & Giles 2011:4).**

The limited literature about Migrants and Refugees within Higher Education in Uganda has left Ugandan educational policy to be silent about the socio-cultural and psychological needs of Migrant and Refugee students and this has disadvantaged their education achievement in a higher academic institution (Taylor & Sidhu 2012: 42-43). This has not only perpetuated their lack of socio-cultural integration within the University system but also have left many of them feeling isolated and discriminated against (McBrien 2005:329, Yahoni 2014:37). However, in addition to their less representation in Higher Education, they have faced belonging and integration challenges (Yahoni 2014:38). In fact, McBrien (2005) argues that in US context Refugee students face socio-cultural misunderstandings while at school irrespective of their educational background in their home countries.

### **1.3 Justification of the research focus and literature selection**

This study has reviewed a number of literature both scholarly and academic research done in different countries. Attention to the issues of Refugees, refugee education and refugee integration in Uganda is not new. There have been many

studies covering refugee primary education, refugee protection, self-settled refugees integration issues, Sudanese refugees in Uganda, and aid policies towards refugees in Uganda, Refugee access to Higher Education, among others (Dryden-Peterson and Hovil, 2004; Dryden-Peterson, 2003; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012; Bagenda & Hovil, 2003; Okello, 2005; Dryden-Peterson and Giles, 2011; Dryden-Peterson, 2003; Hovil, 2007). However, none of these studies explored the question of the integration of Refugees within Higher Education institutions in the country. It would appear that this is therefore the first study conducted on 'Refugees and Migrants' integration into Higher Education in Uganda. This is the reason as to why this study is dominated with literature from the western worlds which seem to have totally different realities from that of Uganda.

Having worked as a teaching assistant in Cavendish University Uganda for the past two years laid a foundation for this study. I had a perceived number of assumptions about a specific group of students from specific countries within Cavendish University that inspired this study. Research done in Uganda shows that in order to effectively utilize the potentials of Refugees, refugee policy should allow for local integration of refugees within a broader society and the host nations need to understand the differences amongst themselves in order to enable them adapt and feel at home within Ugandan educational systems (Taylor & Sidhu 2012:42, Bagenda & Hovil 2003:16). Indeed, researchers such as Leung (2001:251) and Yahoni 2014:38) indicates that it is important to understand the social needs of migrant and refugees, and attention should be paid to their diverse backgrounds which are likely to affect negatively their educational achievement. Uganda being one of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that hosts a number of Migrants and Refugees pursuing Higher Education, justifies the need of this study especially in Cavendish University Uganda where a big proportion of their students fit under this category.

#### **1.4 Research objectives and questions**

The study purpose is to explore the socio-cultural challenges of 'belonging' and integration for Migrants and Refugees pursuing Higher Education in one institution in Uganda, Cavendish. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To find out how the integration and sense of belonging of Migrant and Refugee students within Higher Education be understood, from the literature?
2. To find out the challenges and opportunities of Migrants and Refugees pursuing Higher Education in Cavendish University Uganda.
3. To find out why and how does some Migrants and Refugees manage to succeed in their academics and integrate very well within Cavendish University Uganda in spite of the assumed challenges.

The main research question that will be addressed is as follows:

What are the experiences of Migrants and Refugees within Higher Education studying in Uganda, in terms of their sense of 'belonging' and 'integration' into the system, taking the example of Cavendish University Uganda?

The main question is broken down into a number of sub-questions.

1. How can the integration and sense of belonging of Migrant and Refugee students within Higher Education be understood, from the literature?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities of Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish University Uganda?
3. Why and how some Migrants and Refugees, manage to succeed in their academics, and integrate very well in spite of challenges they might be expected to face?

### **1.5 Research methodology: elements of a mixed approach**

According to some authors, research methodology not only clarifies the means through which relevant data is collected, but also how it will be analyzed throughout the research process (Brynard and Hanekom 1997). In order to give solutions to the research question, I employed methodology that is qualitative and with quantitative elements. Since the issue of Migrants and Refugees is a social reality, qualitative methodology was a focus of this study. Qualitative methodologies explored the respondent's views on experiences of Migrants and Refugees encounter in higher institute of learning. While quantitative

methodologies aimed at supplementing the experiences of different respondents by reviewing some of the University documents in terms of numbers. The purpose of this was to explore the differences in number between academic admissions, retention and finishing of Migrants and Refugees students in comparison with the native students.

However, while at the University, I was unable to access data about the number of students graduated in comparison to the number that was admitted due to a 'busy schedule' of the person responsible. Though the essence of the main research question does not seem interested in numbers but to explore the experiences of Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish University in Uganda, in terms of their sense of 'belonging' and 'integration' into the system, some of the data got through Interviewing from University officials based on numbers of students admitted per semester to claim that Migrant and Refugee within Cavendish University are integrated and achieve a sense of belonging within Cavendish University. The purpose of using this approach was to increase the quality and dependability of data collected (O'Leary 2009:113-115) and the discussion and analysis in reference to the numbers added precision and value to the words. The research took place in Kampala Uganda and Cavendish University was the selected case study. Cavendish is a private University located along Kabalagala Ggaba road, a few miles away from the city Centre. It operates within two small buildings which are close to each other. I did not have a specific place for my Interviews, the choice of the Interviewee dictated where and when to have it. Some preferred within the University premises (old or new campus) while others preferred outside the University. This kept me on run from one place to another.

In order to collect primary data, I chose to use a combination of data collection methods in order to approach this sensitive subject and to increase reliability of my data. Semi structured in-depth Interviews were the main method of data collection. This method helped me to get the first hand information about respondents' feelings and their own perceptions about the research questions

(O'Leary 2014:217). The respondents own words provided illustrations that gave in-depth information about the study.

More attention was put on Migrant and Refugee studying at Cavendish, the selected University, in order to give their attitudes, feelings and experiences about their sense of 'belonging' and integration in the University. I also interviewed fellow students from countries without conflict in order to compare their experiences. In addition, I interviewed University lecturers and administrators to find out their opinion about students integration and sense of belonging within the Cavendish University system and how the University administration is helping them to integrate. I interviewed a total of 26 respondents, 19 were University students and 7 University staff. 9 women and 17 men. Though my initial plan was to select 15 Interviews for analysis, I discovered that all Interviews were relevant to my study as each Interview had a strong point over the others about a specific research question. This left me with a lot of chaotic data as argued by (O'Leary 2014:201).

In order to select the above respondents, convenience sampling method was used. I used this method simply because, my research period was limited and was intrinsically dealing with the population which was clearly known to me (O'Leary 2014:190). But because of some disappointments from some respondents, snow ball sampling method was used, as I asked some respondents to refer me to their friends from the same country whom they thought could give me relevant information yet difficult to reach by the researcher through other sampling method (O'Leary 2014:188). This enabled me to get in touch with Migrants and Refugees who recently graduated from Cavendish University Uganda. Their experiences while at the University were of value to this paper.

Although, in-depth Interview was preferred as a means of data collection, other methods were also used in order to supplement the primary data. Secondary data was used through documentary reviewing. O'Leary (2014:85) argues that 'the production of new knowledge is fundamentally dependent on past knowledge'. For this matter therefore, a lot of literature was reviewed, including scholarly

articles, online journals, previous reports on Refugees and Migrant students in Higher Education from the global west. I reviewed particular documents of the University to find out data concerning admission of Refugees and Migrants. This helped the researcher to produce vivid and critical information about the research problem (O’Leary 2009:174).

Hardon (1995:169) argued that observation supplements Interviews, as it helps the researcher understand better what was said. This method helped me to either verify or refute what people said during Interviews and to identify those behaviors that respondents might have omitted mentioning yet important for critical analysis of the study findings. I attended one tutorial session and one presentations of student’s project. During the tutorial session, I was interested to know the level of interaction and participation of all students, and the focus was put on the Migrants and Refugees, since it is assumed that they face difficulties in engaging in class discussions due to language problem or lack of confidence in themselves. Not forgetting to notice the non-verbal cues of all students and the space given to those who have difficulty in using English as a medium of communication. During presentation of students’ projects, I was interested to know how these students were grouped, their level of confidence and self-esteem and how they presented themselves before the audience. This helped me to measure the extent at which each student contributed to the project content and their English language usage.

I also used focus group discussion. I had three groups, one group of 10 students composed of students from different countries such as Congo, Eritrea, Uganda, southern Sudan, Somalia, Kenya male and females. Second group of 8 students was composed of students from southern Sudan, men and women. This was because the two students from southern Sudan in the first discussion group had stayed a bit longer in Uganda. I also needed views of those who were new comers in Uganda. The third group of 7 students had only female students from Somalia. This was because I was interested in their views as female students from Somalia to compare them with that of male students. In all the groups I used selective

method to give chance to each member in a group to have what to say about the discussion.

## **1.6 Research limitations and fieldwork challenges**

As you read this paper, you stand to be informed that as much as I tried to keep myself a way from the research, this was quite difficult. Indeed, I can admit that I could not separate myself from the topic, people and the institution I was studying. Am believe to a certain degree that my personal bias entered into the picture even if I tried as much as possible to stay out of it. For this case therefore, I can confess that my historical experience and my status as an insider in Cavendish University Uganda working as a teaching assistant in the faculty of social economic sciences, interacted with other factors to influence, constrain and limit the way I collected data, sampling method adopted, the questions I asked, collected data as well as the meaning I extracted from it.

