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It takes a village

Listening to parents

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It Takes a Village: Listening to Parents

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Abstract: The study was premised on the concern of the migrant African parents about their children's lack of aspiration for higher education after completing their secondary education in the Northern Territory (NT), Australia. There appears to be little understanding of, or confusion around, the different pathways available to higher education in Australia. The reports and anecdotes around African youths in the NT demonstrating antisocial behaviors, including, but not limited to drug offences, teen pregnancies and suicides prompted this research. These troubling behaviors have culminated in the death of two young boys in the African community in Darwin 2016 and another girl in 2019 in Kathrine. The study comprises of African parents who migrated to NT in Australia from different demographics in Africa. This study used a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to investigate African parents' perception of their child's post-secondary school aspiration. The outcome of this investigation revealed a lack of understanding of the NT Australian school systems and reporting strand on their children performance and the different pathways through which their children can access higher education in Australia. This study provided four recommendations to help African parents understand the NT Australian government policies and programs on education.

Keywords: education; aspiration; village; African parents; northern territory and demographics

1. Introduction

This paper presents the outcome of the first phase of a research study entitled 'It Takes a Village: Listening to the Village'. The study used the village narrative to explain the role of community in the development of African child as demonstrated by the African communities in the Northern Territory (NT). The communal commonalities in culture and identity that exist within the African demographics in the NT make everyone 'his brother's keeper'. This shared understanding necessitated the need for the study when the issue of lack of aspiration of African youths was raised in the community forum.

There are several studies in the area of educational aspiration, and very few were able to clearly resolve the concern of African parents about their children aspiration for higher education in the NT. For instance, Bu (2014) [1] position on educational aspiration was limited to the family configuration and the advantage that firstborn enjoys in accessing education. Sarker, Karim and Suffin (2017) [2] explored the gender inequalities in tertiary education caused by parental attitudes and their educational aspiration. Wilson (2016) [3] looked at the phenomenological perspective of educational aspiration of the Mexican immigrant to a new world where qualification for skills jobs opportunity is far beyond Year 12 certification. In Zhou, Li and Jordan (2019) [4]'s work, issue of parental interest for their children to study abroad was well discussed, but not related to the growing concern of a whole community on the issue of educational aspiration of their children.

Typically, in the literature exploration, the word educational intent, attainment, interest, motivation, ambition, expectation and others were interchangeably used to connote educational aspiration without

any clear definition of the terms [3]. Moreover, these studies were more ethically and rurally focused unlike 'it takes a village' that explored demographics of the participants to understand the reason for low aspiration among the youths in NT. In this study, educational aspiration means the desire for success in an educational field or gain a degree (www.wikia.org). Similarly, Fraser and Garg (2014) [5] defined educational aspiration as an educational goal that people set for themselves. These definitions justified why African parents are interested in their children having a university education, which also informed the reason why this study sees a parent as a major predictor of a child educational aspiration [6].

While there seems to be little empirical data regarding the statement of the African parents' notion of low aspiration, but there appears to be little understanding of, or confusion around, the different pathways available to higher education in Australia. This confusion guided the researchers to hypothesize that parental pressure to complete grade 12 and gain university entry could be an intense issue underpinning aspiration among African youths in the NT. The need to test the hypothesis and ameliorate issues that impact educational aspiration was imperative for this study. In addition, reports and anecdotes around African youths in the NT demonstrating antisocial behaviors, including, but not limited to drug offences, teen pregnancies and suicides prompted this research. These disreputable practices of African youths in the Darwin region and central Australia region attracted media attention in 2016 [7]. These troubling behaviors have culminated in the death of two young boys in the African community in Darwin 2016 and another girl in 2019 in Kathrine. It was unclear if these reactions were a response to family or education factors.

It was based on these reactions that the researchers took the first part of a traditional African proverb 'it takes a village: Listening to the village' to focus on the NT African community at a time when their youths "are faced with a myriad of both challenges and opportunities" [8]. In order to stimulate the notion of a village, the researchers spent considerable time negotiating and working with the African community of Northern Territory. This was achieved through a series of community meetings with the leaders of many groups across the African community, resulting in a complex, three-phase research proposal that was acceptable to all parties.

