

THE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' COLLABORATION ON
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN THE COLLEGE OF CAREER AND
TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN A CITY IN THE NORTH-CENTRAL UNITED STATES:
A CASE STUDY

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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Abstract

This intrinsic case study aimed to understand how the external stakeholders' (ESs) collaboration impacts international students' enrollment in the College of Career and Technical Education (CCTE) in the North Central United States. The stakeholder theory guided this qualitative case study, based on the philosophical assumption expressed in the ontological assumption taken from the social constructivism paradigm (Vygotsky, 1916). The central research question was: How do the collaboration of the external stakeholders of the college of career and technical education, the alums (international students), and their local community leaders impact new students' enrollment? The objective was to understand this phenomenon and analyze previous research findings in the literature review before finding how the collaboration among the CCTE's ESs affects new international students' enrollment. Twelve participants, including 10 CCTE alums and two community leaders were selected for this study through the snowball technique or chain sampling procedures. I developed the research questions to elicit ESs' descriptions of their collaboration and to discover the impact on international students' enrollment in the CCTE. I used three data collection methods: the reflexive journal for seven participants, two participants for a focus group meeting, and three participants for individual interviews; to strengthen the triangulation required for the scientific viability of the qualitative research. I implemented the data analysis spiral technique, along with NVivo software. The findings suggested that active collaboration occurred between alums from the same field of study, advising was the only support for the new students, and nursing, IT, and auto mechanics alums influenced the new international students' enrollment.

Keywords: alum, college of career and technical education, collaboration, community, leader, enrollment, stakeholder.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my village, Ikumbana, located 25 kilometers from Bukavu, the headquarters of South Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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I express my appreciation to:

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I would also like to thank Dr. Kenneth Adam Musungu who positively responded to my call during my research in the South Sudanese community in a city in the North Central United States, as well as all those who participated in this research. The war broke out while I completed my second university degree in Management. Many people were killed in Bukavu, the headquarters of South Kivu's province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I became a refugee in Kenya, not knowing where I should go. Eventually, I came to the U.S., and subsequently survived a very serious car accident in North Dakota with injuries to my clavicle and spine with which I am still struggling. I thank God for His protection and healing.

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List of Abbreviations

Agricultural Ambassador (AgAmbassador)

College of Career and Technical Education (CCTE)

Community Leadership Development (CLD)

Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)

External Stakeholder (ES)

Internal Stakeholder (IS)

Regional Training Centers (RTCs)

South Sudanese Community (SSC)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The educational institution is involved in developing the necessary strategy to maintain and reinforce the ability to manage the stakeholders' relationships. The stakeholders provide support through their frequent involvement in the different activities that influence the impact on the social and economic development of the community. The support provided by the educational institution to the stakeholders' collaboration reflects the importance of their involvement in building a vital stakeholders' network resulting in positive and valuable services to the community (Kettunen, 2015). The internal stakeholders (ISs) and external stakeholders (ESs) play an essential role in developing a strategy to maintain the viability of the college of career and technical education (CCTE). This intrinsic case study explored the complex phenomenon of the impact of the collaboration of the ESs of the CCTE from the experiences of the CCTE alums who studied in Fargo, North Dakota, and Moorhead, the nearest city in Minnesota. The particularity and complexity of this intrinsic case study is an analysis of stakeholders at the higher education institution (HEI) where the study took place. The key to case identification is bounded and described within specific parameters (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This qualitative case study focused on the impact of collaboration among the CCTE ESs: the alums and the South Sudanese community (SSC) leaders in the North Central United States. This chapter presents details of the background of the research problem. Furthermore, the chapter explains the issue, the relation of the problem to the researcher, the problem and purpose statements, and the study's significance. Finally, the chapter includes the research questions, definitions of terms used, and a summary.

Background

The South Sudanese community members came from the new African country, separated from the Republic of Sudan, Africa's largest country in the southeast of Africa. Drought, famine, and war-ravaged this country, forcing hundreds of millions of people to flee to foreign countries. In January 2005, the Khartoum government and the rebels signed the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA), ending the fighting and granting the southern region autonomy. They organized the referendum held in 2011, from which this southern region proclaimed its independence and became the newest African country of South Sudan (Dagne, 2011). South Sudanese continually migrated to the U.S., Australia, England, and other countries. They live separate lives in a city in the North Central United States; however, they frequently meet to discuss their everyday lives. The community leaders address the problems that impact community members' social, health, education, and economic lives and encourage their participation in the solution-finding and implementation strategy for living in dignity. The declining enrollment in colleges of career and technical education (CCTE) and the financial restraints caused the closure of these institutions across the U.S. and the world (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017).

According to Fletcher and Gordon (2017), higher education institutions (HEIs) face a serious challenge of declining student enrollment. Students graduating from high school have many choices such as vocational schools, technical and community colleges, employment, labor organizations, industry groups, regional training centers, adult workforce education centers, detention centers, and prisons that may provide postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) or are linked with different organizations that provide specialized knowledge and skills acquisition (Dortch, 2014). These organizations also may provide short-term practical programs

to take advantage of the employment opportunities offered by the companies and different organizations within that specific environment. Researchers have suggested various solutions to address declining enrollment in HEIs and CCTEs. For example, Mata-López and Tobón (2019) presented a proactive stakeholder orientation to improve performance and reputation, with the goal of sharing the positive impact of these institutions on the local and national levels to promote internal sustainable development. The network density would reinforce stakeholders' engagement and performance by increasing participation (Vargas et al., 2019). Boesso and Kumar (2016) found that even though researchers have examined how organization-level phenomena guide managerial thinking and decision-making concerning stakeholder relationships, a gap exists in empirical research on this critical topic. Researchers have suggested various solutions to address declining enrollment in CCTEs, specifically targeting stakeholders' collaboration, including initiating various activities, such as sensitization talks, professional fairs, workshops, programmed visits, and advertising on social networks to reinforce the communication and cooperation among the stakeholders (Mata-López & Tobón, 2019). A gap exists in the literature that specifically defines the HEI's external stakeholders and examines their collaboration's impact on international students' enrollment in the CCTE.

Decreases in financial support, geographical distance, employability, and socioeconomics impact enrollment in the CCTE (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017; Gauthier, 2018; White & Lee, 2019). With the development of technology, application for industrial production, skills, and experience remains a central demand for employment. Skills and expertise suggest knowledge that enables any individual to apply for a job and expect a good salary. This status change in abilities and experience affects participation in social capital. Studies on stakeholder relationships suggest the need to develop internal and external collaboration among stakeholders to achieve the

educational skills and knowledge needed for successful employment (Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2018). Stakeholders, both internal and external (see Figure 1), can create and maintain three dimensions of cognition, relationships, and structures. This would include building good alum relationships, which are vital to higher education institutions for encouraging and supporting their activities by their graduates (Luo et al., 2016). This study explored the impact of ESs collaboration that the CCTE leaders could reinforce to enhance positive relationships with the individuals, groups, and organizations having a stake in the CCTE, including international students. The concept of stakeholders strengthening educational institutions is attracting the attention of CCTE administrators.

Historical Context

Vocational education started officially in 1802 with the Factory Act in England, which required instruction and limited individual labor time (Gordon & Schultz, 2020). Before official vocational education, observation was essential for preparation for different productive occupations. Apprenticeships also helped students to progress in business, agriculture, mechanics, or engineering. Congressional decisions ensured the development of vocational education in the United States. The Morrill Acts of 1862 allowed land grants to create educational institutions. The Carl Dewey Perkins Vocational Education and Applied Technology Act of 1984 was the first to authorize federal funding for vocational education programs. They were introduced to CTE and took tertiary education nationwide in 2006 (Gordon & Schultz, 2020). An essential strategy employed to influence enrollment in the CCTE was through student engagement as agricultural ambassadors, called AgAmbassadors (Beyl et al., 2016). The AgAmbassadors program in the college of agriculture involved student recruitment into various areas of agriculture via peer recruiters at college fairs and ending with

agriculture campus tours with a professor's presentation of the advantages offered by the college (Beyl et al., 2016).

The U.S. Department of Education developed and divided the CTE program of study into 10 essential elements: legislation and policies, partnerships, professional development, accountability and evaluation systems, college and career readiness standards, course sequence, credit transfer agreements, guidance counseling, and academic advisement, teaching and learning strategies, and technical skills assessments (Gordon & Schultz, 2020). In addition to recruitment strategies, another enrollment strategy includes having science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) alums of the CCTE support students with financial aid, which boosts enrollment and student attendance, which in turn increases their persistence in their chosen field of training (Krehbiel & Piper, 2017). The current study added a new approach to increasing enrollment in the CCTE by involving ESs' collaboration and considering their active participation to reinforce local learning programs. The CCTE presents a sustainable solution for students from an immigration background by encouraging them to complete the technical training based on a holistic, inclusive, and collaborative strategy to address low-income stakeholders and the residents' involvement (Majee et al., 2018).