The environment context of the places where I carried out my Interviews and focus group discussions was not favorable at all, as it was difficult to finish the Interview or the focus group discussion without an interruption. This was simply because the Interview venues were places for everybody to freely use at any time. This in one way or the other I assume affected the quality of the findings reason being as people kept on entering/coming in to the room/place where I used to do Interview from and sometimes wanting to sit exactly near to us, I did not only become uncomfortable to ask some questions but also noticed a feeling of discomfort among my respondents. Secondary, though I had planned to do my field work for a period of two months, this was not possible. I encountered a number of challenges, losing my beloved brother, Emmanuel Mugumya on 17<sup>th</sup> of July early in the morning in a motor accident deserve a notice.

Doing research topic on students and the University where I was a staff created inquisitiveness not only to students but also to the University staff, everyone was wondering why I chose that topic and decided to do it to the University with many refugee and migrant students. Still the Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish questioned why the research was targeting them. Due to this, some

avoided to be part of this study by giving me excuses up to the end of my study. Since I did the field work towards the end of semester teaching, I got challenged to organize respondents for focus group sessions, as students had different times for coming to school as most of the teaching sessions were done by that time.

Still, the tribal war in southern Sudan had created tension and division amongst students from southern Sudan studying at Cavendish University Uganda. This made students become suspicious about my study. Even those who accepted to be part of my research were not free to give me all the information I needed to ensure that all my research questions are fully catered for. Another limitation was most respondents refused to be recorded. I had to ask questions as I take notes, this was a bit challenging.

In order to solve the above challenges, the following were done as will now be indicated.

I used my personal relationship with some students to convince them to be part of my research and I asked them to convince their friends to do the same. I also decided later on not to tell my respondents that my research was interested in exploring the experiences of refugees and migrant students only, but rather the experiences within Cavendish. This helped me a lot as many students could give me their time even without first booking the appointments.

Since it has been argued that migrant students from war torn countries find a school a critical moment due to social, cultural and emotional factors (Masinda et al 2014: 95). This was clearly a sensitive issue in an institution like Cavendish where a large section of the student body come from outside Uganda. For this case, I approached this study basing on the assumptions and research questions. This meant that I had to rely on respondents' experiences and opinions to get original data. Since face to face Interview requires an environment where the relationship between the Interviewer and the Interviewee need to be created (Greene and Hill 2005:9), I made sure that my respondents not only trust me but I also trust them to ensure that I avoid falling into traps of false information.

In order to avoid missing important information that could result from unrecorded Interviews, I made sure that I write as quickly as I could and make a quick analysis of each Interview before conducting the second one. In order to get groups to carry out group discussions, I used the presentation session and asked the first two groups to give me their time for the purpose of my study research. Since they were already working in a group before, it was easy for them.

Masinda et al (2014:95-96) has noted that schools are a small parts of the complex system of government and society, and are fully embedded into the social cultural values that inform Ugandans knowledge about individual students, and has the potential to promote or inhibit their integration into the school and society .This study decided to take a cautious approach to research ethics by introducing my -self as a credible and dependable researcher, who is seeking to acquire knowledge in the areas of Migrants and Refugees in Higher Education and also to acquire a good grade. I also promised confidentiality and asked permission for dissemination of some information which they consider sensitive and assure them to hide their true identity. To ensure my own protection and that of the institution, I presented consent forms to my respondents to justify their acceptance to participate in the study in writing.

Above all, I approached the whole process as a student seeking to acquire and add knowledge in areas of peace and conflict discourse and social justice in general. I ensured that transparency was assured by explaining the purpose and intention of the research to my respondents as purely academic and aims at influencing policies that may affect the wellbeing of Migrants and Refugees within Higher Education in Uganda.

## **1.7 Organization of the research paper**

This research paper is organized into five chapters. This first chapter has provided the general introduction and justified both the literature selection and the research methodology adopted. The second and third chapters reviewed key scholarly literature about the research problem, definitions of key concepts and outline in more detail the theoretical framework that guided the study and also

try to situate the Refugee and Migrant students within Ugandan Higher Education. The fourth chapter draws on data obtained from the field – both qualitative and to a lesser extent quantitative – and uses the Ager and Strang-based framework and Kuhlman as well as other relevant literature to conduct an analysis of this data, and interpret it. The key findings are summarized in the last chapter, which is the conclusion, which also includes some tentative suggestions for the future.

## **Chapter 2: Definitions of key concepts and Literature review**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the basic concepts of belonging and integration, as well as the question of 'who is a refugee' plus the legal position of a refugee in reference to Ugandan context. Still, basing on research questions, it discusses the relevant literature that is deemed relevant by the researcher to show how the study uses scholarly work to analyze the specific case study of Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish University in Uganda.

### **2.1 Refugee and Migrant concepts defined**

Generally, the term refugee invokes a mix of unwelcoming pictures, since Refugees are widely associated with 'problems'; Refugees are viewed as burdens to the country and to local communities, because it is assumed that they need to 'be taken care of'. Different people define the concept refugee differently, even if there is only one legal definition. The 1951 refugee Convention, defines the term refugee as 'a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion and is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of the protection of that country or to return there, for fear of persecution' (Assembly, UN General (1951). In relation to the Convention, the 1967 Refugee Protocol obliges all states to comply with refugee convention definition without limitation, unlike 1951 convention, the protocol is not limited to only member states.

The refugee legal definition distinguishes a Refugee from a Migrant in the way that; Refugees are forced to Migrate and lack protection from their own countries while Migrants may migrate due to other factors other than persecution and are protected by their own countries wherever they go. The term self-settled refugees in this paper mean all Refugees who are registered by the government of Uganda but are no longer staying in the camps due to factors not limited to hardships or desire to search for more opportunities. The term will

also refer to all migrants who left their country due to war related problems but never registered as refugees instead they decided to self-settle in different parts of the country especially in urban areas (Okell et al 2005:1).

## **2.2 The Legal position of Refugees in Uganda**

The denial of human rights is a root cause of refugee and refugee hood the world over. However, many countries are withdrawing from the 'legal duty' of providing and protecting refugee rights (Hathaway & Neve 1997:115). During her study in Uganda, Hovil gave an estimation of 230,000 officially registered refugees who had lived in exile for a well over a decade (Hovil 2007:599). Despite of the national, regional and international efforts made to curb down conflict in countries such as southern Sudan, Congo and Somalia, the situation continues to be highly dangerous and conflicts that have been creating Refugees are likely to remain for many years to come. On their arrival to Uganda, Refugees are supposed to register before the government authorities and stay in places that have been identified by the government mostly situated in rural areas near transnational borders where access to market is a problem and risky in terms of security. Indeed, Hovil argues that Uganda Refugee Bill of 2003 which replaced the Alien Refugee Act of 1960, Cap 62, looks at encampment of Refugees as the only way for refugee management (Hovil 2007:600, Meyer 2006:8, Kaiser 2006:597). Definitely, the Self Reliance Strategy continues to uphold the refugee encampment and the way it is applied have left many Refugee families more vulnerable than before (Hovil 2007:600, Dryden-Person and Hovil 2003).

A number of problems are associated with living in camps such as lack of freedom of movement which is a gate way for the enjoyment of other rights. Due to this, many Refugees have moved out and self-settle in many parts of Uganda while others have decided not to register at all. Actually Kaiser (2006:604) describes refugee camps in Uganda as, 'Prison-like places where rights to freedoms of movement and related access to education, employment, meaningful family life and livelihoods- are denied Refugees via this mechanisms of control and containment'. Although the government of Uganda claims to be using 1951 and OAU Refugee Conventions as a standard for their refugee policy,

Self-settled Refugees are not eligible to assistance within the government context except the few exceptional Refugees who are on UNHCR urban caseload (Hovil 2007:601).

Uganda is a signatory to the convention related to the rights of Refugees that obliges signatory states to guarantee Refugees the same treatment as nationals with respect to education other than basic education. However, Hovil pointed out that despite of the government effort to implement local integration of refugees, self-settled Refugees in Uganda meet legal barriers. As she writes;

There is considerable ambiguity surrounding the status of self-settled refugees: indeed the government and UNHCR see the very notion of self-settled Refugees as a contradiction ... (Hovil (2007: 602).

In fact, contrary to 1951 Refugee Convention, the management of Refugees in Uganda has redefined the category 'refugee' as 'a person who is in receipt of assistance and living in a physical space defined by the government of Uganda' (Kaiser 2006:605). It's upon this ambiguous legal status that self-settled Refugees in Uganda are discouraged to present themselves before the authorities or to the researchers.

### **2.3. Defining Belonging**

Kenneth (1986:306) generally defined the term to belong as 'a deep desire of someone to have a common bond that create mutual caring, common meaning and connections that help one to identity with others'. He narrowly defined it as to be linked to; a family, membership, some body, to a place or time by relationship. He argues that it is more often than not relevant to Migrants and Refugees who need to have cultural bonding so as they are settled safely within the new population to ensure a common sense of identity and caring. Whereas Yuval Davis (2006:199) argues that the term belonging can mean different things to different people. She defined the term as 'an act of self-identification or identification by others, in a stable, contested or transient way'. Hence a passionate affection about being at home (Yuval Davis 2006: 197). This definition implies that when you belong, you sense yourself as part of something

bigger than yourself, hence it encompasses cultural, social, racial, family and societal aspects.

His definition relates with Kenneth understanding of the term belonging (1986:305) as he noted that having a cultural belonging is very essential, since cultural differences always creates a condition of fear and suspicion, as each category looks at each other as a source of danger. However Yuval Davis (2006:199) argued that to belong is a process which is dynamic and always naturalized to produce hegemonic power relation within a particular societal arrangement. She argues that in order to understand the concept belonging one has to understand the three levels through which belonging is constructed. That is to say; (1) Social connection level, (2) individual identification and passionate to different collectiveness and alliances and (3) the 'ethical and political value system' within which people evaluate their own and others' belonging (Yuval Davis 2006:199). Though these three levels are interrelated she suggests that each one cannot be reduced to the other, as is sometimes assumed. Similarly, research done in Australia shows that to belong, the concept 'social identity' should not be ignored as it can help someone attach to a particular group (Miller 2000: 72). He argues however that social identity is not fixed.