The NT could be regarded as more multi-culturally diverse than any other part of Australia. It is home to people of over 100 ethnic and cultural groups, including a small, but growing African community. Little is known about this community apart from a limited amount of official data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics [9]. For example, the ABS indicated that 564 people of Africa, consisting of people from the West, East, Central, North and South Africa live in greater Darwin area (MYANT 2012) [10]. The data also acknowledged that not only are they from a range of African nations, but their resettlement pathways have been quite different. Forshaw (2011) [11] reported that a small number of these settlers, particularly from West, South and East Africa. have gained visas under the Skilled Migration Stream (SMS). There are two difficulties in reporting these data. Firstly, geographic groupings are sometimes confusing. For example, The United Nations lists Sudan as being both an East African and a Central African nation. Secondly, these figures are several years old, and the size and shape of the population are in constant flux as Australia refocuses its humanitarian and migration intakes in response to global imperatives. In reality, very little is known about the NT African community.

Data from the 2011 census reported Sudan as the only country in Africa that gained Australia's humanitarian attention for resettlement in the NT [9]. This suggests that the first set of Africans to resettle in Darwin and its environs arrived in the NT on refugee or special humanitarian visas having fled unrest or war. While other African settlers may have entered on skilled migrant or family reunion visas from other African countries, such as Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Liberia and others. There is a dearth of literature on the migration pathways of other African countries in the Northern Territory. Coates, Skrbis and Western (2008) [12], for example, lament the relatively limited research on the aspirations and socioeconomic outcomes of African Australian migrants and their children. However, available documentation on Australian's humanitarian gestures reports on the resettlement needs or challenges, such as acculturation, language, job and health-related issues

facing refugees in Australia. For example, Iqbal, Joyce, Russo and Earnest (2012) [13] explored the resettlement of Afghan Hazara female adolescents in outer suburban Melbourne with an emphasis on health services. However, it has been difficult to shift the focus beyond challenges.

Responding to the educational needs of refugee or humanitarian migrants, Correa-Velez and Onsando (2009) [14] investigated the educational aspirations of Sudanese men (of varying ages) in Southern Queensland. At about the same time, Dooley (2009) [15] explored how schooling in Australia impacted the educational aspirations of eight adolescent African refugees enrolled in intensive English classes. Similarly, in Queensland, Clarke and Clarke (2010) [16] reported on the challenges of Sudanese higher education students in achieving their educational goals. Hatoss, O'Neill and Eacersall (2012) [17] research report the complexities between systemic, individual and community barriers on the earlier studies of the Sudanese high school students. These complexities are well illustrated in a report on the educational challenges of unaccompanied minor refugees attending university in the United Kingdom [18]. In the same vein, Lawson (2013) [19] account of an unaccompanied African refugee studying at an Australian university brings the complexities from the global to the local. Unfortunately, little or nothing is known or documented around challenges or educational aspirations of the NT African community. Hence, the study is designed to fill the literature gap on the issue of aspiration of African youth in the NT context.

2. Statement of the Problem

The common denominator among African communities in the NT is the communal spirit—a sense of belonging and brotherliness and value for education. Despite the level of alignment and interpersonal relationship in the community, the issue of low aspiration among African youth in the NT community is a serious concern [20,21]. The general commonality among the African countries is the premium or priority placed on education as the major unifying factor for a continent that hosts a large diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and languages [22]. African parents see higher education as the sole path to prosperity and good life, and the only weapon for breaking the shackle of perennial and generational poverty in the family and community.