Social Context

Most of the South Sudanese living in a city in the North Central United States were immigrants from the new country of South Sudan. Others moved from different U.S. states, wishing to join their brothers and sisters. After graduation, the former South Sudanese students remained members of the alum community organization from the CCTE and interacted with other stakeholders and partners. CTE reduces unemployment and reinforces economic and social development (Dortch, 2014). South Sudanese families were attracted by the economic

and social improvement of their community members who had graduated from a CCTE because they were able to find technical jobs or prestigious employment despite problematic learning conditions due to different factors, such as passing difficult STEM courses and obtaining scholarships. HEIs face multiple challenges, including leadership and funding, adding to the CCTE programs, and declining enrollment, which started with the reduction of CCTE funding (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). Factors affecting student enrollment include geographical distance (White & Lee, 2019), employability, family educational and socioeconomic background, and failure to register in the university (Gauthier, 2018). CCTEs may be located far from many South Sudanese candidates' living areas, making transportation a challenge, despite their desire to develop their technical skills. Collaboration with community leaders may produce an intermediate solution to increase CCTE student attendance.

The North Central United States is a fast-growing region with thousands of immigrants from Africa, America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. Young immigrant students are looking for a successful example to follow to realize their American dream. In the North Central United States, the local South Sudanese community frequently organizes their community leaders' elections, appointments, or designation to help community members solve problems related to their living situations, including social, economic, health, education, job, and transportation. Likewise, the SSC leaders could help address issues that plague the CCTE (Cleveland & Cleveland, 2018). Stakeholders from SSC could become involved in building a sustainable environment to support the function of the CCTE by inviting their community members to join the CCTE (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). An essential advantage of the current study lies in the CCTE alums' collaboration. I selected alums and members of the same community and benefited from collaborating with their community leaders, obtaining employment information

and valuable support, morally, financially, and materially, for their family members than others who were not alums. These alums remained an excellent example of the CCTE's ESs through their successful careers that encouraged new international students. From their frequent visits or interactions with the CCTE alums, new students learned about the advantages of enrolling in the CCTE. They were granted an opportunity to prepare for their professional life, reinforcing their decision to acquire more knowledge and skills in the selected field of study. SSC members came to the United States without sufficient educational background, fleeing the war in South Sudan. Following an education in the U.S., they were provided the technical education that led to direct employment after their training at the CCTE.

SSC members in a city in the North Central United States succeeded in keeping some of their cultural values and customs, thus guiding their actions and responsibilities toward the younger generation. Unity and activity were critical challenges they faced in this fast-changing society; a new world is driven by technological development. However, their goal was to become successful through hard work, family support, and education for their children. Community events brought them together and reinforced their belief and trust in working to achieve a common goal for a better life under a chosen leadership that met a certain tacit percentage of everyone's confidence and trust.

Theoretical Context

Following the impact of technology development on the national economy, different forms of training have emerged for new students in the North Central United States area. The South Sudanese candidates registered for the CCTE to become more comfortable with college transition for employment. Student enrollment encompasses different processes, including the study area, the quality of services offered, and the opportunity to develop interpersonal

relationships among the CCTE stakeholders (Ulewicz, 2017). The current study focused on the collaboration among the ESs of the CCTE, the alums, and the SSC leaders in a city in the North Central United States, where these alums lived with their families. CCTE alums (see Figure 1) have had the chance to improve their lives through the training they received. These institutions face challenges due to government funding reductions that affect their performance in successfully realizing their goals in terms of human resource reinforcement, technology acquisition, training practices, and student support, all of which contribute to the decline in new student enrollment (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). The current study added to the existing knowledge about the collaboration among the CCTE's ESs, which remains among the activities defining its strategic plan (Vargas et al., 2019). New international students need support from the faculty, career counselors, parents, and friends who had experience, including the alums and social factors, to promote enrollment in the CCTE (Xing et al., 2019). The theory framing this study was the stakeholder theory developed by Freeman in 1984, which stipulates that a stakeholder is "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (p. 46). Essentially, the stakeholder theory suggests that we can deal effectively with the problem of value creation and trade, ethics of capitalism, and the managerial mindset, if we consider the individual or the group who can affect or is affected by the business or organization (Parmar et al., 2010). Stakeholder theory relates to this study precisely because it refers to organizational management and ethics and focuses on the sense of value in workplace relationships, when specifically, this applies to the collaboration of the CCTE ESs, alums, and the community leaders in the SSC (Parmar et al., 2010). Researchers have relied on this theory to identify different groups related to HEIs, the internal and external stakeholders, their collaboration, and the impact of public funding on strategic management,

with a negative influence from budget cuts (De la Torre, 2019; Kettunen, 2015; Mampaey, 2017)

I applied the stakeholder theory to this study to deeply understand the impact of ESs' collaboration among the SSC leaders and the alums of the CCTE. Students' professional futures may continue by the qualifications demanded by the job market or by the connections between the HEIs and the job market, making HEI stakeholder engagement a critical factor in students' professional success (Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2018). Stakeholders play an essential role in developing the quality assurance of the HEIs to attract new students through the quality of education and other services offered to society (Ulewicz, 2017). The graduate faces the employment challenge of obtaining trusted information about job opportunities from the university or college. To address this challenge, community leaders can help monitor employment information about new vacancies in various companies for available positions. The alums obtained this information through an organized connection with the community leaders from their regular communication.

The involvement of the CCTE in strengthening the collaboration among the ESs could support the participation of more individuals and groups (see Figure 1) in developing an enrollment strategy. A proactive stakeholder orientation would represent an administrative attempt to understand and fulfill the needs for participation, collaboration, and partnership of ESs (Alarcón-del-Amo et al., 2016). The ESs' collaboration provides a way to maintain connections with every individual, group, or organization participating in different activities, whether inside or outside the CCTE. Internal and external stakeholders should work together toward the institution's promotion and development while reinforcing their individual or organizational objectives. The HEIs should consider providing valuable field knowledge, and

support from the community service alums would be valuable in developing students' social and civic skills. The students, as community members, should take advantage of the CCTE alum experiences and their relationships with community members in order to face CCTE enrollment challenges. As ESs, active students improve their learning and training through the CCTE program of study by providing feedback to the academic staff through regular or occasional assessments (Ricci et al., 2018).

When students graduate, the next step is to join a group of people who interact, support each other, share experiences or characteristics, and share a sense of belonging in the same physical proximity (Cobigo et al., 2016). ESs, being members of the local community, provide essential information to support the strategic management of the CCTE. ESs also keep improving the CCTE's participation in community development, resulting from the stakeholders' collaboration, ISs, and ESs. Similar studies grounded in the stakeholder theory have been conducted. For example, Bischoff et al. (2017) studied stakeholder collaboration in the entrepreneurship education of 20 European HEIs, using cross-case analysis, and found that these institutions considered the importance of stakeholder collaboration. Oonk et al. (2016) studied supporting student-stakeholder collaboration in the multistakeholder regional learning environment and the effects on student learning. They implemented a quasi-experimental mixed-methods pre and posttest intervention study to investigate the impact of explicit support of student-stakeholder collaboration using workshops, and found that students had opportunities to develop their abilities through multistakeholder collaboration. Zhimin et al. (2016) studied alum relations in three Chinese HEIs. They applied the social capital theory using qualitative case studies, where the focus was on how to turn alum resources into productive, public, and abundant capital through consensus, partnership, and functional

relationships. Their findings suggested the need to establish sustainable stakeholder collaboration and teamwork, as well as strengthening of the holistic relationship.

Problem Statement

The fundamental problem for this qualitative research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018), was a lack of collaboration that was causing international students in the CCTE to fail to attain the full benefits of enrollment in the programs offered. This study aimed to identify the stakeholders of the local CCTE, their relationships, their valuable voluntary services to their community, and their lived experiences in their collaboration that impacted international student enrollment in the CCTE. There is a need for additional empirical research in this area of stakeholder relationships, although knowledge of managerial activities and decision-making has been developed (Boesso & Kumar, 2016). Through participative action research, Ayala (2018) investigated the challenges and strategies for multiple stakeholders' collaboration from academia, government, business, local communities, and civil society organizations and found a remarkable lack of strategies to address resource affectation. From the study of two Dutch universities of applied sciences, Snijders (2019) recognized that alums add essential value to HEIs by spending their time and money, and additionally noted the importance of alum loyalty resulting from trust. Studying three major Chinese universities, Luo et al. (2019) found that solid alum relations are an essential resource that should be developed. I identified the literature gap and the lack of the practice of collaboration among the ESs that could provide support for new international student enrollment in the CCTE. This gap was evident in the absence of available information regarding the cooperation of international alums and South Sudanese community (SSC) leaders. The findings from this research aimed to narrow this gap by providing evidence regarding the impact of this collaboration. Ten CCTE alums and two community leaders participated in this study, all

members of the SSC living in a city in the North Central United States. Research on the ESs and ISs of higher education did not correctly consider addressing the collaboration among the CCTE's ESs in the SSC. This position reflected the importance of the identified gap, which was at the center of this qualitative intrinsic case study.