## **2.4 The concept of Integration Defined**

Ager and Strang argue that the concept integration means different things to different people and this has caused confusion both in terms of theories and practices of integration (Agar and Strang 2008:167). Starting broadly, they define integration in general as 'the cultural understandings of nation and nation hood' (Ager and Strang 2008:173). This definition looks at integration in relation to individuals' sense of identification with the nation and incorporation of national values that shape the way people live. Integration is also defined more closely, however as 'a process which prevents or counteracts the social marginalization of Refugees by removing legal, cultural and language obstacles and ensuring that Refugees are empowered to make positive decisions...' (Ager and Strang 2008:180).

This definition looks at integration as the means to remove different kinds of vulnerabilities to ensure that people are empowered to live happily. However, Paaskesen (2010:12) argues that integration is not given, but depends on 'individual power and negotiation skills', coming close to the notion of self-efficacy as shall be broadly discussed while reviewing literature in this chapter. This can be related to Dryden-Peterson and Hovil's research on the integration of Refugees into primary education and commerce in Uganda, when they define integration as 'a situation in which host and Refugees communities are able to co-exist, sharing the same resources-both economic and social with the host community with no greater mutual conflict than that that exist within the host community' (Kuhlman 1991) in Dryden-Peterson and Hovil (2004:26).

Leung (2001:252) argues that the term integration is more or less synonymous with the concept of adaptation. He defines adaptation as 'the changes that individuals or groups make as a response to demands in the environment'. He identifies two closely connected aspects of integration and adaptation: first, social cultural adaptation or integration and second, psychological adaptation or integration. He argues that both relate to the ability of persons to deal with everyday situations and stresses (Leung 2001:252). More ambitiously, research done in Canada suggests that integration and adaptation should be two-way processes, where not only newcomers learn new cultural practices and language, but where the host population also makes some adjustments to their values, language and practices so as to ensure that newcomers may more easily find a sense of 'belonging', and to avoid isolation (Wilkinson 2000: 173).

Having discussed the key concept in this paper, below is the literature that the researcher paid attention to as far as this paper is concerned.

## **2.5 What are the experiences of Migrants and Refugees within Higher Education system?**

Yohani (2013: 62) points out that Migrants and Refugees are greatly challenged with adapting in a new school environment. And this is attributed to a number of factors such as; lack of peace and poverty in their home counties, difficulty

in making friends from the receiving countries and social isolation (Leung 2001:251, Fuligni, 2006:351). Despite of the above, schools and education policy from the global south have not done anything to counteract these problems. Yet, providing lasting socio-cultural, and psychological solution to them need special consideration to ensure effective integration (UNHCR 2012:17). Indeed, research done in Canada and Colombia indicates that the school plays a significant role in promoting local integration of Refugee and Migrant students within the broader society (Masinda 2014:93, Dykshoorn 2009:12). As Masinda writes;

The school environment is critical to newcomer students' learning pertaining to social, cultural and emotional dimension...the school plays an important role in helping immigrant's students to properly settle in schools, irrespective of individual factors, including self-determination, self-motivation, personality traits, parents' level of education, socio-cultural capital and self-coping mechanisms (Masinda et al 2014:95).

However, Leung argues that their needs cannot be met unless efforts have been made to understand the difference amongst themselves (Leung 2001:251). The involuntary migration represents a traumatic situation over time and space and this situation affects them differently due their differences in terms of gender, age, class to mention but a few that is likely to affect their rate of adaptability and integration in a new environment (Aysa-Lastra 2001:283). Implying that education is not only a right to Refugees and Migrants but also a healing process.

Researchers such as Dykshoorn (2009:12) and Masinda (2014:93) pointed out that schools play an important role in integrating new comers within a new society by instilling multicultural values. However they argue that teaching students from a multicultural background necessitates changing in the curriculum, teaching styles, attitude, values and educational objectives to ensure that all students are included. The inability of the school systems to provide multicultural education has led to the emergency of what Dykshoorn calls 'racist'

education which reproduce inequalities either based on class or socio-cultural and psychological aspects (Dykshoorn 2009:13).

Research also shows that though Migrant and Refugee students are assumed to be facing a number of challenges, some of them face unique problems (Leung 2001:251). Still, the differences in behaviors and values might have implications to their integration within the broader society and the University/school. Evidence has it that integration within the school is an important aspect of academic satisfaction which helps students to deal with academic stresses (Leung 2001:252). Lack of integration is caused by poor interactions with other students which is caused by not only their non-English speaking background, but also people's prejudice around them (Mak & Tran 2001:182, Griga and Hadjar 2014: 276, Fuligni 2006: 351).

### **2.5.1 What may determine the Academic performance of Migrants and Refugees within Higher Education?**

Studies done in Europe have found out that Migrant and Refugee are not only less represented in Higher Education system (see figure 1) but also their performance is lower compared to that of their counterpart (Griga and Hadjar 2014:275, Fuligni 2006:351, Dryden-Peterson & Giles 2011). Related to the above, research done in Canada shows that schools are the first site where Migrants and Refugees are introduced to the host nation cultures for easy integration (Wilkinson 2002:173). It is also argued that special attention should be given to Migrant and Refugees in order to be successful in their studies and the focus should be put on language used at school, as it has been pointed out that limited knowledge of English language has a shocking consequences for Migrant and Refugee educational experiences (Griga and Hadjar 2014: 276, Wilkinson 2002:176). In support to the above, Fuligni argues that good family background in English language, sometimes lead Refugees and Migrant students to attain higher grades (Fuligni 2006: 351).

Still, another evidence shows that the social economic status of Filipino Refugee and Migrant student families played a significant role in determining the educational performance in American schools, in spite the fact that the study done to Indochinese Refugees in the same country does not agree with it (Fuligni 2006:352). Leung (2001:252) pointed out that the individual control and intervention skills to belong and succeed in ones studies play an important role in determining the educational achievement of refugees and migrants.

However, Paaskesen (2010:12) argues that integration is very important to any new comer in the new society as it helps in the ‘construction process of the self’ which later lead to the development of both the ‘private self’ and the ‘public self’ that is socially accepted. This implies that for the case of Migrants and Refugees students, integration is very important as it facilitates self-confidence which can yield into higher performance not only in academic work but also in other aspects outside classroom. Research also shows that factors such as acceptance, inclusion, and being welcomed into a new community leads to happiness, contentment and calmness. While being rejected or ignored can lead to negative feelings of anxiety, depression and loneliness, thus rendering it more difficult to integrate within the new and unfamiliar community (Paaskesen 2010:14). This in a school setting has the potential to undermine their performance and achievement.

Though the above view emphasizes the role of host population in enabling new comers feel at home and avoiding loneliness, Wilkinson (2002:177) recognizes the role that should be applied by the individuals so as they get integrated a factor that may help them improve on their academic performance.

### **2.5.2 Why and how some Refugees and Migrant students succeed in their studies amidst challenges?**

Though it is assumed that Migrants and Refugees meet integration challenges which affect their academic performance at school, it should be noted that some of them succeed even better than the native students. It is argued that academic achievement is directly connected to the concept ‘locus of control’ which is the

attribution of one's success to internal controllable factors such as individual commitment and sense of self belief (Leung 2001:252). Research done in Australia indicates that students' belief in themselves to perform better has great influence on their performance than their actual abilities (Mak & Tran 2001:182). This is not only in academic performance but also in their decision they make. Researchers such as Bandaru 1999 and 1977 argue that self-efficacy is very important for Migrant students to succeed in their academics simply because it determines one's expectancy to succeed in performing or completing a particular activity/behavior or every day situation that involves social interaction (Leung 2001:252, Mak & Tran 2001:182).

The above implies that though Migrant and Refugees' students may come from the same country which is experiencing conflict, individual determination on their studies may have a lot of influence on both their academic and non-academic performance. However, Wilkinson (2002:179) pointed out that Migrant and Refugees from the same country tend to have different characteristics, that is to say; home backgrounds, histories, experiences, that may affect them differently. That's why even when it comes to coping, these people may cope at different times and rates due to individual differences in terms of personality and rate of adaptability. Still, research done in Canada argues that the longer the period of stay in host country and knowledge of English language influences academic success and therefore lack of it may lead to problems in someone's performance (Wilkinson 2002:180). This implies that those who have stayed longer are likely to easily integrate and succeed in their school work.

More so, it is indicated that the effective interaction of Migrants and Refugees with academic faculty staff, peers and administrative staff, has a potential to contribute to students' mastery of academic work and social integration and well-being within the educational setting and other social activities (Leung 2001:252, Mak & Tran 2001:182).

In conclusion, this chapter has defined key concepts, discussed the legal position of a refugee in Ugandan context and provided the literature review.

## **Chapter 3: Situating Migrants and Refugees within Ugandan Higher Education and the adapted framework**

### **3.0. Introduction**

The previous chapter indicated that conflict is no longer taking place outside people's homes and that refugee issue is increasingly seen as a social reality. Within educational institutions in Uganda, how is the principle of education as a human right being balanced with such debates about belonging and integration, Since education is part of a healing process (McBrien 2005:329, Hirano 2014:37, Dryden-Peterson 2003:29). Hence, this chapter gives a brief background to private Universities in Uganda and Refugee and Migrant position within Ugandan Higher Education and within Cavendish University. It provides basic information about Cavendish University Uganda as an academic institution which provides Higher Education for Migrants and Refugees as well as for Ugandan nationals. Lastly, it elaborates the conceptual frame work used in this study.