The study sought to understand the deeper meaning of the general notion of African parents towards any youth that refuses to move straight to university, after the completion of grade as a failure. It sought to investigate if the statement of the African parents could be responsible for the antisocial behavior of African youth in the NT? To know if this labelling stigma could be responsible for the social vices, involvement in drug and crime-ridden regions where homes are badly kept and families are dysfunctional [23–25]. The under-representation of young people from the African community in higher education [26,27] underpin the motivation for this study. Hence, the study arose out of the growing concerns on the part of the leaders of the NT African community about the perceived lack of aspiration for higher education among their youths, particularly those youths from low socioeconomic status SES backgrounds. The concerns of the community were reflected in reports to government [28], and as a consequence, efforts to improve the educational outcome of these students represent "one of the enduring goals of Australian social policy" [26].

3. Research Questions

The overarching research question that guided this first phase of the study was to understand parental perception about their children's low aspiration for higher education.

(i.)　How important is higher education for African parents?

(ii.)　How knowledgeable are African parents about educational pathways through which their youth can access higher education?

The research questions guided the researchers to elicit information from African parents about the importance of education systems and issues around several pathways through which their children

could access higher education. The questions also enabled the researchers to understand individual African parent's educational aspiration as well.

4. Aims and Objectives

There are pockets of persistent socially disadvantaged communities in Australia. Communities in these pockets are caught in a downward spiral of low school attainment, possibly resulting in "high unemployment, poor health, high imprisonment rates, child abuse and low social cohesion" [29]. Though there is a lack of literature to support this claim, however, a few available literatures seem to categorized African community in the NT as a community where children and young people "have lower rates of Year 12 completion" [26] and are persistently "underrepresented in higher education [27] (p. 3). The first phase of this study was to investigate if African parents' perception of post-secondary school education and their understanding of the pathways through which their children can access tertiary education in the NT.

5. Theoretical Framework

5.1. Value Theory—Mark Schroeder (2008)

Value theory provided the framework to understand what education meant to African parents. The theory of value is universally acclaimed to be a branch of philosophy otherwise known as axiology. According to Schroeder (2008) [30], the concept of value has its roots in ancient philosophy where it is called axiology. Ancient philosophers used it to understand good and evil and the concept of "the good". Today, much of value theory aspires to the scientifically empirical, recording of what people value and attempts to understand why they value it in the context of psychology, sociology, and economics [31,32].

In the philosophical term, axiology is subdivided into three distinct areas, namely, ethics, aesthetics and moral tradition. Philosophers have been exploring these areas to discuss the overarching purpose of value placed on education from both intrinsic and extinctic perspectives as relates human and social development. According to Farayola (2007) [33], the concept of value helps to channel all the individual's potentialities—intellectual, moral, physical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual—for a good life. The interpretation of a narrative of a good life through education situate within the concept of moral good which usually leads to praise or blame depends on the perspective of African youths towards education. The general understanding of moral value guided the researchers in the choice of research design to collect data on the issue of low aspiration for higher education among African youths. The research questions that guided the study provided the opportunity to listen to the divergent complaints and frustrations of parents on the one hand, and blame trading between the youths and the elders in the community on the other hand during the interview stage. The understanding from the data collection assisted the researchers to understand the premium placed on education by African parents as the only way to prosperity and good life.

5.2. Olav Nygard (2017) Immigrant Optimism

Immigrant optimism is a theory that provides a different perspective on the issue of educational aspiration as it relates to immigrant educational achievement. This theory draws on the assumption that the migration process of the immigrant is positively screwed to favour some selected groups of people who are willing to leave their country of origin to settle in another country with the aim of achieving social, economic improvement [34]. According to Nygard (2017) [35], the desire of immigrant to settle in another country based on economic reason presents another trajectory in understanding educational aspiration. This trajectory is affected by factors, such as environment, socio-cultural background, peer influence and educational level of the parent [36–38]. This theory sees strong educational aspiration of immigrant children as a way of compensating for discrimination of the disadvantaged or minority ethnic groups in the new home [39–41]. Inequality, social class, immigrant

occupation is among other factors advocated by the theorists in this school of thoughts impacting on the educational aspiration of immigrant children. The overarching understanding of the theory is premised on the fact that mobility of immigrants impacts on educational aspirations of their children.