Purpose Statement

This qualitative case study aimed to understand the impact of the CCTE's ESs' collaboration, the South Sudanese alums, and their community leaders on the enrollment of new international students at the CCTE in a city in the North Central United States. I chose the qualitative case study research plan for this study, as a case study is appropriate when a researcher wants to understand a complex social phenomenon within the field of research (Yin, 2018). At this stage in the research, CCTE's ESs were the South Sudanese who graduated from the CCTE and their community leaders who were involved in different activities through their status as tribal leaders and local church pastors. I identified the research question aligned with the theoretical framework through the literature review (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The concept taken from the stakeholder theory was the ESs of the CCTE: the alums and the SSC leaders, their affiliation with the CCTE, the alums, and their leaders' collaboration experiencing the existence of shared beliefs among them (Müller & Van Esch, 2019). This study identified the real stakeholders of the HEIs, the concept of internal and external stakeholders of the CCTE, and presented a realistic figure based on the findings from the literature review. The accessible CCTE alums and SSC leaders from the churches and their tribes, for those living in a city in the North Central United States, participated in this research (see Appendix C).

Significance of the Study

Stakeholders add value to business organizations, considering the sustainable social

interrelation, which reinforces the relationship among the stakeholders with the business to improve the company and society (Parmar et al., 2010). A vital future of the HEIs lies in their capacity to be accountable for stakeholders' engagement in different programs (Stankevičienė & Vaiciukevičiūtė, 2016). In their analysis of quality assurance of stakeholders' relationships in Finnish HEIs, Lyytinen et al. (2017) called for an investigation to explore how Finnish and other European HEIs organize their ESs' relationships. HEIs face a critical challenge to improve their network and collaborations with the ESs to secure and develop their relevance to society (Jensen et al., 2018).

This qualitative intrinsic case study aimed to fill the literature gap regarding the relationships between two stakeholders, alums and SSC leaders living in the same community. These graduates applied the stakeholder experience, supported different career initiatives, and encouraged new international students to join the CCTE. Previous researchers have not analyzed the combination of these two collaborative actions to emphasize the need to energize alums' participation in strategic management to provide a leadership experience that students could apply during their first steps in a career. Understanding the partnership function between two stakeholders filled the literature gap, making this case study an essential step for stabilizing CCTEs' external relations. Cavallone et al. (2020) surveyed the primary stakeholders of the HEIs and recommended further studies to gather evidence about the value expectations from other stakeholders.

I expected that the community and the CCTE would benefit from this study. HEIs have a fundamental and influential role in society because they provide education, research, knowledge transfer, structure, and values for sustainable development (Meyer et al., 2018). CCTEs face the challenge of enrolling new international students due to multiple factors, including the

administration's financial restraint, providing less money to spend on outreach and recruitment, and declining registration (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). One of the strategies used to find and solve problems remained to reinforce the collaboration among different ESs (Jensen, 2018; Vargas et al., 2019). Stakeholders support the relationships between the HEIs and the parents or the students' families and the ISS' strategies to reinforce the students' enrollment process (Beyl et al., 2016). Also, the students' geographical locations (i.e., the distance between the CCTE and the student's living area) strongly affect these institutions (White & Lee, 2019). Family status plays another critical role in attending a CCTE (Gauthier, 2018). The stakeholder theory refers to the business world, where there is growing interest in the strategic management of ISs and ESs for the benefit of enterprises (Parmar et al., 2010). Stakeholders in business include employees, communities, shareholders, creditors, government, customers, and enterprise owners. The stakeholders in education are the individuals, groups, and organizations that directly or indirectly impact training for the sustainability and success of the education programs. In HEIs, stakeholders include students, families, community members, local business and organization leaders, school boards, student organizations, and organizations of teachers (Bischoff et al., 2017; Kettunen, 2015; Labanauski & Ginevičius, 2017; Slabá, 2015; Stankevičienė & Vaiciukevičiūtė, 2016).

A gap existed in the research literature for understanding how the different ESs of CCTEs organize their collaboration. This intrinsic case study aimed to understand how ESs construct reality through their lived experience and mutual interactions. Investigating the participants who have their own interpretation of the truth as it was happening in their local community using the triangulation process helped me further understand their real experience. The following activities reflect the initiative for engaging in basic investigation principles of the qualitative analysis

methods: reflexive journaling, focus group meetings, and the individual interview. These three data gathering methods supported the scientific triangulation of the qualitative research. These activities happened in the participants' natural living environment and deepened their living realities, focusing on their collaboration. The South Sudanese students completing their training did not stay long in the community before obtaining employment. However, joining the CCTE was challenging for the students due to their families' educational background, and knowing that they had fled their country of origin without sufficient education, war plunged them into deep poverty. Gauthier (2018) identified more factors influencing student enrollment, including graduate employability, the family's educational and socioeconomic background, and the failure to register in the HEIs. In addition, Slaba (2015) noted there is a lack of awareness and sufficient institutional support for STEM careers, as well as lack of guidance for students regarding enrollment in the CCTE. Cavallone et al. (2020) also noted a lack of reinforcement of collaboration among different ESs to support the registration process in the CCTE.

Studies investigating the same area of interest have provided significant findings that HEIs could access in order to reinforce strategies for minimizing the declining learning environment (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017); however, researchers have yet to directly address the impact of the collaboration among ESs of the CCTE. Investigating the ESs' collaboration implies applying the stakeholder theory to discover the effect of their collaboration on the enrollment process in the CCTE (Bischoff et al., 2017). This collaboration vitalizes the social implications of the CCTE in the community from both the direct and indirect effects of the qualified workforce and economic growth (Findler et al., 2019). Collaboration among the ESs could positively impact declining enrollment in the CCTE (Lyytinen et al., 2017).

The current intrinsic case study presented two significant aspects: (a) the HEIs

stakeholders' practical framework from the literature review, and (b) the CCTE's ESs' collaboration impact. Stakeholder collaboration and partnership reinforce the ISs and the ESs in developing business sustainability in the HEIs, and having a vital interest in the ESs' cooperation may boost enrollment (Khanyile & Green, 2016). SSC members who completed education in the CCTE played an essential role in their community by creating employment when they opened a private business in their education domains such as nursing, IT, and engineering. Anthony (2020) noted that the knowledge mapping-based technique facilitates the integration to bolster the partnership between the alma mater and alums through improved communication. Still, no improvement can emerge from this collaboration without the active participation of the CCTE stakeholders in the decision-making process. ESs have an essential role in the visibility of the CCTE development's actions (Mata-López & Tobón, 2019): The ESs' collaboration brought practical knowledge to potential students who lived closer geographically and could help students decide to follow the examples of the ESs to achieve success in both their education and jobs (Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2018). The findings from this qualitative case study could substantially impact the lives of immigrants by providing improved guidance through local community leaders, the CCTE alums, and strategies that could be applied to increase their participation in the enrollment of new students. The involvement of ESs with their direct and indirect support to the CCTE could also minimize crucial financial challenges.

Research Questions

Research relies on continual questioning, which makes the researcher's essential foundation to develop the central research question and sub-questions based on the research problem, which elicit the data to be collected, analyzed, and discussed to discover the results (Neri et al., 2016). This study focused on the experiences of the external stakeholders of the

CCTE in the community of South Sudanese living in a bounded environment in a city in the North Central United States in order to understand their contributions to the enrollment of new international students. The reflexive journal, the focus group meeting, and the individual interviews gathered potential information to answer the research questions, understand the participants' experiences, and facilitate the data analysis. I used these three research methods to explore this topic in-depth and followed the developed guidelines for data collection through continuous discussions until saturation (Weller et al., 2018). Yin (2018) stated that defining the research questions is possibly the most critical aspect of the study. The research questions addressed the focus of the research and aligned with the theoretical framework. The literature supporting the research questions followed the central and sub-questions, which were not discussed by previous researchers on the same topic.

Central Research Question

How does the collaboration of the external stakeholders of the college of career and technical education, the alums (international students), and their local community leaders impact new students' enrollment? The central research question generated the subquestions, which led all the research activities to focus on case study principles and methodology. The performance of external stakeholders of the college of career and technical education may reinforce their relationship (Soewarno & Tjahjadi, 2020). Stakeholder theory creates value in higher education institutions based on knowledge and information sharing, the local community, mutual trust, involvement in the decision-making, and prioritizing their interests in the strategic planning process (De Freitas et al., 2020). The two research subquestions shared the essential content of the central question to include all the critical aspects in the data collection, and they were related to the different concepts of external stakeholders, including the alums and the SSC leaders, their

collaboration, enrollment, and cooperation among these external stakeholders (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I identified the following two critical subquestions for this intrinsic case study:

Subquestion One

How do the local community leaders support South Sudanese students' enrollment in the college of career and technical education in Fargo, North Dakota, and Moorhead, Minnesota?

The overall declining registration in the college of career and technical education is one of the critical consequences of the decrease in the financing of the college of employment and technical education (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). The SSC members and the college of career and technical education alums may influence new candidates by describing their experience and role in their community. These alums became role models for the new enrollment in the CCTE, which is raring the candidates. Gianiodis and Meek (2019) expressed the need for research regarding higher education institutions adding stakeholders such as alums and the local community commitment. The collaboration among the external stakeholders of the college of career and technical education including the CCTE alums and SSC leaders who participated in the educational activities with their members, could include long-term planning of activities of the institutions offering career and technical education. Their punctual involvement could reinforce the role of employment and technical education in their community.