### **3.1. Higher Education and Refugees in Uganda**

Higher education in Uganda is privatized. This came into place as a result of neo-liberal reforms that targeted Higher Education which were sphere headed by world bank as a way of renovating Higher Education on African continent (Mamdani 2005: VII). Though this reform aimed at allowing private University to operate alongside public Universities, public Universities were later partially privatized as a way of increasing University revenue (Mamdani 2005: 25). While many countries have ratified the right of education for all, In Ugandan context, it only applies to primary and secondary education. Higher Education is still a challenge to many governments of Africa. Privatization of Higher Education in Uganda is one of the Ugandan government plans adopted in order to pave way for private sector expansion. This culminated into mushrooming of a number of

private institutions and Universities that have attracted both Ugandans and non-Ugandans.

Though the status of Refugees and Migrant students as far as Higher Education policy is concerned is unclear in Uganda and in US context (Hirano 2014:38). It should be noted that Migrants and Refugees have been attracted into Ugandan Higher Education. However, my efforts to assess the attraction of students from other countries into the Ugandan Higher Education system has been fruitless. Nevertheless, an important point to make here is that the globalization of societies has a lot of influence on this matter. Research indicated that the world is in the information age in which knowledge has become a 'commodity to be bought and sold' in the market called Universities, hence, Universities do provide Higher Education in order to 'restore understanding' (Knight and Wit 1995:6). Privatization of Higher Education in Uganda witnessed an increase in influx of Refugees and Migrant students to Uganda for the purpose of finding better opportunities in Ugandan Higher Education. Accessing Higher Education in public Universities was becoming more difficult not only by foreign students but also by nationals due to high academic grades that are required for admission. When it comes to Refugees and Migrant students it worsens as these students have no stable academic background due to political instabilities that have disorganized their schooling as well as their non-English education system back in their countries. Even when Refugees have been able to meet the academic requirements, other barriers such as birth certificates have limited them to enroll in public Universities (Dryden-Peterson & Giles 2011:4). Private sponsorship in private Universities remains the only alternative for them.

### **3.2 Cavendish University Uganda**

Cavendish University is a private University in Uganda. It was established in 2003 in a small building within Kampala –Wandegeya city- suburb. Due to the increased number of students, it was transferred to another bigger building located along Nsambya-Ggaba road opposite the American embassy, few miles away from Kampala- the city Centre. Due to its uniqueness in terms of programs, flexibility and admission criteria, Cavendish University has attracted

nationals and mostly non-national students (**See table 1**). Cavendish has courses ranging from ordinary certificates and diplomas, degrees and master degrees. All these courses are running on the basis of fulltime, part time, weekend and distance learning programs. Cavendish University has three in takes in a year, that is to say; January in-take, April in-take and August in-take, and this keeps campus busy throughout the year.

In an Interview with one senior University staff member, he argued that Ugandan students are the majority of students.

Table 3: Showing Cavendish University student’s enrollment categorized as nationals and non-nationals

Year	Ugandans	percentages	Non Ugandans	percentages	Total
2009	170	70	72	30	242
2010	196	39	312	61	508
2011	401	29	980	71	1381
2012	1040	35	1902	65	2942
2013	1378	37	2332	63	3710

Source: Hard copy of admissions statistics, obtained by the researcher from Cavendish University Uganda Admissions Office, unpublished source during an informal discussion, 12thAugust 2014.

However, the evidence available suggests that this was true around 2009, but since then, categorized by nationality, migrants from other countries are the majority (see Table 1). He argues that Ugandan students tend to be at the university only when they have lectures, since many have part time jobs. He contrasted this with migrant students who stay around the University even once they complete lectures, and use the library and other facilities. He suggested this is why it is sometimes assumed that students from Southern Sudan and Somalia

are the majority of all students at the University. However, the official suggested that even when non-Ugandans are in the majority, in most years Ugandans are the single largest group of students (the only exception in Table 2 is in 2010-11). Another head of an administrative department at Cavendish University suggested that in 2014 there were very few students enrolled from Southern Sudan. She suggested that Migrant and Refugee students might no longer be in the majority in 2014. This declining trend was clear in from 2011 onwards (See table 2).

Table 4: Showing Cavendish University Students enrollment according to their nationalities.

YEAR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Kenya	8	1	0	52	2
Tanzania	2	0	0	27	0
Rwanda	8	17	43	689	477
Burundi	0	10	5	57	2
Congo	5	22	31	111	139
Nigeria	0	7	3	105	138
S.Sudan	41	206	689	591	1228
India	0	0	0	1	0
Eretria	0	0	0	3	0
Somalia	8	49	209	266	346
Uganda	170	196	401	1040	1378

Source: Hard copy of admissions statistics, obtained by the researcher from Cavendish University Uganda Admissions Office, unpublished source during an informal discussion dated: 12thAugust 2014.

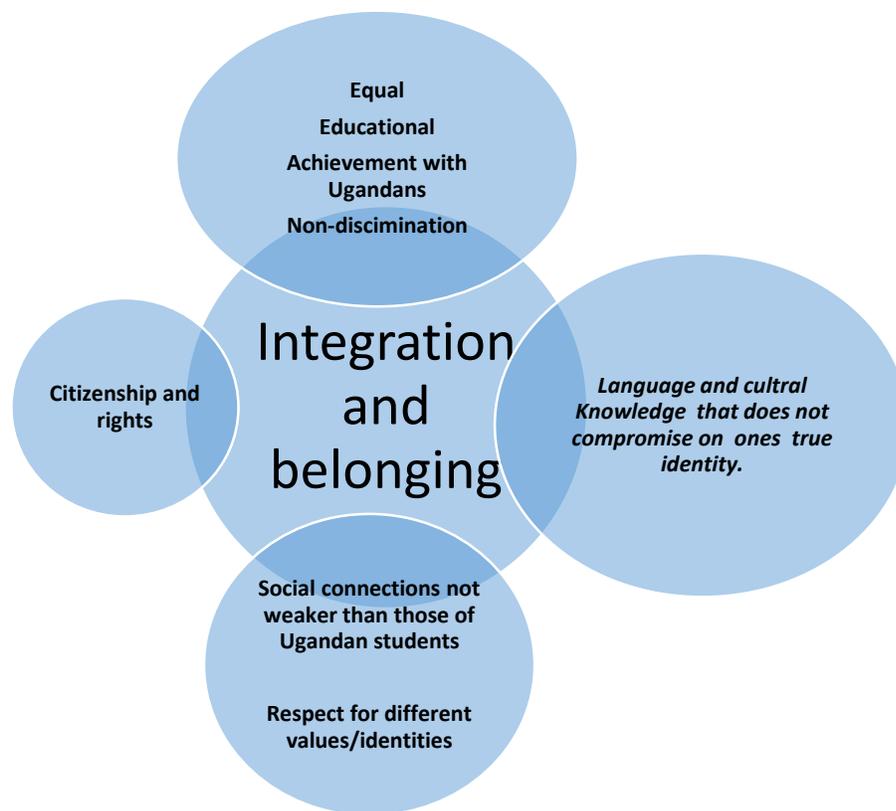
A number of courses are being offered by Cavendish and the courses are under different faculties such as business and management, social economic science, science and technology and faculty of law. This research was interested in exploring the experiences of Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish University Uganda. It is especially interested in hearing from students about their sense of 'belonging' and whether they feel that they are integrated within Cavendish education system.

### **3.3 Adapting Ager and Strang's approach to integration within Cavendish University setting.**

There is a lack of literature and theorizing on Refugees and their integration into Higher Education, in East Africa, including in Uganda. For this reason, this study adapted the integrated approach as advanced by Ager and Strang and developed using Kuhlman 1991 understanding of integration to build an argument drawing on the Ugandan context of Cavendish University. Another recent study by Masinda (2014) was also found relevant, and shares a similar understanding to Ager and Strang, in relation to aspects of integration of Refugees within the school context in Canada. Although Masinda is a current publication, his integration approach – unlike Ager and Strang – does not include elements of citizenship and rights, both deemed relevant for this study (see Figure 2). For this case therefore, Masinda was used to discuss the other aspects. For effective integration of Migrants and Refugees within Higher Education in Uganda, Figure 2 shows how different elements of Ager and Strang's proposed four main domains have featured in this study (Ager and Strang 2008:166). However, in order to analyze the socio-cultural and psychological challenges of Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish University Uganda, Kuhlman understanding of integration was adapted (Kuhlman 1991:3) to build that of Ager and Strang. However, the focus was more on the elements that are depicted on the right hand side of the model, than those on the left. The study thus selects a few aspects of the Ager and Strang frame work, rather than using it entirely. The main focus will be on: education, language and cultural knowledge, social links. To a lesser extent we also consider rights and citizenship, but these

are given less prominence than the other factors. Although citizenship and rights may be relevant to Cavendish university students' sense of 'belonging', they are not issues I was able to discuss openly without straying from the issue of educational and social integration and belonging. Aspects such as equal education and achievement as well as non-discrimination, language and cultural knowledge, social networks or relations not weaker than those of native students with respect to each other's' values and identities and citizenship and rights were chose simply because these directly connect with my central research question. In explaining differences in well- being and academic achievement among Migrant and Refugee students, and between them and 'native' Ugandan students, these factors seem the most relevant.

Figure 4: Showing Integration approach framework



Source: Adapted from Ager and Strang (2008:166) and Kuhlman (1991:3).