5.3. Value Theory and Immigrant Optimism: A Juxtapose

The two theories provided a divergent viewpoint to the concept of aspiration, which is the focus of this study. Both theories emphasize the role of the parent in the educational achievement of their children. Thus, educational aspiration connotes high performance in academic engagement [5,35,36]. Unlike immigrant optimism that looked at some inherent factors associated with mobility, such as discrimination, social class, culture, inequality and socio background of an immigrant in deconstructing educational aspiration of children. Value theory focuses on the importance of higher education to an African parent irrespective of their social orientation or class. To both educated and uneducated African parents, education has an intrinsic value that can help their youths to prepare for the roles and responsibilities that they should take on when they reach maturity [31,42]. Contrary to the immigrant optimism theory that viewed immigrant mobility from the vintage of economic improvement, the demographics and mobility of the participants in this study were majority, due to political instability and other factors beyond socio-economic imperative.

6. Research Methods

Research method denotes the approach through which an investigation into a matter is carried out or a way of providing a solution or solving a problem [31,43]). This study used a qualitative approach with a demographic table to show the spread of participants in collecting data and report the data in a precise and concise manner. The qualitative approach was adapted to draw interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems articulated in the study. It also aligned with the position of Creswell 2015 [44] as an appropriate approach to explaining an intervention in a more in-depth analysis. In the study, the demographic questions were designed to elicit information on a range of issues that have to do with African parent's immigration status in Australia. On the other hand, the semi-structured interview was designed to provide qualitative information on their concern about their children's lack of aspiration for educational engagement in the NT. The interview question aimed to start with the adult's own experiences (life and education) and then allowed time to reflect on their child's. This was designed to give some indication of the adult's aspirations for their child and the joys or frustrations that arise as the parent/carer of a high school student in NT.

6.1. Data Collection

The study aligns with the case study research because it was based on an issue of concern raised by a community with shared cultural affinity and a strong level of fidelity. The study became imperative out of the growing concern of African parents about their children's lack of aspiration for higher education. The data for the study was collected through semi-structured interviews, including demographic questions that were later coded and analyzed. As mentioned in the above session, the interview question aimed to start with the adult's own experiences (life and education) and then allowed time to reflect on their child's. This was designed to give some indication of the adult's aspirations for their child and the joys or frustrations that arise as the parent/carer of a high school student in NT.

6.2. Selection of Participants

The ten participants were community leaders drawn from each of the sub-African communities represented in the NT through flyers, and a letter of invitation to the community forum or platform (see Table 1). There was no other condition associated with the selection of the participants for the study. The conversational, semi-structured interviews encouraged participants to talk about their

perceived notion of low aspiration of their children for higher education [45] (p. 140). Participation was voluntary, and participants were aware that they could pull out at any time without prejudice. There were no risks associated with this research other than inconvenience related to time committed. Interestingly, the interview (face to face) lasting approximately between 45 and 60 min at the time and place of the participants choice. The semi-structured interviews afforded the participants the opportunity to express their views of their history, approaches, and cultural identity with a sense of pride and confidence without any sense of intimidation or fear (p. 141). This understanding aligns with the position of Flick 2014 [46] and Rubin and Rubin 2012 [47] that interviews allow interviewees to answer questions freely.

Table 1. Demographics of participants.

Demographic Data /Country	Number of Participant	% of Participant	Migration Pathways	Language	Parental Education
Congo	3	30%	Refugee/Humanltaiian	French	Year 12
Liberia	2	20%	Spouse Visa	Creole	Decree
Nigeria	2	20%	Skilled Visa	Yoruba/Creole	Degree
Sierra Leone	1	10 %	Skilled Visa	Creole/French	Decree
South Sudan	1	10 %	Refusee/Humanltaiian	Arablc/French	Year 12
Senesal	1	10 %	Refusee/Humanltaiian	French	Year 12
Total	10				

6.3. Data Analysis and Findings

The data collected were analyzed to understand the concern of African parents on the low aspiration of youths towards higher education in the Northern Territory. The semi-structured interview was digitally recorded and transcribed for analysis through a process of coding and reducing the data to a theme and finally representing the data in a discussion [45]. More interesting was that the data represented in the discussion was read and re-read in a way that the researchers became familiar with the data and could recognize the general key issues as they began to emerge [43]. The research team used a descriptive analysis for the demographic data presented in frequencies and percentages (Table 1).