Subquestion Two

How do alums support the South Sudanese students' enrollment in the college of career and technical education in a city in the North-Central United States? This question aimed to elicit the importance of providing support from the higher education leadership to the ESs and leadership, reinforcing the alums-student mentoring programs (Dollinger et al., 2019). Regular interaction between ESs, alums, community leaders, and college of career and technical

education administrators could be essential in reinforcing the college of career and technical education activities in the community. A survey administered to 2,544 alums in a Portuguese university indicated that education, communication, and satisfaction with the social and academic environment determined the relationship between alums and higher education institutions (Pedro et al., 2018). CTE alums from the SSC received a crucial technical skill that could produce positive results by reinforcing communication among themselves and their community leaders. Their professional position influenced social capital by earning a good salary that provides financial support for families and community members (Zhimin et al., 2016).

Definitions

The following relevant terms were used in this study:

1. Alums - Alums are former students and graduates of a program and are part of university networks that offer knowledge and exchange possibilities as guest lecturers or mentors. Alums might serve as advisory board members or organizers of events and workshops (Bischoff et al., 2017).
2. Alum Relations - Alum relations refer to connections between alums, their alma mater, and social alums ties, including individual-individual relations, group-individual relations, and group-group relations (Luo et al., 2016; Zhimin et al., 2016).
3. Career and Technical Education - CTE refers to organized educational programs offering relevant technical knowledge and skills in health science, business, sales, finance, information technology, science, technology, engineering, math, manufacturing, logistics, hospitality, government, law, agriculture, human services, construction, training, arts, audio/visual technology, and communication (Gordon & Schultz, 2020).
4. Coding – Coding is an inherently flexible process and highly dependent on the context,

research questions, methodologies, and data types engaged in the process (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019).

5. Collaboration - Collaboration involves new relations between two or more entities; it reinforces and promotes interdependent stakeholder relationships (Lawson, 2004). As its Latin roots - com and labor are - indicate, collaboration means working together (Chrislip & Larson, 1994).
6. Community - A community is a group of people that interact and support each other and are bound by shared experiences or characteristics, a sense of belonging, and physical proximity (Cobigo et al., 2016).
7. Stakeholders - Stakeholders are groups and individuals with a valid interest in the organization's activities and outcomes and on whom the organization relies for achieving objectives (Freeman, 1984).

Summary

The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to understand the impact of the collaboration between the ESs of the CCTE, including the alums participating in the CCTE enrollment campaign, and the local leaders of the South Sudanese community in a city in the North Central United States. The problem was the lack of collaboration among the CCTE's ESs. The impact of the partnership among the ESs of the CCTE on enrollment has never been identified. This problem demonstrated the study's significance and the research question's origin. The introduction included the overview and the background of the collaboration among the ESs and its impact on the enrollment of new international students in the CCTE. SSC leaders practiced collaboration to address the challenges they faced in their daily social and economic adaptation, crucial problems in this beautiful region of the United States. The analysis of this collaboration

supported this qualitative case study. It provided answers to the research questions designed to examine the impact of the partnership among the ESs on the enrollment of new students in the CCTE in the social constructivism paradigm. The study included 12 participants, including 10 alums and two local community leaders. To complete the scientific triangulation of this intrinsic case study, the reflexive journal prompts from the seven alums, the focus group meetings from two community leaders, and the individual interview from three alums were selected to provide sufficient data on the SSC's critical events.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative intrinsic case study is to understand the impact of the collaboration among the external stakeholders (ESs), the South Sudanese community (SSC) leaders, and alums of the college of career and technical education (CCTE) on the CCTE enrollment of South Sudanese students. The community leaders involved in this research are the SSC leaders living in the North Central United States because of their connection with the CCTE alums who are members of the same community. This community frequently organizes elections, appointments, or designation of their community leaders to solve problems related to their living situation, including social, economic, health, education, job, and transportation. The alums benefit from collaboration with the community leaders, obtaining employment information and valuable support even after getting a job. These alums who have careers are excellent examples for the CCTE's stakeholders as well as future CCTE students. The social constructivism paradigm implies understanding how the collaboration among different ESs, and the impact on enrollment, support the training in the CCTE. Jensen et al. (2018) found that higher education institutions (HEIs) have a critical challenge to improve their network and collaborations with ESs to secure and develop their relevance to society. This case study describes how participants, including alums and local community leaders, construct their reality through their experiences in collaboration and mutual interactions. Investigating the participants who have their interpretations of the truth as it is happening in their local community in the reflexive journals, the individual interviews, and the focus group meetings helped delve genuinely into their experiences in their natural living environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This literature review focuses on the previous research on how ESs (CCTE alums and the local community leaders)

organize their collaboration, impact the HEI and the CCTE activities, and present the existing literature gap.

Theoretical Framework

This section addresses the problem of the viability of the CCTE, which includes the partnership among the ESs and their activities supporting new students' enrollment from the community where they live together and work. Built from the stakeholder theory, the research, and my experience, this structure guided my research and conclusions from the analysis and findings. The literature provides a general explanation of the ESs' collaboration and presents the needs of the participants in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The community leaders search for solutions to the problems the community members face. This role of the community leaders was evidenced during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which disrupted the lives of communities across the nation. The citizens' engagement in public institutions has yet to solve their problems. An active community member can solve critical issues through the collaboration of community leadership (Cleveland & Cleveland, 2018).

Studying the challenges facing HEIs through a case study, Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) suggested several reasons for the declining enrollment of students in the CCTE. These included funding cuts and the current economic situation, the lack of motivation in high school students for taking STEM courses and entering STEM careers, the leadership challenges (Gabriel et al., 2018), and the geographical distances for some students (White & Lee, 2019). The current study's framework provides an in-depth description and analysis that facilitates an understanding of the CCTE graduates' experiences, the community's support for developing their careers, and the impact of their collaboration on the enrollment of new students. The current study's defining pattern is based on the social constructivism paradigm, which places social partnerships at the

center of the learning process. The construction of this collaboration reinforces the participants' perceptions of the cooperation among different ESs and its impact on student enrollment in the CCTE (Yin, 2018).

Related Literature

This chapter presents the main areas explored by researchers in the field of stakeholder theory applied to HEIs, detailed explicitly in the theoretical framework. I first discuss stakeholder theory, developed by Freeman in 1984, who specialized in strategic business management. He identified the primary and secondary stakeholders and their roles in business development. In the next topic, I talk about the higher education stakeholders, specifically in the CCTE, because of their importance in the practical support of the immigrants' finding jobs after they acclimate to living in the U.S. I differentiate between internal and external stakeholders and discuss the external stakeholders' collaboration that supports the enrollment of new international students in the CCTE. This chapter ends with a summary where I briefly review the most critical content.

The first critical aspect of this literature review aims to identify the two groups of the CCTE's internal and external stakeholders. The previous research, developed by Alarcón (2016), analyzes the orientation of responsive and proactive stakeholders in public universities. Avci et al. (2015) noticed the issue of HEIs stakeholders' identification in management organizations in the United States. Bischoff et al. (2017) oriented the research to stakeholder collaboration in twenty case studies in European HEIs, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder collaboration in entrepreneurship education. Bjørkquist (2009) analyzed the stakeholder influence on the HEIs. De la Torre (2019) oriented the research priority and benefits in the HEIs of the United Kingdom. Freeman (1984) specialized in business strategies and the role of the primary and

secondary stakeholders. Kettunen (2015) focused on the stakeholder relationships in the HEIs. Labanauskis & Ginevicius (2017) oriented the research on the role of stakeholders in the HEIs development, and Švaikauskienė & Vaiciukevicinte (2016) identified the stakeholders' typology in the Lithuanian HEIs. These are the most influential researchers who worked on the HEIs stakeholders. Still, none of them addressed the impact of the external stakeholders on international student enrollment in the CCTE or entrepreneurship tertiary education. They did not address the importance of these two groups of stakeholders based on each group's position and activities in advancing the CCTE influence on community development—another topic in the literature review —another collaboration among ESs (see Figure 1).

Stakeholder Theory

Defining the stakeholder has long been an important issue in management in organizations to know the stakeholders and correctly identify them (Avci et al., 2015). Stakeholder theory originated in business management and may apply in many other fields, such as higher education (Parmar et al., 2010). However, critics have argued that the practicability of the stakeholder theory needs to be testable, and there is also ambiguity in the term's definition (i.e., stakeholder). The term stakeholder comes from the original meaning of a person having the stakes of bettors (investors, employees, customers, suppliers, students, alums, and the community). Stakeholder theory interests researchers in HEIs for their role in reinforcing career and technical education (CTE) programs at this level (Beerkens & Udam, 2017). Identifying the stakeholders is the first step for change implementation within an organization; leaders create strategies to involve stakeholders in a collaborative process (Freeman, 1984). After first publication of the stakeholder theory, many researchers applied it entirely to higher education, searching to understand different aspects of internal and external stakeholders' involvement in

institutional strategic management (Parmar et al., 2010). Various researchers have focused their research based on activities related to administrators, academics, staff, students, and alums, as well as other organizations that supported the achievement of educational goals in their communities or for the implementation of national programs of the CCTE (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017).