### **3.3.1. Justification of the conceptual framework**

In most of the existing studies, the issues of Refugee integration in Uganda are related to a focus on economic integration of Refugees into host communities, through employment and income-generation, and on the integration of Refugee children, mainly within Universal Primary Education. This made these existing approaches less relevant for my research than I had hoped. Even though employment is crucial for the future of Migrants and Refugees, the focus of this study is on Higher Education itself. For this reason, the decision was taken to adapt the integration approach advanced by Ager and Strang (2008), and this was developed using ideas of Kuhlman (1991:3). Though designed with the UK in mind, it has proven useful also for understanding the case of an HE institution like Cavendish in Uganda. The main domains of refugee integration in this model allow for deeper insights into the integration and sense of belonging of Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish University itself, rather than in the wider Ugandan society. Of course the model was adapted, and was not used uncritically.

### **3.3.2 Education and non-Discrimination**

In United States context, it is noted that education is the way to ensure that Refugees and Migrant are fully integrated within the wider society (Ager and Strang 2008:172). Whereas Dryden-Peterson (2003:5) argued that education at all levels is an essential for all refugee situation both as a human right and as well as a basis for their protection. Indeed Kuhlman considers non-discrimination of refugees in all aspects of their lives as one of their possible durable solution (Kuhlman 1991:2). Research done in Canada shows that Migrants and Refugees are most likely to assume that they are discriminated within schools due to factors such as local teaching styles, perception of authority between teachers and students, communication and participation styles to mention but a few (Masinda 2014:97). This mostly affects those who come from conflict zone areas with unstable schooling experiences. As Kuhlman (1991:5) has pointed out, schools should avoid Migrants and Refugees becoming 'marginal' as a result of teaching styles among others.

A 'marginal' according to her is a Migrant who fails to become a member of a new community where he/she migrated. This has the potential to leave many of them unequally attended to by educators. This has the potential to compromise the quality of education given to Refugees and Migrants given their disadvantaged position as non-English speaking background (Dryden-Peterson 2003:5). This is most especially to developing countries whose governments are still struggling with a number of social problems, including failure to provide quality education to their citizens (Dryden-Peterson & Giles 2011:4). For clear understanding of Refugee integration within the school, it is very important to concentrate on their own experiences at school and how they view themselves before their own peers and teachers (Masinda 2014:94). This understanding will aid providing non-discriminative education both in the eyes of teachers as well as that of the Refugees. This is likely to reduce the perceived discrimination and isolation of Migrants and Refugees within the school setting. Still, evidence from UK has it that schools should provide enough information about the school system and the needed efforts and capabilities to pursue different courses (Ager and Strang 2008:172). This shall enable Refugees and Migrant students not to do courses which are beyond their potentials and limit their educational achievement at the end of their study.

### **3.3.3 Language and cultural Knowledge**

School is an arena where Migrants and Refugees do learn and perfect the language that local people use (Ager and Strang 2008:172). Research done in Europe shows that most Migrants and Refugees in Higher Education get isolated and excluded by the native students due to English language problem especially in activities outside academic work (Griga and Hadjar 2013 :276, Ager and Strang 2008:172). Whereas Masinda 2014:95) argue at higher levels of education there is limited time for students to learn new language and bond with native students as well as local people, and this has compromised on their integration (Masinda 2014:95). However, Kuhlman (1991:4) argues that integration in a new community necessitates Migrants and refugees to try to learn new language and culture of the host population, but he cautioned them not to

compromise on their true identities. Kuhlman view is shared by another research done in America among the migrant Mexican adolescents within the American University, it states that learning a new culture does not mean that a minority group completely break away from their cultures of origin but rather keep their identity as separate from that of the new culture (Nelson & Infante 2014:40). Hence both researches seem to argue that 'bi-cultulism' is different from 'assimilation' where the former means total elimination of the culture of origin but the latter means integrating both the new and old cultures.

On the other hand, research done in UK indicates that unless Refugees or Migrant students been granted a chance to be employed in a host country, there is no way how they can improve on their language skill officially used by the host nation (Ager and Strang 2008:170). Still they argue that understanding of the English language can also help these students to improve on their health, a factor for their academic concentration as they can easily explain their illnesses to the health practitioners (Ager and Strang 2008:173).This can promote their wellbeing and a sense of feeling at home within the new community/school (Griga &Hadjar 2013:276). In support of the above, Kuhlman (1991:5) argues that integration means harmony and positive interaction however also uncertainty and clashes is normal in such a situation.

Still, it is argued that knowledge of the language can make it easier for a host community to translate the previous skills and qualifications to fit in a new society and new demands (Ager and Strang 2008:171). Indeed, Nelson & Infante (2014:40) pointed out that though maintaining ones culture/identity amidst a new culture is important, one should be aware that there are some situations where they need to shift to another identity for them to succeed in a new society. However they argue that in order for a migrant to devote effort to learn a dominant language of a new culture, the natives should also show interest in learning the minority language of the Migrant, according to them, this can create a balance between two groups and ease adjustment process of Migrants and refugees (Nelson & Infante 2014:42).

### **3.3.4 Social connection that respect values and identities**

Ager and Strang (2008:178) pointed out that Social connections as a crucial domain of integration approach, has aspects such as social bonds, social bridges and social links. Masinda defines Social integration as ‘the degree to which an individual is connected to others individuals in a social setting. It is also referred to as social skills or social competences and ability to interact adequately in the host society’ (Masinda 2014:96). He argues that school administration need to intervene as agents of social integration, to ensure that such students learn new social codes, develop languages skills, acquiring emotional support as well as learning new cultural norms that are relevant to their socialization with others (Masinda 2014:97). Kuhlman (1991:3) shares similar understanding of the concept integration, he pointed out that social connections of a Migrant and a Refugee necessitates socio-cultural change, however, this process should allow them to maintain their true identity as well as psychologically adjusting to the new situation. Nelson & Infante (2014:41) point out that as Migrants always goes through what he termed as ‘ethnic fight’ when the dominant culture tend to subordinates the culture of origin, this may results into both social and emotional problems such as stress and depression.

In reference to the above, it should be noted that getting integrated within a community or a group does not mean that all people must be believing in the same values but rather people of different values respect each other and live harmoniously. Indeed, Kuhlman (1991:5) argues that integration means harmony and positive interaction, however, conflict is normal in such social interaction. It brings about psychological stability of Migrants and Refugees within school and this is very important for their academic excellence as well as their relationship with both the peers and the teachers (Masinda 2014:97). Kuhlman argues that schools as agents of integration of Refugees and Migrants within new communities should avoid what he calls ‘marginalization’ (Kuhlman 1991:5). She defines ‘marginalization’ as a situation where a Migrant loses his culture but at the same time does not become part of the new society. But rather

Migrants or a Refugees should interact well with the host population but at the same time maintains their identity (Kuhlman 1991:5-6).

Indeed, Nelson & Infante (2014:41) argue that an individual should not recognize the balance created between identities but rather he/she should see him-self in an integrated identity comprising essential elements of both cultures. But when Migrants and Refugees have a feeling that their identity might be in danger as they try to socially connect to the local people, they may decide to 'separate' from others as a way of protecting their true identity (Kuhlman 1991:6). Hence, integration should be a 'mutual live and let live' attitude based on tolerance of differences, solidarity and positive interaction (Kuhlman 1991:4).

### **3.3.5 Citizenship and rights**

Though the term citizenship is used differently by different people, Ager and Strang (2008:173) notes that it is an essential aspect for effective integration and a high degree of 'cultural assimilation' of new comers in a new society. Yuval Davis (2006:205) defines citizenship as 'a reciprocal relationship of rights and responsibilities between individuals and the state'. Indeed research done in Thailand indicates that education should be made as a right to refugee children (Menjívar and Coutin 2013:327). However they notice that education is always provided to refugees not because of its perceived benefits but rather preventing them from becoming a security risk to the host society and sometimes just to meet the convention obligations (Menjívar and Coutin 2013:327).

Since Migrants and Refugees have to enjoy their rights such as human dignity, equality and others, it has been noted that it's the responsibility of both the state and an individual to ensure that this is realized. That is to say; the state has to provide these rights in all sectors of the economy while the individual refugee should be responsible in ensuring that he/she establish a responsible and mutual relation with different sectors and be willing to adapt in a new life style of the new society (Ager and Strang 2008:176). However Ager and Strang recognizes that the effort of the new comer to adapt to the new environment of the host population is possible if the Migrant population have the same rights as that of

the host population they are living amongst (Ager and Strang 2008:176). Menjívar and Coutin (2013:327) recognizes legal consciousness as a challenge to the above. They argue that 'liminal legality' in many countries is rooted from the national laws that make Refugees feel that they are temporary citizens who are not entitled for both social and legal justice. Still it can be due to the ambiguity of national laws that sometimes may even crash with the supra national laws (Menjívar and Coutin 2013:328).

In conclusion, this chapter has situated refugees within Higher Education in Uganda and within Cavendish a private University. It briefly gives basic information about Cavendish, it ends with a broad discussion of different aspect of the conceptual framework used and discussed these aspects in reference to the views of other researchers.

## Chapter 4: At Home in Cavendish University?

### 4.0. Introduction

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 indicated that Migrants and Refugees meet difficulties at school and in Higher Education, and that building on an understanding of their needs will facilitate their integration and acquiring a sense of belonging in the institutions where they study (Yohani 2013: 62). Basing on the above argument this chapter presents data from fieldwork, and analyzing obstacles as well as achievements of this group of students at Cavendish. Language skills, efforts towards socio-cultural integration and achievement within a non-discriminative education framework are all identified as key findings of the study. Without these, barriers to a sense of belonging within the institution will persist. In Chapter 5 a few conclusions are made including suggestions for improving the situation of Migrants and Refugees at Cavendish in future.