The descriptive analysis used for the data was based on the responses elicited from the participants on the demographic questions. From the analyzed data, the country of origins of the participants affirmed the position of the researchers on the spread of participants from different countries in Africa. For instance, 30% of the respondents were from Congo, 20% were from Liberia and Nigeria. 10% were from South Sudan, Sierra Leone and Senegal. As reported in the body of literature, the data analyzed ascertained the different migration pathways through which the participants arrived in Australia. As explained in Table 1, 60% of the respondents arrived in Australia on a humanitarian visa, 30% through skilled migration and 10% came to Australia through a spouse visa. All respondents have English as their second language. Among the first language spoken by respondents, French was the most spoken 40% followed by Creole 30%, Yoruba 20% and Arabic 10%. The respondents expressed satisfaction with the educational system in Australia, but they seem to have little or no understanding of the assessment modes used in assessing their children outside their conventional understanding of examination that they were familiar with back home. From the analyzed demographic data, 60% of the participants had a minimum of university degree while 40% only completed year 12 equivalent before migrating to Australia.

6.3.1. Interview Data

Apart from the analyzed demographic data, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the 10 participants to elicit information about their concern for their children's educational aspiration. The key issues that emerged from the analyzed interview data are presented below:

6.3.2. The New Home and Reflection on Australian Educational System

The general reflection from the participants was that Australia had become their new home. As stated in the demographic data, 60% of the respondents mentioned war, political unrest, insecurity and genocide as reasons for seeking asylum in Australia. In fact, political instability, civil unrest has been an issue since 1960, after more than three decades of independence in many Sub-Saharan African countries [48,49]. The scourge of unrest in the developing countries has dramatically increased the numbers of migrants seeking refuge, and which has continued to impact on the developed nations. According to Sulaiman (2019) [50], the world is currently facing the highest levels of displacement ever in history, with an unprecedented 65.3 million people forced from their homes by war, internal conflicts, drought or poor economies

The interesting part of the story is that Australia, as a nation, plays a strong role through their refugee and resettlement humanitarian program. Hugo (2010) [51] and Reiner (2010) [52] suggest that Australia's settlement strategies are one of the best in the world in terms of promoting inclusion. Participants in this study amplified this position. The reflection of one of the participants captures the act of benevolence of Australians towards the refugees:

> Specifically ... I still remember when we came here... the level of support I received is something I cannot forget ... I met people that I referred to as good Samaritans. For instance, the first microwave I used here was bought for me by an Australian that I didn't know before ... (Participant 4)

The researchers found the above submission interesting because the majority of literature in the area of humanitarian entrants to developed nations are always around barriers and challenges of integration, including discrimination, ethnicity, social isolation, associated with their appearance, and cultural difference, that comes with culture shock [53]. The overarching understanding from the analyzed interview data was that Australia had become a home to the majority of African migrants irrespective of the pathways through which they came to the country, and there is no urgency for their return anytime soon.

It was evident from the analyzed data was that education is important to African parents irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. To an average African parent, education is the only enduring legacy bequeathed by the colonial powers that symbolizes the gateway to prosperity or the notion of a good life [22]. This narrative must have accounted for the zeal with which Africans embrace education as a potent instrument for the socio-economic and political transformation of the African continent. According to Crabtree 2014 [54], more than four in 10 Africans surveyed chose education when asked what the most valuable pathway could be to succeed in life. Although many believe family and social connections (30%), intelligence (17%), and a strong work ethic (12%) are also valuable, Africans clearly view education as the most important ingredient for success. The position of African parents in the NT was not outside the context of the above submission. However, what constitutes a good education and how to achieve it, was not well articulated in their responses. What resonated with the researchers about their submission was the concern for their children in high school to develop the aspiration for tertiary education. This understanding guided the researchers to ask the participants for their views on the NT variant of the Australian system of education and if the Australian education system can help their children's aspiration for higher education.