Stakeholder theory was applied in the current qualitative case study because it explains the cooperation of the community members and other stakeholders for higher education and focuses on the support offered to the alums from the CCTE (Wolniak et al., 2019). Specifically, stakeholders collaborate to take necessary action to support new CCTE students from the South Sudanese community. Collaboration works when a few key leaders engage in the process, either in formal or informal roles. This is best achieved by continually collaborating with other community members with the goal of getting every citizen involved in order to help increase enrollment of the South Sudanese students in the CCTE (Oonk et al., 2016). Success depends on a few key members who can help make the process work, though they do not have formal power or authority. Collaborative leaders usually have no legal control or official management to impose on the community members who voluntarily adhere to and participate in the specific activities elaborated by a joint decision (Oonk et al., 2016). The general goal of the ESSs' partnership is to reinforce their collaboration through trust and to maintain the relationships to develop the self-determination and competence of the CCTE students and members of the SSC. Their leaders organize the activities, take care of the leadership tasks, and mobilize the stakeholders around the existing problem to find a sustainable and favorable solution for every identified member, considering the information and necessary resources for finding credible support.

The success of graduates' careers lies in combining the college's leadership experience, stakeholder collaboration, and the collaborative community leadership (Mat et al., 2018). The current case study combines these three dimensions to understand how the reinforcement of the ESs provides strong support for the first career of college graduates (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). Parmar et al. (2010) conducted a study framed by the stakeholder theory and analyzed business stakeholders and focused on the firm's productivity. However, other researchers have used the stakeholder theory in the field of higher education (Stankevičienė & Vaiciukevičiūtė, 2016). The basic stakeholder map developed by Freeman (1984) suggested that the stakeholder theory may be applied to any organization, as the primary stakeholders are directly involved in the business's value-creation process.

South Sudanese live in different geographic locations; however, they come together to discuss any important matters for the benefit of the community members. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a case study may involve an individual, a small group, an organization, or a partnership. The participants for this case study research included the South Sudanese alums of the CCTE and the SSC leaders in a city in the North-Central United States, who function as a small group or partnership. The alums of the CCTE and the community leaders are the ESs with whom collaboration can occur.

Freeman developed the stakeholder theory through his book *Strategic Management, A stakeholder Approach*, published in 1984. In the 1980s, Freeman (1984). Researchers addressed the issue of stakeholders in different specific business areas, which was later applied in higher education. Avci et al. (2015) questioned the stakeholders' nature and identification, considering the government, parents, students, community, and donors. Bischoff et al. (2017) examined the role of stakeholders' collaboration in entrepreneurship education from 20 European HEIs, where

the partnerships with entrepreneurs and companies were strongly identified through their cooperation, which is the condition of having the necessary resources, time, and commitment. De la Torre (2019) identified the main HEIs' external stakeholders as the students, industry and government, employers, and community. They are among their specific roles grouped in communication, funding, collaboration, sponsorships, partnership, and suppliers.

Freeman (1984) specialized in strategic management of business, where he identified stakeholders and grouped them into primary and secondary stakeholders based on their positions in and influence on the business organization. Only a few researchers applied the stakeholder theory regarding the critical role of stakeholders in HEIs. For example, Kettunen (2015) identified the importance of the media in communication for providing financial support from the stakeholders through payment for services and education. Kettunen noted the importance of stakeholder collaboration in reinforcing quality assurance in the growing competition, the decrease in enrollment, and the effect of globalization in tertiary education. The stakeholder theory focuses on adopting a unit of analysis, and the relationships between a business and the groups and individuals who can affect or are affected by it (Freeman, 1984). According to this theory, the relationship between the organization and the stakeholders must be an essential preoccupation. The CCTE needs to target student enrollment (Alarcón-del-Amo et al., 2016). Reinforcing the ESs' cooperation would positively impact the registration of new students in the CCTE, which would support the institution's viability (Lyytinen et al., 2017).

Higher Education Stakeholders

Educational organizations form a national, regional, or community coalition to address complex issues that require collaboration within and across sectors - demographic and geographic boundaries - creating long-term social change and building legitimacy to initiate

policy change in the ESs of the CCTE. Azman et al. (2019) studied university-industry collaboration in Malaysia from the stakeholders' perspectives' and found that variables affecting the partnership's interest included barriers of cultural differences, academic expertise, regulations, the inadequacy of institutional policies and regulations, lack of trust, issues of intellectual rights, and lack of an appropriate reward system. Community leaders respond to collaborative leadership principles by solving problems through commitment and action, developing involvement and participation, exhibiting mutual participation in problem-solving, and growing in involvement, hope, and engagement, as more of a process than a role (Iachini et al., 2019).

Higher education institutions (HEIs) can initiate the platform for collaboration and partnerships, intellectual engagement, and encourage stakeholder participation (Khanyile & Green, 2016). Declining enrollment in the CCTE and financial restraints have caused the closure of programs and some institutions (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). The alums of the CCTE and the community leaders are the ESs, with whom collaboration may occur. Parmar et al. (2010) stipulated that stakeholder management enables the activity's performance by creating value, innovating, dealing with inclusivity and relationships, and better addressing ethical issues. Other stakeholders' groups with influential roles in the firm, the secondary stakeholders, including the media, competitors, government officials, regulators, union leaders, particular interest groups, consumer advocacy groups, and non-governmental organizations influence the outcome of the organization's activities (Freeman, 1984).

A strong alum relationship transforms alum resources into a social network that the managers can turn into productive, public, and abundant capital. However, alums' social capital transformation depends on cognition, relationship, and structure (Zhimin et al., 2016), which

effectively impact the community. The positive change brought by the stakeholders lies in the establishment of collaboration through consensus and identifying exact values between the HEIs, alums, and other stakeholders, thus activating the organization and venue and maintaining a sustainable relationship with alums through their internal and external connections with other HEI groups (Zhimin et al., 2016). HEIs have a social responsibility to train students and directly initiate and participate in community development projects (Findler et al., 2019). HEIs undergo a substantial change due to the educational environment being affected by financial fluctuation and technology development. Still, the government benefits from financial support through the HEI-government collaboration to produce and commercialize knowledge for the industry. There is a need for a strategic response to adapt to the factors affecting this change by training highly qualified STEM specialists to develop and adapt to current employment issues. Ferrero-Ferrero et al. (2018) found that stakeholder engagement in HEIs improves perspectives and sustains stakeholder collaboration, assesses organizational strengths and weaknesses, ensures distributed leadership, evaluates language for change, builds and supports networks, and creates feedback channels. They also found that new technologies improve the curriculum's quality, applying strategies to enhance affordability and the teaching profession to support students better, considering the decisive orientation for sustainable social goals. The HEIs' affiliate traditional stakeholders provide advocacy services and advice to avoid wrongdoing in cases like race in selective college admissions (Barnhardt et al., 2017). The social media and informal networks being a supporting tool in higher education, both educators and students acknowledge the importance of their incorporation for the delivery and assessment of collaborative and organizational skills, keeping an eye on the use, the control, and the limit of platforms (Jensen et al., 2018). The typology of the Lithuanian HEIs presents four main factors that can highlight the

stakeholder's capacity in the CCTE, including organizational capacity, learning capacity, partnership capacity, and advocacy capacity (Švaikauskienė & Mikulskienė, 2017).

Internal Stakeholders

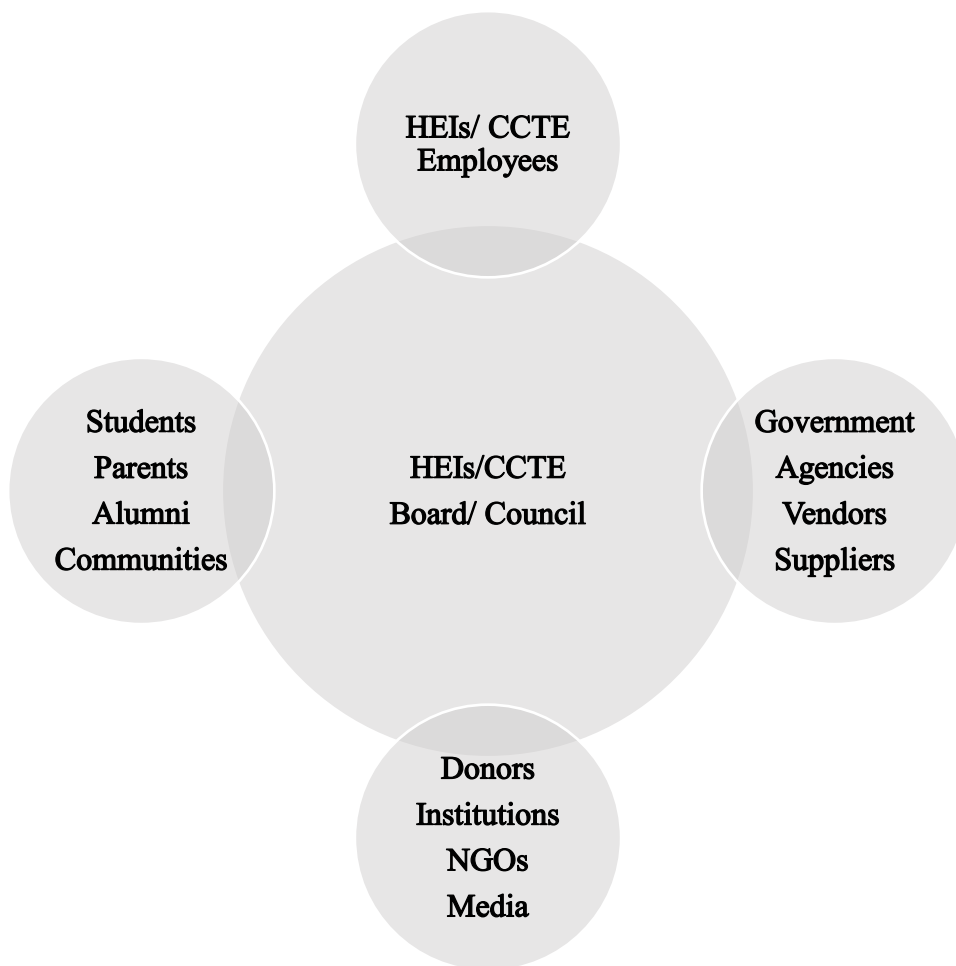
I faced the challenge of developing new programs to improve student enrollment and sustainably reinforce the relationship with the ESs through a proactive strategy (Alarcón-del-Amo et al., 2016; Freeman, 1984). The institutional board supports the enrollment organization during the defined period when more students are needed to fill the gap during the activities in preparation for the opening of the actual academic year.