### 4.1. Is Cavendish the right place for Migrants and Refugees?

When asked whether they belong to Cavendish University or not, most of the respondents argued that they feel at home, however their reasons to justify this was different. One female student from Congo claimed that she feels at home since Cavendish University policies are universal to all students.

*'...If it's refusing those who have not paid fees to enter the University, all those who have not paid including Ugandan are affected...'* (Congolese female student aged 23: Interview, 12th August 2014). The above view equates the term to belong to lack of discrimination. This implies that as students are subjected to the same treatment, they feel that Cavendish is the right place for them in spite of their individual challenges. Truly, Kenneth (1986:306) pointed out that to belong is to have a connection and to identify with others. Hence, this research would suggest that it was in part the lack of discrimination or discriminating behavior by Cavendish that led Migrant and Refugee students to identify themselves with the Cavendish community, and to feel at home in the institution.

Another student, who felt he belonged in Cavendish University, nonetheless noticed that despite rules being in place to govern relationships between students, teaching staff and Cavendish management, sometimes this does not work to cater for the needs of specific kinds of students. He argued that Cavendish management and some lecturers show they are flexible in this regard, and are willing to listen and help individual students, especially those who let them know about their challenges.

*'...If it was not the flexibility of Cavendish management, almost three quarters of students from southern Sudan were not meant to do exams last year due to ethnic conflict that affected the financial status of their sponsors...'* (MA male student from Southern Sudan aged 38: Interview, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2014).

While another student understood feeling at home as being happy all the time at Cavendish, she argued that when everything seems okay to her she feels at home but when she gets challenged in one way or the other such as failing an exam, she gets disappointed since she expects education to positively change her life. Indeed, Peterson and Hovil (2004:31) and Ager and Strang (2008) noted that education is the only way that Refugees can hope to attain brighter future. It seems that when they fail to achieve good results, and get disappointed, it may be that at the end of the day they feel Cavendish is not the right place. This may be a temporary feeling, however.

Two other students interviewed, one woman from Southern Sudan and one man from Somalia, also said they felt at home in Cavendish University because some of their lecturers encouraged them to pursue their dreams, despite their individual difficulties or weaknesses. In fact the woman argued that if it was not for encouragement from her lecturers, she was planning to stop school simply because she felt out of place due to her relatively old age (she was 47). Studies seemed hard for her, yet due to encouragement from Madam Cissy (an academic staff member, not real name), she managed to settle well and she was hoping to finish her course this year. Yet another student from Uganda argued that though the teaching staff try to understand individual students, and try to pay attention to their concerns, this is not always the case for administrative staff, some of

them he considered they could be arrogant towards students when it came to providing support or documents. To him this sometimes makes the students feel out of place while at Cavendish University. So it is interesting that this student, though Ugandan, also sometimes questions whether he feels at home.

During an interview, a member of the teaching staff argued that Cavendish uses a business approach to customer (student) satisfaction. She argued that though this is demanding of staff, such an approach emphasizes friendliness and flexibility towards students as customers. In her view, this could ensure that all students feel they can belong to Cavendish, and in the end achieve their educational goals. Another male lecturer agreed that: *'Being flexible is very important here, but you have to make sure that students do not take you for granted...'* (Male lecturer aged 35: Interview, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014). Yet one top administrator of Cavendish University argued that all students nevertheless where they come from do belong and feel that Cavendish University is the right place for them. He justified this basing on students enrollment that shows an increment year after year from various countries within Cavendish University. He argues that it is only 2013 January intake that students from southern Sudan were low compared to the previous years and this was attributed to wars back home. *'Grace, how can you encourage your friend, sister or brother to join the University where you do not feel at home? It is impossible...'* (Male University top administrator aged 30: Interview, 12th August 2014).

More so, the issue of environment was crucial element in in trying to understand the degree of belonging of Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish. One respondent claimed that the University is operating in what he termed as a small building(s) that limit their interaction amongst themselves, this possibly inhibit their sense of belonging. Relatively, one respondent from Congo raised an issue of absence of facilities to enable students engage well in co- curricular activities. He argued that Cavendish pays little attention to sports to enable those interested in a particular sport to feel at home. *'Personally am not a school boy, my interest is in basketball, but Cavendish has no sports ground for this...'* (Congolese male student aged 27: Interview, 29th July 2014). This relates with Masinda (2014:96) as he pointed

out that environment is a crucial element for refugee learning. In fact, Ager and Strang (2008:180) argues that participation of refugees in various social activities can promote effective integration and acquiring a sense of belonging.

Related to the above, one student respondent from Uganda argued that student's associations and students' guild committee have tried to make students feel at home while at Cavendish. This is done by organizing social activities such as organizing competitions in activities such as football among others that make students feel happier and at home while at Cavendish University. However, she argued that Cavendish University administration probably has no interests in such activities and rarely support them financially in case of a need arises. When contacted, the University top administrator argued that Cavendish goal is more academic, however it appreciate the role that students association can do in making students feel at home while at Cavendish University, as a result, they are working towards including such activities in the University budget.

*'Cavendish being an international University, you expect a number of students associations based on countries and faculties,, if the University is to finance all of them, it can fail to meet staff salaries...'* (Top male administrator aged 30, Interview, 12th August 2014).

Still, having a relation with people who share the same ethnic tribe was found vital in acquiring a sense of belonging within Cavendish. One male student from Southern Sudan argued that speaking a local language with students from the same country was important for him to acquire a sense of belonging as soon as he joined Cavendish. He argued that; *'When you find people speaking your local language you feel that you are at home'* (Southern Sudan male student aged 30: Focus Group Discussion, 12th July 2014).

The individual level of adaptability and the ability of the individuals to believe in themselves was also mentioned as a factor that influence students' sense of belonging. Leung (2001:252) defines the concept adaptation in chapter two as 'the changes that individuals or groups make as a response to demands in the environment. Research claimed that though Migrant and Refugees may have had bad experiences that possibly affected them, their effort to adapt to the new

environment was too vital. One male student from Southern Sudan argued that despite the fact that he did not enjoy his past life (as a soldier in the bush), he believes that his commitment to integrate within Cavendish University has helped him to feel much better and at home than before.

Research also revealed that despite the fact that Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish University may face belonging challenges while at school, it is sometimes worse to female students. This was attributed to their gender roles particularly in African societies. A female lecturer argued that female students need more support in terms of getting integrated and feeling at home as well as succeeding in their academics. As she said; '*...Female students from war torn countries experience a lot here,...I tell you many have problems that are not academic but family based that disorganizes their belonging and studies and some even withdraw from the course...*' (Female lecturer aged 34: Interview, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2014). This claims that Migrant and Refugee female students do not only face challenges to interact, to belong or perform well, some of them have withdrawn from the course due to family related issues that generate equally important and conflicting roles as students, mothers, wives to mention but a few.

## **4.2 How can the concept of intersectionality help?**

Issues such as gender, age and class of Migrant and Refugee students within Cavendish also had a lot of influence on students' sense of belonging within the University. For example, this study revealed that some women students with supportive husbands and families were integrating very well. Still, relatively young female students also proved to be happier and claimed to belong to Cavendish University compared to relatively older female students. Interestingly, according to my observation, this seemed to be more apparent with female students from southern Sudan and Congo, who seemed more at ease than women students from Somalia. However, one male student from Somalia argued that Somalia women are obliged to follow their strict culture and religious norms even if they are out of the country, which may explain this difference, so it may not be correct to conclude that Somali women students do not feel at home.

The above raises the whole notion of ‘intersectionality’ as a multi-level of analysis as advanced by Crenshaw Kimberley (1989). The concept can help explain vulnerabilities that can be experienced by groups and individuals, due to socially defined categories such as gender, race, age, class and religion overlapping and intersecting, in a way determined by wider power relations in society. In fact, Yuval Davis (2006:199) points out that though people may belong to a particular gender, country, class, group, school, study in the same class, their various social locations imply different power relations and different positioning in the same society, depending on the context.

### **4.3 Do social relations and cultural involvement of Migrants and Refugees matter?**

It has been noted that in order to be able to help Migrant and Refugee within schools, it is important to understand their socio-cultural needs and special attention should be paid on differences amongst themselves (Leung 2001:251, Aysa-Lastra 2001:283). Basing on the above argument, two students one from SS and another from Somalia both male argued that being a new comer in Cavendish University affected their social life as they did not know any one at Cavendish. However, as time went on, one argued that he started getting to know other students especially his classmate and that’s when life came back to normal. While another one argued that he cannot forget the social isolation he experienced during his early days at the University. He denoted that some of this isolation was caused by lack of social interaction skills and some kind of cultural shock. *‘This actually affected my academic grades...my English was too much influenced by Arabic accent, I decided to isolate myself from other students...’* (Male student from Southern Sudan aged 38: Interview, 20 August 2014).

The above findings claimed that meeting the socio-cultural needs deserves attention by the school administration as many students claimed to have performed poorly in early days of their school due to social isolation from others. In fact, Meyer (2006:1) pointed out that irrespective of the period one has stayed in host countries, the socio-cultural and economic needs of Refugees need to be met, and lack of it have compromised on students’ well-being. In fact Ager and

Strang (2008) adapted framework used in this paper in chapter three indicated that language and cultural knowledge and interest in a host community help in meeting socio-cultural needs of Migrants and Refugees. Whereas, another male student from southern Sudan argued that in order to get integrated well within Cavendish University, he decided to learn the local language of Ugandan people so as he can even interact well with the local population. When asked which language he is trying to learn he argued that '*yuganda*', he literally wanted to say 'Luganda' a local language used mostly in central Uganda.