The participants reflected that the Australian education system is well structured to help any African children achieve their aspiration. This assertion reaffirmed the position of African parents about educational offerings in Australia, including NT. However, there were views about how their children are assessed for their progression through stages of their studies in high schools. This question was not unexpected by the researchers because African parents in the NT consider examination as the only way to assess students' progress in school. Thus, coming into an educational system that places more emphasis on classroom assessment, assignments and homework seem contrary to their

experience. The lack of understanding of the NT Australian system of education and school operations is one key area that came through in the study.

> ... there are a lot changes to educational understanding in this country ... the system gives more freedom to students which is against the culture of how we brings up our kids. We believe that culture is part of learning system ... but here everything is made easy. In Africa, students learning in a strict system and tested through examination to move from one class to another ... here there's nothing like exam to move up in classes ... (Participants 2 and 10)

The reflection from participants 2 and 10 captured the viewpoints of many of the participants in the study. This explains that African parents are yet to understand how schools in Australia measure achievement standards and classroom progression of both Australian and non-Australian students in schools. Outside the above key findings, there was a general agreement regarding the parental expectation that their children must have a university education.

> We have our kids in Darwin High School and Casuarina Senior College ... I wouldn't want to see our kids ... just finishing high school working...around Casuarina KFC or McDonalds after Year 12 ... they should be motivated to enroll into a honor degree and well prepared for life challenges ... (Participant 2)

6.3.3. Low Aspiration and Pathways

The data collected on the research questions that guided the study provided clarity on what African parents referred to as low aspiration and pathways to higher education in Australia. The participants' interpretation of low aspiration was based on the attitude of their children to school matters that they believe might impact on their academic performance. The view of one of the participants summarized the position of other participants' idea of low aspiration:

> ... you know Australian policy allow school kids to work from age 14. The problem is our kids are more interested in making money and fashion than studying. This is a serious issue in Africa family now ... some of our kids have left home and seek refuge from government while some have call police on their fathers for disturbing them to go to school ... it is that serious ... (Participant, 4)

> ... On this issue of education I have had cause to settle issues between parents and their children ... I can count about seven families that I talked to just to allow the kids to do whatever they think is right for them ... the issue is about studies while the kids prefer to work and make money than going further in their education ... it's a big issue in the community at the moment... (Participant, 9)

The reflections of P4 and P9 clarified the African parent meaning of low aspiration. This interpretation re-echoed the value that African parent placed on the education of their children. However, the participants' response to the question on knowledge of pathways to access higher education demonstrated their limited knowledge of how their children could access university education.

> ... I know that Year 11 and 12 is important to the success of children. It's in Year 12 that students write their exams and their scores determine if they will go to university or not ... In my situation my boy didn't do well in his ATAR [Australian Tertiary Admission Rank] exam and he's not even interested in discussing about further studies. He just busy doing disability work ... what a disappointment ... (Participant, 7)

> ... I know any other way of getting my two girls to university. Why do I have to be thinking of alternative ways for them when they had the opportunity to do well in their Year 12 but refused to be serious ... instead they are focusing on money they are getting from aged care ... I have left them to do whatever they like ... (Participant, 5)

The above data captured the general understanding of the participants on the issue of academic pathways to higher education. The responses were insightful and deepened understanding of the two research questions in this study.