Figure 1 indicates the need to identify HEI stakeholders and explore their multidimensional relationships and collaboration (Katsamunskā & Rosenbaum, 2020). In Figure 1 Kettunen (2015) set the HEIs, the personnel, and the students at the center of HEI activities, while Bischoff et al. (2017) placed the HEIs in the center of the figure but did not identify students' positions in the organization of the HEIs' activities. Stankevičienė and Vaiciukevičiūtė (2016) placed the administration or management division and the students outside the area of the HEI map and separated them from the linkages of the IS and ES groups.

The consideration of different positions occupied by individuals or groups impacted by HEI activities influenced the categorization by various researchers for the ISs or ESs. Ulewicz (2017) researched the role of stakeholders in quality assurance in higher education, including students and employees within the IS group. Savga (2018) presented more details about the HEI staff IS stakeholders, including the faculty, the administrative staff, and the institution-level management, , in addition to the students.

Figure 1

Stakeholders Map



Note: Adapted from Alarcón (2016); Avci et al. (2015); Bischoff et al. (2017); Bjørkquist (2009); De la Torre (2019); Freeman (1984); Kettunen (2015); Labanauskis & Ginevicius (2017); McCaffery (2019); Slabá (2015); and Švaikauskienė & Vaiciukevicinte (2016).

The council members or governing board of the HEI, or in this case study, the CCTE, are the ISs. The council members have the responsibility to control, not manage. They work to secure the institution's mission and vision. The council approves the policies, organizes the fundraising, and decides on strategic planning. They control the performance and appoint the institution's head (McCaffery, 2019). This position contradicted Savga et al. (2018), who suggested that the ISs are the academic and administrative staff, institution-level management, faculty or department-level management, and the students. ESs must address the integration of

low-income students and underrepresented minority groups, reinforcement of teaching practices, and focus on assessing their collaboration (Herbaut, 2020). Bjorkquist (2009) included the stakeholders, academics, students, technical and administrative staff, and members of the faculty boards in the same group of ESs. Universities organize activities outside the classrooms to encourage collaboration with the ESs, creating new learning opportunities for students to familiarize themselves with the external environment (Katsamunskā & Rosenbaum, 2020).

External Stakeholders

External organizations participate in HEIs such as the CCTE through funding research, project development, and training (Kettunen, 2015) to sustain the knowledge triangle (Cervantes, 2017). The ESs of public and private HEIs such as the CCTE influence important decision-making regarding services (Xanthopoulou, 2020) and faculty preparation (Morgan et al., 2020). Other ESs include the parents, alums, students, community, donors, media, government, agencies, vendors, suppliers, and funding organizations (Freeman, 1984).

The difference between ESs and the CCTE is unclear in the definition provided by Bischoff et al., (2017). They stated that the ESs include all outside stakeholders directly involved in or related to the institution, either through active involvement in the provision of education or recipients of knowledge. These authors placed all people involved in the same group: the ESs, those closer to the institution, the education providers, and the beneficiaries at all levels of interactions. Bischoff et al. did not delineate between stakeholders in charge of policy administration, the managers, and the faculty.

Švaikauskienė and Mikulskienė (2017) studied the typology of stakeholders in the case of Lithuanian HEIs. They suggested using stakeholders' capacity in organizational learning, partnership, and advocacy, which cannot occur without a dynamic collaboration. However, Wise

et al. (2018) suggested that the ESs include all non-university stakeholders directly involved in or related to the institution through active involvement in education provision or knowledge recipients. Bischoff et al. (2017) placed the students, parents, social financing entities, education providers, service providers, insurance companies, and alums in the same category of types of stakeholders. U.S. universities are accountable to multiple stakeholders by applying stakeholder marketing to curricula decisions. Universities that fail to adopt stakeholder marketing risk failing to provide students and businesses with the skills they need for future success.

Students and alums play different roles in HEIs. The success of students and alums' participation lies mainly in their sense of belonging (Drezner & Pizmony-Levy, 2020), such that students keep receiving knowledge from the institution while alums support institutional activities to reinforce education provision (De la Torre et al., 2018). De la Torre et al. placed the students, their associates (e.g., parents), and alums in the ES category, although they each play a different role in the sustainability of the institution's performance. Managers care for the stakeholders to gain information, creating new strategies that open value creation (Parmar et al., 2018).

Applying stakeholder theory principles improves the strategic management of HEIs by creating more value. De Freitas et al. (2020) confirmed this disposition through their quantitative study that examined the principles of knowledge and information sharing, mutual trust, involvement in the decision-making process, and the alignment of stakeholder interests in the strategic planning process, which depends on the sustainability of the strategic management of the HEIs. The internalization of the HEIs' cycle of studies is a means to achieve quality education, research, and service to society, which requires stakeholders' collaboration to engage the communities in sustainable development (Findler et al., 2019). This partnership will lead to

strategies to integrate collaborative services and approaches into regular activities of formal or institutional activities (Perez-Encinas, 2018).

The collaborative partnerships in education policy research involve various stakeholders in co-investigation to monitor and evaluate education to achieve sustainable development. Collaboration seeks to strengthen the research policy to conduct adequate research and ensure policy identification through multiple stakeholder involvement. The stakeholders' partnership aims to produce knowledge and recommendations to support the policies (Didham & Ofei-Manu, 2020). There are some barriers to university-industry cooperation, such as procedural rigidity in the decision-making or the implementation of existing systems, to the knowledge transfer that requires a practical process to ensure quality acquisition and shared values. The strategic guidelines for ISs and ESs should address the conflicting priorities between academics, strategic offices, and industries. District-university partnerships reinforce the ES collaboration program. The importance of this collaboration is that it helps support the positive result of preparing new teachers (Morgan et al., 2020). The regional learning environment system involves learning, which offers students opportunities to develop boundary-crossing competence through multi-stakeholder collaboration, supporting the training program implementation (Oonk et al., 2016). Every educational stakeholder perceives the policies and appropriate levels of mutual participation differently; thus, they must plan differently to participate in the policymaking process. The stakeholder collaboration reinforces the importance of working on programs like foreign language education policymaking from social and cultural perspectives (Peláez & Usma, 2017). The ESs are essential catalysts for change, particularly for large-scale changes involving many advances, including increased access, research, and teaching, to improve student success.

Piotrowska-Piątek (2017) found that the Polish HEI's ES network comprised many

entities: employers, economy representatives, regional authorities, and labor market institutions. The ESs' perspectives on the Swedish HEIs' curriculum development and quality of work affirmed that changes in their relationships, knowledge, and labor skills could positively encourage HEIs to develop their programs, where the communication should flow from the collaboration between the internal decision-making process to ESs and improve their expectations (Farrell et al., 2020). The collaborative process between ISs and ESs can improve the HEI curriculum. In a study conducted in Finland, Lindsten et al. (2019) noted that the ISs included the faculty, students, and the higher education teachers' community, whereas ES referred to the higher education policy and the labor market. Partnerships between the Franco et al. (2019) noted that Portuguese HEIs and firms focusing on students' curricular internships increased the firm's mutual benefits in the value of exchange and innovation, and students found advantages, as collaboration opened the way to the competitive labor market. Stakeholders play a significant role in community development. Understanding social accountability presents an advantage in meeting the workforce, and the community health needs, determining nature, and supporting the school program implementation. These two main stakeholders (i.e., IS and ES) support HEI management by reinforcing the education program and providing financial support to the research projects (Kettunen, 2015).

