CHAPTER SIX

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Limitations

As is inherent to happen, no research endeavour is ever perfect or without room for improvement, current company included. Although limitations often link to the weaknesses of a study they also pave the way for future researchers to learn from these and to produce work in the future that is stronger and sounder as a result. The discussion to follow is on the limitations of the study, looking broadly at limitations pertaining to the sample and sampling as well as to methodological issues.

In terms of the sample the following were problematic: due to time constraints, the sample was neither randomly sampled nor representative of either the University population or the South African population. Within the sample all racial groups, except for the 'coloured' group were underrepresented. This was further compounded by the fact that the sample was drawn from one department, namely the psychology department and so there is a possibility of having sampled only one 'type' of opinion as a result. The sample was also small in comparison to other opinion/ attitude samples and so adds to the unrepresentativeness of the sample as well as its inability to be generalised.

Another important aspect of the sampling was the age of the participants. Although the range was from 17 years to 38 years, participants at the higher end of this range were a very small minority. On average students were 19 to 20 years of age. Acknowledging that the university presents students with on of the first opportunities to really 'mix' with people of other racial groups as well as different nationalities, the use of first year students and looking at intergroup contact is limited. By this it is meant that they have not been at the university long enough to have had prolonged contact with other groups. This

could be a reason why the results show limited contact of students with African Migrants although the other possibility being that these students avoid this contact. Whichever the case, it comes out as a possible limitation.

Another aspect in terms of the limited age range also pertains to maturity of students and knowledge of current affairs. Being a young sample, exposure to issues surrounding xenophobia, immigration and the possibility of discussing these issues may have been limited. As such many students may have been unsure about their own opinions or even unfamiliar with the subject matter.

Linking to the above mentioned limitations, the results showed that many participants chose the 'neutral' option in answering. There are many possible explanations for this. In its simplest, students maybe didn't have an opinion as thus chose to remain neutral. There is also the possibility that they didn't understand what was being asked and so didn't shed an opinion. The other which is also a methodological as well as individual issue is that of social desirability. The use of self-report measures has been constantly under scrutiny for self report bias in the form of social desirability. Although the research tried to cater for this by allowing all students to fill out the survey and then exclude non-South Africans responses in the analysis, given the sensitive nature of the research social desirability was inevitable.

In terms of the survey itself, questions were broad and limited in number. Again, this was in part due to time constraints. The time constraint was both I terms of time needed to complete the data collection but also the time needed for the students to complete the questionnaire. Giving students a very long questionnaire would have run the risk of them losing interest and increasing the possibility of the use of response sets to get through all

the questions. This would have possibly produced invalid and unreliable results which thus would have given a more inaccurate picture of student's attitudes. In terms of the broadness of questions again this links back to the time factor. If there was more time available, more questions would allow for more specific questions yielding a fuller picture of attitudes.

In terms of the scale used only three responses where provided. This was limiting in that it basically allowed for a yes. No or 'don't know' in terms of response. This may have been perceived as limiting and perhaps having used a 5-point likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, neutral/ don't know, disagree and strongly disagree) would have allowing for meeker answers such as 'agree' to be chosen instead of just having agree to chose from as an extreme. The scale also limited the analysis in that it didn't allow for statistical analysis. If a 5-point likert scale had been used the researcher would have been able to draw up correlations which may have been more descriptive and telling of the relationship between contact and attitudes as well as of the relationship between national identity and attitudes toward migrants and immigration.

Lastly, an alternative possibility for this research topic in terms of methodology could have been qualitative techniques but more specifically focus groups. A limitation of the survey method is that it may be superficial and does not allow for further probing or clarification. The reason focus groups could be more beneficial in terms of this topic is in that immigration does not affect people in isolation but rather affects people as a nation. Focus groups would allow for discussion around the topic while at the same time allow for the expression of attitudes as well as for the justifications of such attitudes. Gathering more information around why people hold the views they do would enrich our

understandings about attitudes and possible prevent incidences such as those of the xenophobic attacks.