7. Discussion

The overarching understanding from the analyzed data was that tertiary education is important to African parents in the NT, Australia, but how to get the children motivated to access the opportunity was an issue of concern. The value placed on education by African parents was demonstrated in their responses to the research questions and justified the relevance of value theory that guided the study [30]. Through the analyzed data, it was evident that the African proverb of a village shows that higher education is not an option, but a must for the African child because the expectations are for the child to be the best at everything. The intrinsic value of education was well emphasized in the responses of the participants [31,42]. The intrinsic value was interpreted to the mean the opportunity that higher education offers: A good job, better salaries and lifestyle. It also includes the aims of supporting their family and parental recognition of self-worth in the community. African parents take pride in children in high profile occupations, such as medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, pilots. That is why according to the analyzed data, African parents see the need for higher education as a platform for their children to gain the necessary recognition for political appointment from their home country to provide humanitarian services and rebuild the land of their birth. The African parent's intention for higher education aligns with the position of Dewey [42] that through education, society can formulate its own purpose, can organize its own means and resources and shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move. From the foregoing, the common characteristic of African parents is the desire for and value of education. The analyzed data affirmed the African parents idea of education that lies with the concept of man as the greatest value in all of the created reality, and the overriding purpose of education is 'the making of persons' and 'to help a child attain his full formation or his completeness' [31,55]. Thus, education is regarded as the only platform through which the individual's potentialities could be realized. Africans consider education as the most important element for success [54].

The importance of education to an African parent cannot be over-emphasized as stated in the analyzed data. However, what came through to the researchers in the study was that African parents lack an understanding of achievement standards used for reporting performance and progress of students through their stages in high schools. The testing through stages of schooling to demonstrate educational excellence or performance still much as an issue with the African parent in developed countries [22]. This narrow perspective to determine educational aspiration, seems to give credence to the work of [39–41] as a way of compensating for discrimination of the disadvantaged or minority ethnic groups in the new home. It also explains the classical mindset of African parents towards their children education. As acknowledged in the methodology section, the majority of the participants has a university degree, but the reflection on their children assessment and report strand did not reflect their knowledge of the educational system as expected. Thus, parental education, to an extent might not be a contributing factor to the concept of aspiration of their children as some of the immigrant optimisms scholars might want to believe [36–38]. From the analyzed data, the traditional African culture of parenting was obvious, a situation where parent decision without any consideration for children to voice their opinion or interest on issues that has to do with their education or future engagement. The researchers see this as one of the potentials that could be responsible for the low aspiration of their children towards education though not reported in the data.

The second research question revealed that African parents had little or no knowledge of the different pathways through which their children could access tertiary education after completing high school. As stated in the data, the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is the final examination for Year 12 students, and it determines the student's entry into university (NCET 2019 [56]). It is true that this examination is used to determine a student's choices after school and for some their future

too, but there are other pathways through which a student that did not do well in the examination can receive mileage on for their university education. The Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP) is one of the several pathways through which children with low performance in ATAR can access university education. Universities across states and territories in Australia offer this mode of study to students (CDU and TEP 2020 [57]). In addition, it depends on the preferences of students, especially those who are keen to study for their degree through apprenticeship training, could achieve that aspiration through the Technical and Further Education (TAFE). This educational agency is also available in Australia, but these pathways are not well known to the participants. The findings from the analyzed data upheld the research questions that guided the study elicited the needed information which informed the recommendation provided in the study.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

As stated above, the study was an outcome of the first phase of the research study designed to investigate the parental notion of low aspiration of African youths for higher education in the NT. The theoretical framework explored for the study guided the researchers in understanding how education has been valued by African parents in the NT. As seen in the analyzed data, African parents indeed value education and consider it as the most important platform to success. The study has unveiled that the challenge of lack of knowledge of several pathways through African parents can guide their children in accessing education. This study has provided a new direction of recommendations explicated below to guide parents in understanding Australian education in all entireties.

1. The researchers are to organize an African community forum every six months to educate African parents in the NT on Australian school systems and its operations, including discussion around the achievement standards used in measuring the performance of their children's progression through classes in high schools.
2. The researchers are to facilitate collaboration with the tertiary institutions or providers in the NT to explain the pathways through which African parents can guide their children to access tertiary education.
3. The researchers would be serving as gatekeepers or facilitators and change agents for transcending the mindset of the African community in the NT, towards a better understanding of government policy initiatives around community engagement and possible opportunities for their children in the area of tertiary education.
4. The researchers would start an online and print newspaper for the African community in two major languages—vernacular (creole) and English. The two languages are widely spoken among both literate and illiterate African parents in the NT, Australia. This idea is to ensure that African parents are well informed about schools and other educational opportunities that are available to their children in the NT.

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