Bischoff et al. (2017) found that the stakeholders' involvement through collaboration reinforces the HEIs differently, especially enrollment. Parmer et al. (2010) noted that the real challenge is determining the best stakeholder managing practices and the possibility of producing the best value-creating results. Stakeholders' participation is a contributing source of information for developing HEIs in the national, regional, and local education programs (Labanauski & Ginevičius, 2017), building sustainable relationships through appropriate marketing strategies,

management, and communication (Slabá, 2015). Stakeholders in business include the employees, communities, shareholders, creditors, government, customers, and enterprise owners (Freeman, 1984). The stakeholders in education are the individuals, groups, and organizations that have a direct or indirect impact on training for the sustainability and success of the education programs, including students, families, community members, local business and organization leaders, school boards, student and teacher organizations (Bischoff et al., 2017; Kettunen, 2015; Labanauski & Ginevičius, 2017; Slabá, 2015; Stankevičienė & Vaiciukevičiūtė, 2016). HEIs need to ensure that stakeholder engagement does not result in a lack of accountability, which must reflect their involvement at all the administrative stages, especially in the process of decision-making (Stankevičienė & Vaiciukevičiūtė, 2016).

External Stakeholders' Collaboration

In this study, South Sudanese alums are also members of the local South Sudanese community and benefit from collaborating with community leaders to get employment information and obtain valuable support even after getting a job. These CCTE alums with successful careers are an excellent example for young students who aspire to achieve similar goals. Enrollment remains a crucial challenge for the CCTE, where stakeholders invest for a better future. Strategic managers of educational organizations invite research-based contributions to implement and monitor their programs (McCaffrey, 2019). Universities integrate the 2030 world agenda for sustainable development goals (SDGs) to end poverty by improving health, and education, by supporting economic growth, the environment, and climate change initiatives, and by reducing inequality (Morton et al., 2017). The SDGs focus on research activities in a plan adopted by all the United Nations' state members in 2015, combined into 17 realistic but controversial objectives (Morton et al., 2017).

Collaboration among stakeholders and participative management involves the implementation of critical strategic tools for building sustainable universities (Turan et al., 2016). The cooperation of stakeholders with different perspectives is important when addressing complex environmental issues. This collaboration reinforces the partnership for knowledge and resource management in order to solve specific problems in the community. However, it is a challenge for the multi-stakeholder collaboration of the countries mandated by the United Nations to address sustainability politics, focusing on the partnerships between multiple actors in environmental initiatives (Turan et al., 2016). The collaboration among the ESs in HEIs and ISs, such as faculty, students, and staff reinforce the importance of quality improvement for added value and satisfaction achievement (Degtjarjova et al., 2018). This literature review revealed the importance of the current study on stakeholder collaboration for the CCTE graduates to analyze the impact of the student experience and cooperation with the community leaders of the South Sudanese community (Jensen et al., 2018). These graduates have an opportunity to practice their knowledge and skills after graduation while maintaining their involvement in community activities. The science would be the same, but the learning environment is different based on its financial support, which depends on each state. This literature review targets two key factors affecting the HEIs' ESs: students, and the community, including collaboration among the ESs and their living experiences. These two factors contribute to quality assurance in HEIs and reinforce stakeholder engagement to participate in policymaking (Beerkens & Udam, 2017). In their review of studies on collaboration, Mattessich and Monsey (1992), found the following five factors influenced successful collaboration: environment, membership, communication, purpose, and resources. The current study considered the SSC, the SSC members, their frequent meetings, and communication within the churches and through social media, addressing different issues in

their community, using their local human resources from their leaders and the CCTE alums.

South Sudanese Alums

Universities play their role in research and education by connecting science and society through collaborative learning (Meyer et al., 2018). The research integration, knowledge, and innovation from universities into communities constitute the concept of triangulation, which depends on the environment where the universities are operational. This connection appears in the collaboration between the universities and public research centers, where the technical colleges transform their program into universities of applied sciences to serve society better (Cervantes, 2017). The realistic picture of education, communication, and the social and academic environment is the principal determinant of sustainable relationships between the alums and alma mater, visible in the community, the society, and the family, who are the beneficiaries of the alum participation when deciding to give back from their jobs, earning, and experience (Pedro et al., 2018). Hasanefendic et al. (2016) found that Portuguese technical and vocational higher education needs to engage the local ESs in training programs to implement diversity in education delivery. Venkatraman et al. (2018) worked on a new approach from the United Kingdom and Australian HEI experiences by analyzing the integration of programs adapted to the rapid world change based on digitization. They suggested Australian career training through tertiary education, emphasizing innovation, integration, and stakeholder collaboration. Regarding alum engagement with their alma mater, Shen and Sha (2020) identified three dimensions: instrumental, communicative, and valuable. The partnership among the ESs of the CCTE presents advantages through curriculum conceptualization and practical implementation, which enables successful training opportunities. It improves the behavioral health needs of their students (Rubin & Kilgore, 2020).

Many students cannot pursue a formal degree because of the increased competition, certification requirements, and integration of advanced technology. For accountability, the HEIs involve the quest for transparency (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). The stakeholders reinforce their participation and correct to know current and precise information about strategic management to ensure the ESs' involvement through the approved control mechanism (McCaffery, 2019). Students' experience is at the center of this qualitative case study. They will expectedly demonstrate the knowledge and skills acquired from the CCTE associated with their ability to collaborate with community leaders (Degtjarjova et al., 2018). After a considerable period in the CCTE, a time comes with the need for informal efforts dug from the learning and leadership experience to collaborate with stakeholders to support and reinforce institutional objectives. This collaboration becomes more active when the ESs work through the program established based on the evaluation, expecting a natural, concrete, and practical action (Jensen et al., 2018).

Creating relationships among the stakeholders of any firm, business, or organization offers strategic support that positively impacts the beneficiaries' social and economic development (Parmar et al., 2010). HEIs limit their actions according to their financial status and society's demand, consuming their education and research products. The entrepreneurial model of HEIs reinforces their mission by adding a new focus on economic, technological, and social development (Stolze, 2020). The collaboration among the ESs may support product quality in education to meet performance management and to monitor and support the quality improvement of the HEIs comprehensively. Currently, HEIs are facing the challenge of producing competitive graduates who can bring solutions to multiple problems, especially in the STEM areas, as the key to the economic, sociological, and technological transformation for sustainable development, which cannot happen without the practical involvement and the collaboration of the stakeholders

(Achhnani, 2019). There is a need for a strategic response by training highly qualified STEM specialists to develop and adapt to current issues involving the collaboration between the ESs. CCTE graduates collaborate with other stakeholders to learn about the field and increase their business knowledge (Kalayci, 2017).

Students are the ESs of the CCTE; they benefit from the faculty members' knowledge as they assess the program's quality of education. In contrast, students must present their skills and expertise in the labor market after graduation (Degtjarjova et al., 2018). Stakeholders' engagement is necessary to face the new challenges of society's needs that the HEIs can achieve by listening to them and giving them a voice, facilitating, and acknowledging their participation (Gabriel et al., 2018). Alums are former students who graduated from any educational organization or institution, mobilized to offer support in different strategic forms, like mentoring (Dollinger et al., 2019). Bischoff et al. (2017) recognized that alums are part of the knowledge exchange's HEI network, including serving as guest lecturers, mentors, and consultants. Culture influences future alums giving through maintaining the relationships between alums and alma mater (Vidal & Pittz, 2019). The strategy for joining any career-oriented study field at the CCTE includes advocating for jobs and scholarships; stakeholders provide more support to reinforce student retention (Castellano et al., 2017). Social status and the labor market's quality impact students' enrollment, performance, retention, and degree completion (Contini et al., 2017).

With increased activities, a new market for alum engagement creates donor cultivation and student and alums job opportunities, maximizes strategic outcomes, supervises regional trips, and increases organizations with alum support and students. Financial gifts also proliferate, increasing university pride and loyalty, recognition and acknowledgment, and monetary donations (Grant et al., 2020). The HEIs and the CCTE cannot deliver the expected results

without all the stakeholders involved in the education programs (Azman, 2019). This participation is an ongoing process requiring a request evaluation to reinforce any weak activity area, follow the administrators' plan, and attain the quality standard. The institutional goals would meet ESs' needs based on the government's regulation and the application of local rules negotiated with the education partners (Mata-López & Tobón, 2019). Studying the implementation of quality assurance, Lyytinen et al. (2017) observed the need to manage ESs relationships and the education administrators' responsibilities in applying the governmental regulations to achieve the academic goals in Finnish HEIs. The relationships between HEIs and stakeholders remain a preoccupation of administrators seeking to promote and consolidate sustainable development communities. The participation of ESs in educational activities includes feedback, expertise, supervision, design, funding, placements, and experience exchange (Bischoff et al., 2017).

Financial distribution in Portuguese public HEIs creates a problematic learning condition between teaching and research funding and tuition fees. Teixeira and Koryakina (2016) found that austerity and revenue diversification were essential factors that significantly changed the HEIs by slashing some expenses for another category of ESs, the academic staff, and different services. Herbaut (2020) studied HEI student dropouts' central concern, using a French longitudinal survey and event history analysis on the relationship between social origin, academic failure, and dropout behavior. He found that the first academic year's loss strongly predicts dropping out. Academic managers must address these issues to support socially disadvantaged students in reducing and controlling students' educational activities while promoting enrollment. The South Sudanese graduates, alums from the CCTE, may take advantage of the higher education stakeholder collaboration and local community leadership in a

city in the North-Central United States to practice their acquired knowledge and skills to reinforce their social capital. A committee in charge of their community organization finds different supports to facilitate educational, social, and economic integration. This review addresses the relevant theories taken from the community's position being stakeholders for the HEI where these students live and the need for the community leadership to play an essential role between the college and these students (Dollinger et al., 2019).