6.2 Recommendations

Universities present a unique platform of interaction where people from many different contexts are brought together and co-exist. As such universities present a particularly important arena where the reduction of xenophobic attitudes can take place. It is important for universities to raise awareness about xenophobia. Awareness can centre around why people are coming into the country, what the actual impact is of people coming into the country as well as challenging some of the common held stereotypes about African migrants. Raising awareness and providing people with accurate and truthful information allows them to make choices based on this information rather than the often exaggerated information provided by the media and uninformed locals.

In addition to this universities should encourage activities that promote intergroup contact such as having cultural events and information sessions. This allows students to be exposed to people and cultures different from their own but also allows them to find common ground. These intergroup interactions will allow for the reduction of anxiety often felt in intergroup interactions (Allport, 1952) and thus may encourage more intimate interactions such as friendships.

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Letter Inviting Students To Participate In A Study Being Conducted At The University Of The Western Cape Around Student's Attitudes Toward African Migrants And Migration

Researcher: Guia Ritacco Psychology Masters 1
Department: Psychology

Dear Student,

I am undertaking to conduct a study around students' attitudes toward African migrants and immigration policy.

Participation involves completing a questionnaire that should take about 30 minutes. You are not required to put you name on the questionnaire and so responses cannot be identified. You are entitled to remove yourself from the process at any time, should you wish to do so, with no repercussions. You will also have access to the findings once the study is complete.

Your assistance in this regard would be mostly appreciated.

Yours in research
Guia Ritacco (student researcher)

APPENDIX B:

Letter Of Participant Consent

Research topic:

An exploratory study of attitudes toward African migrants and migration among a sample of students at the University of the Western Cape

Please read the following carefully and sign below:

I have been informed what the above-mentioned study is about and accept the invitation to participate. Furthermore, I understand that I am entitled to anonymity and that I may leave the process at any time, without repercussions, should I so wish.

Signature (participant)   **Signature (student researcher)**

INSTRUCTIONS:

Good day and thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. The questions look at your attitudes toward people from other counties as well as practices governing whether these people can come into South Africa.

Please answer all the questions honestly and to completion.

Select the one of the choices provided that best describes your attitude to that particular topic by placing a cross "X" over your choice.

The questionnaire should not take you more than 30 minutes. Pease do not write your name on the questionnaire.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Sex:
1 Male   2 Female

Race:
1 Black   2 Coloured   3 Indian   4 White   5. Other

Age:

Citizenship:
1 South African   2 Non-South African   3 South African Permanent resident

B. BEING A SOUTH AFRICAN

1. How important is being born in South Africa to being a South African
1 Important   2 Not Very Important   3 Not At All Important

2. How important is speaking an African Language to being a South African
1 Important   2 Not Very Important   3 Not At All Important

3. How important is it to supporting non-racialism to being a South African
1 Important   2 Not Very Important   3 Not At All Important

4. How important is supporting the Constitution of South Africa to being a South African
1 Important   2 Not Very Important   3 Not At All Important

5. How important is working and contributing to the economy of South Africa to being a South African
1 Important   2 Not Very Important   3 Not At All Important

C. ATTITUDES

6. African migrants create jobs for South Africans
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

7. African migrants commit most of the crimes in South Africa
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

8. African migrants use this country's welfare services
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

9. African migrants bring diseases to this country
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

10. South Africa should let anyone into South Africa who wants to enter
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

11. South Africa should strictly limit number of African migrants who can enter South Africa
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

12. South Africa is letting in too many African migrants into the country
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

13. South Africa should turn on the electric fence that surrounds part of the border
1 Support   2 Neutral   3 Oppose

14. African migrants should be required to carry identification at all times
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

15. South Africa should make It easier for African migrants to work here
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

16. All African migrants should be deported even if they are here legally
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

17. African migrants should be granted the Right to freedom of speech
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

18. African migrants living in South Africa should be granted the Right to vote
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

19. African migrants should be granted the Right to legal protection
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

20. African migrants should be granted the Right to Police protection and protection of property
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

21. African migrants should be granted the Right to social services
1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

D. CONTACT WITH AFRICAN MIGRANTS

22. I have regular contact with African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

23. There are African migrants living in my community

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

24. I know African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

25. I have friends who know African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

26. I have friends who are friends with African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

27. I have friends who are African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

28. I have family members who are African migrants

1 Agree   2 Neutral   3 Disagree

Thank you for your participation ☺