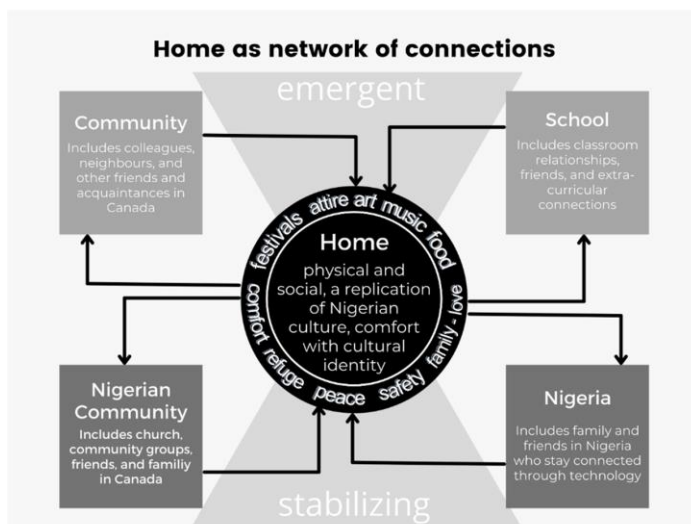


RESEARCH CONNECTION

Expanding meanings of home: A case study of Nigerian migrant families and their school-aged children

By Ayodeji Osiname, PhD



Why this research is important

African-born individuals in Canada comprised 13.4 percent of the total population in 2016 compared to 3.2 percent in 1971 (Statistics Canada, 2019). The growing presence of African immigrants, individually as teens or adult students, as well as the children of immigrants and refugees, justifies the increasing exploration of and attention to their needs. As such, facilitating positive experiences with regard to migration and home is of importance to the positive socio-emotional and

What you need to know

This qualitative case study facilitates the understanding of how Nigerian migrant children and their families within the Manitoba K-12 educational system articulate their ideas of home with regards to their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relations. Specifically, the research considers how these families negotiate and navigate the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences.

educational experiences of children, along with families, who move from one country to another.

How the research was conducted

The data for this study included interviews, observations and fieldnotes, and photovoice methodology with five Nigerian families and their school-aged children. The interviews and observations (although limited to what I could observe) were conducted via Zoom. The data were analyzed by hand, using open coding and interpretive comments to obtain the overall and unique experiences of the participants. During coding, data was arranged by segmenting sentences based in the actual language of the participants.

What the researcher found

The study underscored the human need for connection. Participants utilized technology to maintain connections to friends and family in the country of origin. They invested time and energy into connecting with other Nigerians living in the new environment. They utilized the stabilizing support they gained from Nigerians living in the diaspora and those who remained in Nigeria, to find the strength and confidence to contribute to their emerging relationships with people in their new community—at work, in school, and in their neighbourhoods. As such, for the Nigerian migrant children and families, home was conceptualized and articulated as a network of connections. The connections that the children and parents established within the home, the connections to their Nigerian roots, and members of their ethnic groups living in the diaspora, helped them to realize a sense of stability in their new home, Canada. Moreover, the emergent connections and relationships that the Nigerian families were able to realize within their schools, work, and community served to keep them grounded.

How this research can be used

This research is useful in assisting and supporting the adjustment and integration of migrant children and their families and their realization of a sense of home. This research study provides ways for schools and teachers to sponsor school events that involve migrant children and parents to build personal connections or relationships between and among schools and families to ensure that newly arrived immigrant children and their families are welcomed and supported. As well, this study offers an opportunity for school leaders to reflect on the migration experiences of African families and, as a result, to have a deeper understanding of how school programs can support successful transitions to life in Canada for African children and their families.

About the researcher

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