This finding connects well with Kuhlman (1991) view as he argued that Migrants and Refugees should try to learn as much as possible the local languages and cultures of the host community, however he cautioned them not to compromise with their true identity, but to create a balance between the two cultures. However, what could be confusing in Cavendish situation is that Ugandan students within Cavendish speak different local languages due to different cultures. Hence, one can argue that the framework adapted by this paper does not fully relate with Migrant and Refugees within Ugandan society context where Migrant and Refugee students encounter a number of cultures and local languages that are being used by students within the University, in addition to English language. Unlike in the UK context where all students almost have same culture and English is the only language that Refugees do learn to facilitate their socialization and integration within the society. Due to this confusion, one may argue that it may probably affect Migrant and Refugee socialization within Cavendish.

However, Kuhlman (1991:5) seem not to agree with the above understanding, she argues that integration through socialization does not mean that people have to speak the same language or share the same culture but rather people of different cultures and beliefs live harmoniously with solidarity and respect each other's identity. Personally I agree with Kuhlman view as I recall my experience at International Institute of Social studies. I remembered how I struggled for some time to interact with different students from socially and culturally diverse background, speaking different languages especially in activities outside class

room. I struggled to understand them when they speak and also struggle to make them understand me due to different accent used while speaking English, however this did not limit me from getting socially interactive.

Whereas two male respondents, one a Masters student from Southern Sudan, and another from Uganda, argued that social interaction with fellow students has little/no influence on their integration within Cavendish. The Sudanese man argued that because of his past experiences, he prefers not to socially interact with fellow students, but that this does not mean he does not feel part of Cavendish University. While a Ugandan student argued that he feels better when he isolated himself from fellow students, since, according to him, that is when he can meditate upon his life and lay strategies to achieve his goals. He also refuted the idea that isolating oneself means one does not want to integrate within Cavendish. *'Am either in my room or class or library...I do not value social interactions...'* (First year Ugandan male student aged 27: Focus Group Discussion, 13<sup>th</sup> August: 2014). To him social interactions wastes a lot of time that could be used to do more valuable things. These two views contradict with a scholarly view which states that friendship is very important in making a new comer within the school setting feel secure, and lack of it prevents successful integration and automatically affects academic achievement (Ager and Strang 2008:180).

Despite of the above, Most of the students and staff respondents agreed on the view that social interactions are very paramount to make Migrants and Refugees get integrated within Cavendish community. However one male lecturer added that this is not only applicable to Migrants and Refugees only but also to other students. He continues to argue that although Cavendish staff is obliged to enable such happen but this is an individual effort to enable it yield positive results. His view justified Paaskesen (2010:12) as she argued that integration is not given but rather it depends on cooperation skills and individual willingness and interest to mix with others. Though Paaskesen view seem to hold some water, but one may argue that individuals do not exist and work in isolation from the environment around them, implying that the environment has to be

favorable enough to allow balanced and positive relationships amongst different social groups. And when it comes to Migrants and Refugees, enough support is needed to enable them socially interact well with others to facilitate their integration within Cavendish. In fact, this study confirms the view of Thijs and Verkuyten (2014:3) that interaction of students from diverse cultural backgrounds is not automatic, and that there must a favorable environment created by the institutions and teachers to enable this to happen.

Though integrating Migrants and Refugees within Ugandan broad society was not the interest of this paper, some respondents tried to link their integration within Cavendish to a broader society. Two Cavendish graduated students from Southern Sudan expressed their interest in trying to link Migrants and Refugees integration within Cavendish to a broader Ugandan society. They argued that according to their experiences after school, they do not see any value of getting socially connected since their efforts to get employed in Uganda have been fruitless. As one of them had this to say; *'you know Madam, even organization working on refugee issues in our settlement cannot employ us ... No, and it is indicated on job advert that nationals only...'* (Cavendish graduated male student from Southern Sudan: Interview17<sup>th</sup> August 2014). In reference to the above, one may claim that all aspects of integration as adapted by this paper, work hand in hand and each one cannot be strongly appreciated if other aspects are not respected.

Still, the above findings relate to one of aspect of integration in the model informing this study; citizenship and rights, an important aspect for further analysis. However, this study does not dig deeper into the issue of graduate employment of Migrants and Refugees who have studied at Cavendish, since this would require another study altogether.

#### **4.4 Is it discrimination or prejudice?**

In my effort to find out the social interactions of Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish University. One Ugandan student during a Focus Group Discussion argued that Migrant and Refugee students socially discriminate the native students. The above issue rose my curiosity, I desired to know who discriminate

who at Cavendish University, since it is evidenced that Migrant and Refugee students are discriminated by native students (McBrien 2005:329, Yahoni 2014:37). Mummendey and Wenzel (1999:159) defines social discrimination as ‘denying individuals or group of people equality of treatment which they may wish to have and or favoring one own group of people relative to another group’. A Ugandan male student argued that Migrant and Refugee students do not want to interact with them, in fact he told me that the reason as to why they formed a project group with many Ugandans was simply because most of them were removed by the members of the first groups which composed many of Migrants and Refugees. Still another Ugandan male student had this to say; ‘...ever since they discovered that i don’t come from their country they no longer even talk to me...’ (Ugandan male first year student aged 27: Focus Group Discussion, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014). However, another male student from Southern Sudan argued that the reason as to why such cases happen is due to a number of reasons such as desire of some students to use their local languages when discussing class assignments or in their conversations, but this does not mean that students discriminate each other. While another female student from Kenya argued that when she had just joined Cavendish she thought that some students do not like her, in fact she thought she was discriminated against by some students, however, she later discovered that may be some students were lacking self-confidence that made them appear as if they were discriminative in their behaviors. ‘...In fact the last meetings of our group work, they were free talking to me, I discovered that I had a wrong perception about them...’ (Kenyan female student aged 25: Focus Group Discussion, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014).

The above finding claims that sometimes lack of confidence or being deserved in a way makes one to be selective in a way of choosing who to talk to or not. However Kuhlman (1991:6) argues that sometimes Migrants /Refugees separate from others because they are worried of losing their true identity, but this does not mean that they are discriminating others. Yet, another research noted that intercultural mix in a school setting have a potential to negatively affect the non-cognitive outcomes such as self-esteem and ethnic acceptance (Thijs &

Verkuyten 2014: 1-2). Basing on this argument, one may argue that due to cultural mixing of students from diverse background, some may feel inferior/superior to others and this may undermine their socialization and this may affect their sense of belonging. Hence, this research claims that there is no social discrimination of any kind at Cavendish University. This is simply because the evidence provided by this paper does not justify that discrimination does happen. Still the definition of social discrimination adopted by this paper as advanced by Mummendey and Wenzel (1999: 159) .Hence, one can argue that perhaps Cavendish University students have prejudice against each other. Due to issues such as ignoring each other, being afraid of talking to each other, not wanting to begin a conversation and having limited time to socially interact lead some of them to develop negative biases against others.

In fact, studies indicate that unlike in primary level of education where there is a long term contact amongst students from a diverse background, it is not the case with Higher Education (Thijs & Verkuyten 2014:3). Indeed this was justified by one male top Cavendish administrator as he argued that native students only stay at school campus only when they have classes. This can explain why prejudice do happens due to limited interactions between Migrants, Refugees and native students. However, this is not always the case as evidence shows that Migrants and native students within Cavendish had developed a 'good and health' friendship were also noticed. The 'intergroup contact theory' as used by Thijs and Verkuyten is challenged by the above findings. The central message of this theory is that when students from diverse cultures come into contact with one another, they tend to develop favorable beliefs and positive attitudes towards one another (Thijs and Verkuyten 2014:3). However, research findings claimed that this is not always the case and automatic at Cavendish University.

#### **4.5 What about the educational capabilities of Migrants and Refugees?**

Research findings discovered that Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish University are different in terms of academic performance. Though some meet difficulty in managing the school work but it's not always the case. One female

Ugandan student confessed for having been surprised about the performance of some Migrant and Refugee students within Cavendish who do the same course with her. ‘...*John, Peter and Eryn (not real names) perform well and Eryn perform even better than Ugandan students.* (Ugandan student aged 26: Interview, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2014). Another female lecturer also argued that though generally it’s known that students from a certain countries do perform less poorly and are less focused on their academics, it’s not always the case as some of them have challenged this perception. ‘...*Mind you the overall best student in the Faculty of social economic science in 2012 student graduation was a female student from Somalia, you see...*’ (Female lecturer aged 32: Interview, 15th August 2014).

In fact my own observation partially justified this view. A female lecturer helped me to arrange a meeting with Eryn as one of her best student, she accepted to be part of my research after which we arranged a day and time for the Interview. However, we totally failed to meet each other as she continued excusing herself as having discussion groups to attend. This continued to happen until students started writing their exams and it was the same time towards the end my field work. This really disappointed me. However, while trying to reflect on different Interviews, I came to realize that perhaps she saw an interview as a distraction from her studies. This partially challenged one of the assumptions that the home experiences of Migrant and Refugees affect negatively affect their academic concentration and performance. However, a male student from Uganda argued that though this does not apply to everyone he believes that some Migrants and Refugees need extra help and advice to be able to succeed in their studies. In addition, he argued that the reason as to why some of them are less focused and pay little attention to their studies is that some staff members of Cavendish University are not professional enough to discourage that kind of behavior from happening again ‘...*I was shocked with some students performance last semester...how can a student who does neither attend classes nor make himself understood in English score beyond 80%...*’ (A first year male Ugandan student: interview, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2014).

Still, the concept self-efficacy as used in the previous chapter was also found relevant in this research. Different lecturers from different departments argued

that those Migrant and Refugee students whose performance was average or good could be partially attributed to their ability to believe that they can make it. In fact one male student from southern Sudan argued that he is ashamed of his first semester grades as they are dominated with pass marks, however he continued to say that when he talked to different lecturers they encouraged him that he can perform better than that which according to him synthesized in his mind and ever since then his grades are improving. While a male student from Somalia raised an issue of lacking enough information about the necessary effort and prior knowledge required to be able to pursue a certain course. He argued that Cavendish does not provide what he considered to be 'enough information'. And this has resulted to students enrolling on different courses on bandwagon basis. This finding justifies Ager and Strang view as they pointed out that schools do not provide enough information about the school system and the needed efforts and capabilities needed to pursue different subjects (Ager and Strang 2008:172).

When contacted, one of the Male Cavendish top administrator argued that Cavendish admission criteria is based on National council of Higher Education guidelines of two principle passes. Cavendish University only need to provide direction rather than making decisions for such students. However one can argue that the experience an individual goes through does not only affect the present but also the future decisions. Hence since Cavendish is aware of the past experience that is characterized with conflict, it should be able to provide 'enough support' to such students in order to make right decisions. In fact, Yohani (2013:62) pointed out that Migrants and Refugees within schools do not only need support in terms of social interaction but also in decision making as the past experience affects them both socially and mentally. Yet, a long lived male lecturer at Cavendish University argued that privatization of Higher Education in Uganda did not only create job opportunities but also has compromised the quality of education Universities provide. He continued to say that private Universities in Uganda are in place to make profit. *'If a student is told to change a course he wants to apply for, he/she will go to another University, as a private*

*University you are losing business...*' (Male lecturer aged 37: Interview, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2014).

#### **4.6 English Language: a Key Factor**

The language of instruction in schools is a political issue the world over, it comes to represent the dominance of a group, a culture, an ideology (Dryden-Peterson 2003:28).

The issue of knowledge of the English language was raised as an important aspect in ensuring Migrant and Refugee sense of belonging within Cavendish University and most probably improving on their academic performance. A female lecturer argued that students with challenges in using English as medium of communication meet a number of limitations while at Cavendish compared to those who are not. In fact a female student from Somalia argued that her academic performance and social interactions were limited by his failure to express herself before others in English Language. *'I used to sit near my friend from Somalia so as he can interpret what the lecturer is teaching in our local language...it was a stressing period* (Somalia female student aged 26 Focus Group Discussion, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2014). While another male student from Southern Sudan argued that if it was not the encouragement he received from the lectures and the head of department, he was planning to withdraw from the course due to Cavendish style of making students present their assignment that requires some degree of confidence in English language. *'I remember during class presentation, I went and stood in front of the class and did not know what to say, I got embarrassed...'* (Southern Sudan male student aged 30: Interview, 12 August 2014). In fact, researchers such as Ager and Strang (2008), Masinda (2014:95) share the same view with the above finding as they argue that language barrier is one of the challenges that affect both Migrants and Refugees within schools. In-fact, Miller (2000:70) argues that to ensure that Migrants acquire a sense of belonging while at school, the focus should be put on language used.

One female respondent from Congo argued that challenges in using English language did not only challenge her academic performance but also limited her

from engaging in other social discussions and activities that could perhaps make her feel happier at Cavendish University. *'A Ugandan friend used to invite me over the weekend to go beaching but she used to come with friends, since I could not use English well I decided to excuse from the group.* (Congolese young female student aged 23: Interview, 12th August 2014). The above relates with research done by Griga and Hadjar (2013:276) which indicated that it is very difficult to engage in various social activities/discussion if one is not confident with the language used. Indeed, research done by Mak and Tran (2001:185) showed that lack of host language competences slower adaptation and belonging of new comers. However, one female student from Somalia emphasized the role that social interaction with others and the attitude one has over a host society in promoting ones language proficiency. She argued that though some of her friends from the same country had stayed a bit longer in Uganda, her improvement in English language was surpassing that of theirs due to her commitment to socialize with those who can speak it well.

In order to ensure that Migrant and Refugees are helped to improve on their English language, one male lecturer and a female student from Uganda argued that Cavendish University made a resolution to introduce short English program courses as one way of helping those with English language problems. The lecturer respondent argued that if Migrant and Refugee students with English problems take seriously this course, they can better their English speaking and writing. However a female student from Uganda retorted that the short program provided makes no or little impact on student with difficulty in using English as a medium of communication. She continued to argue that the only way how they can improve on their English language is through social interactions.

In conclusion, this chapter has made a critical analysis of the data got through in-depth Interview and other data collection method adopted. Throughout the analysis, different literature and the adapted integration approach were used to justify or to counterattack the data. The researcher also used her own reflections and experiences to add more meaning on the research findings.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions**

This study has explored complex issues of integration and belonging by talking with Migrants and Refugees studying in one Higher Education institution in Uganda, Cavendish University. The aim has been to find out about some of the key challenges and opportunities that this group of students face when pursuing Higher Education. The methodology adopted was mainly qualitative, and the key findings were: (i) knowledge of English is important; (ii) self-belief of an individual also matters, as do their efforts to adapt to the new society's demands (iii) Gender, age and class can also influence the extent to which integration and a sense of belonging are achieved (iv) Students' prejudice against each other that affect their social interactions and (v) Migrant and Refugee students also need support from the academic institution and the broader society to achieve a sense of belonging and to integrate fully into Higher Education and Ugandan society. Each of these issues is considered in turn.

### **(i) Language**

Though individual differences exist among Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish University that affect their sense of belonging and integration, social interactions with others and academic performance, knowledge of English language was revealed to be a central factor that influences the others. This paper has argued that Migrants and Refugees with confidence in using English language have been able to socialize easily with others students from different countries. This has helped them to make more friends whom they socialize with during and after school, unlike their counterpart who decide to isolate from other students and only limit their interactions with only those who can speak their local languages. Still knowledge of English language has influenced students' performance whereby those who do make others understand them in English language have been able to participate in class discussions and also involve themselves in various discussion groups where they share their views and listen to others' views, this as a result, affect their performance positively. While those who meet difficulties to make others understand them through English have been challenged in terms of academic achievement since they

cannot share their views during group discussions, or read and understand the subject matter as well as expressing their views through writing. In fact researchers such as Fuligni (2006: 351) among others emphasized the issue of language in influencing academic performance of Refugees and Migrants.

Likewise achieving a sense of belonging and getting integrated within the University was also claimed to be dependent on knowledge of English language. This research claims that Students who can easily express themselves in English language have been able to make many friends beyond their country horizons and to contact the University staff as soon as they need help unlike their counterparts who decide to isolate themselves from others simply because they do not feel confident enough to engage in social discussions, and do not contact staff in case they have a problem, this leads to isolation and perhaps feeling out of place.

### **(ii) Self-Efficacy**

This paper has shown that self-efficacy was discovered as an important precursor, as well as a result of successful social cross cultural interaction, sense of belonging and achieving good academic grades. This paper has argued that students who had or developed confidence in themselves have been able to integrate and achieve a sense of belonging within Cavendish University. Whereas those Migrant and Refugee students who do not believe in themselves, lack the self-confidence hence ending up separating themselves from others which have negatively affected their happiness while at Cavendish as well as their academic performance. Indeed Mak and Tran (2001:194) pointed out that individual avoidance can negatively affect social interaction across cultures. Self -efficacy was found a vital determinant of one's ability to self -represent him/herself well with others and this promote their adaptability to the new demands within Cavendish environment. Research has claimed that even those students who came without confidence in English language due to self-confidence they have been able to socialize with those who speak it better and this has quicken their language proficiency unlike their counterpart.

### **(iii) Gender, Age and Class**

Gender of the person was also an important factor in this paper. As women Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish were found with more and unique integration and belonging challenges as compared to male students from the same countries. Again intersectionality of factors such as gender, age and class was also an important point in this analysis as young female students were found with less challenges compared to older female students due to additional responsibilities as mothers and wives back home. Still this research claimed that students from well off families were able to integrate and acquire a sense of belonging than their counterparts. Though issue of intersectionality was an important point in this paper, it does not mean that it is a general conclusion to all Migrants and Refugees within Cavendish, evidence showed that sometimes male or relatively younger female students were facing integration and belonging difficulties while at Cavendish.

### **(iv) Students' prejudice against each other**

Research findings have claimed that Cavendish being an international University, students come from diverse cultural background with different way of behaviors as well as different interpretations of these behaviors. As a result, they start having prejudice against each other without putting into consideration their cultural diversity. In fact research finding claim that student's just need to acquire social and interactional skills in order to be able to effectively socialize within the cross cultural environment without forgetting to respect each other's true identity. This has a potential to promote their integration, acquiring a sense of belonging within Cavendish which will automatically improve on their academic performance, as claimed by this research.

### **(v) Wider institutional support for Refugee and Migrant students**

Research findings recognized the role that the institution should play in enabling Migrants and Refugees get integrated and belong within Cavendish University. Indeed researchers such as (Masinda 2014:93, Dykshoorn 2009:12, Ager and Strang 2008:166) among others also recognized the role of the institution as well

as that of the host community in promoting integration and belonging of new comers. For that case therefore this research recommends that Cavendish being one of the Universities in Uganda that enroll both Migrants and Refugees, should ensure that they create a favorable environment to facilitate effective integration. In fact, Thijs and Verkuyten (2014:3) argue that integration of Migrants and Refugees is not an automatic process but rather there are certain conditions that must be fulfilled by the institutions such as schools and teachers.

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