Relationship quality dimensions reinforce alum loyalty in delivering voluntary services to the alma mater (Snijders et al., 2019). Alums offer donations to support students and encourage new student enrollment with scholarships, reinforcing student retention (Krehbiel & Piper, 2017). Various efforts contribute to the innovation of industry expansion capabilities; HEIs, with other actors, participate in industry innovation dynamics depending on their specific competencies, the form of knowledge primarily employed by creative firms, and their cultural divergence (Calignano & Jøsendal, 2018). CTE students do not consider the financial criteria influencing labor development compared to the ecological, technical, and social aspects that provide holistic learning 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Castellano et al., 2017). Two logical consequences of their decision positively reinforce their personal and familial situation while participating in the local, regional, and national economic growth from the newly acquired employment after graduating from the CCTE (Emilsson & Mozetič, 2019). The viability of the CCTE is in question and concerns the program management that must be present through their graduates' presence in the job market. SSC student and community engagement require active participation in HEIs through collaboration to ensure an honest and mutual exchange (Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2018). Universities find solutions for the world to respond to the SDGs through practical teaching and research in collaboration with the stakeholders to positively address social,

economic, and environmental challenges (Filho et al., 2019). These goals address the problem of poverty, hunger, health and well-being, quality education, gender, equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation, and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities, and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice, and strong institutions, and partnerships for the goals (Findler et al., 2019). Living in the city, the student keeps relationships with other community members and participates in different community activities while learning from the community leadership to better understand how to practically join after graduation and bring new skills and knowledge for a better benefit of the whole community (Phillips, 2018). The inclusion in CTE programs remains an interest in social, economic, and environmental concepts (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017).

South Sudanese Community Leaders

The place of HEIs in society is always evident due to their permanent involvement in social and economic activities through education and research. Their challenge remains to build productive relationships with the stakeholders (Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2018). The HEIs managers can move ahead by facilitating internal and external evaluation channels. Still, another meaningful action will be to bring as many active stakeholders as possible to support the education programs (Vargas et al., (2019). Institutions can win by reinforcing the stakeholder relationships because of the positive impact on the knowledge transfer visible in society through the human capital transformation (Jensen et al., 2018). The intention of alums to collaborate with the HEIs is rooted in committed relationships, identified from the recommendations, training, sharing experience, and supporting the HEI initiatives associated with gender, marital status, and volunteering are among the factors reinforcing the collaboration between the HEIs and the alums

(Pedro et al., 2020). The advancement of training programs and alums relations have become a growing concern in the United States. Supportive strategies create an opportunity to reinforce the relationships among the stakeholders, donors, and essential volunteers, leading to legislative advocacy and agenda for the HEIs (Acitelli, 2020).

Community groups comprise diverse stakeholders providing different services. Examining the application of collaborative leadership in the community by providing health services from the public and private sectors, seven themes emerged in a multiple case study, including a focus on the context, connections, communication, vision, skill-building, mobilization of people, and projects, sharing information, and knowledge (Didham & Ofei-Manu, 2020). Analyzing the ESs of the United Kingdom HEIs, De la Torre et al. (2018) found that their strategies, activities, and resources influenced their position and created a positive mutual interdependence and consideration. Beerkens and Udam (2017) recognized that stakeholder engagement is becoming an active part of European HEI management, though with different expectations. They emphasized the necessity of communication between various stakeholders but still need to establish this collaboration mechanism. Beyl et al. (2016) successfully involved students in the enrollment process at the college of agriculture. With high training performance, the ambassadors, through the collaboration among the alums and the local business owners, is another practical and profitable experience for the college. Research involving 546 Indian HEI managers on the relationship mediation between stakeholder pressure and strategic performance management suggests the need to accommodate stakeholders' interest in strategic planning and execution (Soewarno & Tjahjadi, 2020). The HEIs participate in society's development by providing teaching, research, and cooperating with enterprises.

HEIs are involved in knowledge exchange and collaboration with enterprises by

supporting prospective alum entrepreneurs through mentoring and facilitating access to finances and business support services. HEIs' intervention in this collaboration provides entrepreneurial teaching and learning, which support the development of change in attitudes and skills (Küttim et al., 2019). The partnership between the HEIs, government, and industry reinforces the generation and commercialization of new knowledge for society's use. This collaboration can take different forms depending on the social, economic, and political environment in knowledge creation and development. Government plays a role in funding the HEIs for teaching and creating research that meets the industry's requirements to maximize the quantity and quality of the production (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). HEIs use different resources, such as a skilled workforce, laboratories, and equipment, to accomplish the task within a set time frame. Benefits for the HEIs collaborating with private sectors include financial assistance, student support, research knowledge sharing with the community, opening new networks involving staff and students, marketing, and commercializing research outputs (Gachie, 2019). Applying the stakeholders' collaboration activity in the HEIs includes improving academic performance, network alignment, performance to public needs, and sharing expertise with other educational institutions and society (Castellano et al., 2017).

Mat et al. (2018) found two types of collaboration that can work at the tertiary level: partnership among the HEIs, and cooperation between the HEIs and industries or businesses. Still, time management remains one of the critical challenges in this process. Mat et al. (2018) suggested integrating information and communication technology (ICT) to help HEIs select the best collaborations. In adopting online collaborative learning tools in the HEIs, the intention to implement this new system of education is significantly affected by perceived usefulness (Yadegaridehkordi et al., 2018). The online learning implementation faces challenges due to the

technical character of the education in the CCTE. However, the COVID-19 pandemic opened a favorable option for online studies in countries devastated by this disease's consequences (Bao, 2020). Still, the online application presents enormous difficulties in technical colleges, which cannot fully adopt this teaching system due to the practical aspect of teaching in this career and technical education (CTE) institutions (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). Adding to this problem of adaptation to online courses, the CCTE has experienced a remarkable decline in funding that affects the development of the service expected to deliver to communities. From their findings on the analysis of career status, Fletcher and Gordon (2017) invited the CTE institution administrators from their findings on the analysis of career status, to develop strategies for mobilizing partners, individuals, groups, communities, or organizations to support these institutions and motivate them to join the technical colleges.

The advantages for the stakeholders taking part in the definition and implementation of the HEI degree and the higher apprenticeship level present three emerging themes: alums, including the program, the strategy, and graduation. The in-depth interview questions about the stakeholders' current challenges in applying for these programs emphasize the need for collaboration to secure a successful system (Mulkeen et al., 2017). The stakeholders use collaboration in educational practices in community health care services to significantly improve their perception of leadership efficacy as a team effort in the participative process (Iachini et al., 2019). The HEI and the CCTE administrators have the duty of organizing a proactive orientation to avoid any unwanted interaction that can negatively affect the development of the education programs based on the law and rules to ensure quality, performance, and reputation (Alarcón-del-Amo et al., 2016). Jensen et al. (2018) called for more research to understand the cooperation between the HEIs and the ESs, not considering the collaboration among the ESs, which can

positively affect the HEI's sustainability. The relationships between the HEIs, the CCTE, and the stakeholders result in high-value creation for their benefit. These institutions will sustain their knowledge creation and mobilize their managerial strategy to become more accountable to the stakeholders (Stankevičienė & Vaiciukevičiūtė, 2016). There is a lack of direction on skills to enable teamwork that students would acquire through contact with the ESs alums, local community leaders, or previous personal connections having technical knowledge (Kori et al., 2016).

The management of the relationships between the HEIs and the stakeholders should consider the salience and cultural value, but there needs to be more empirical research concerning decision-making. Boesso and Kumar (2016) examined one side of the relationship between HEIs and stakeholders. Still, needed to not to analyze how that relationship could remain strong by involving every area of concern in management, planning, and sharing decision-making with stakeholders (Hajjar et al., 2020). The ESs did not touch the researchers' attention, despite the strength and harmony that can generate this relationship in HEIs. Studying German and Russian students, Iskhakova et al. (2020) found that the bond between alums loyalty and its antecedents is sensitive to the cultural environment that cannot be affected by the student's gender. Partners' quality of resources for a collaboration depends on collaboration management and roles' attribution; it does not depend on gender.

Females and males participate in the development of HEIs. The company's successful innovations, resulting from cooperation and strategic organization, the number of joint publications, design, and enterprise image improvement, constitute the common ground and specific key performance indicators of university and industry collaboration (Azman, 2019). Falqueto et al. (2019) found that HEIs focus on the stakeholders that can control them. However,

this attitude can change stakeholder engagement through various external activities affecting these institutions (Gabriel et al., 2018). HEIs are facing the severe challenge of declining student enrollment. All solutions must be on the table to mitigate these challenges. The CCTE falls into the same critical situation resulting from multiple transformations affected by different aspects of problems in the social, technological, economic, and political environments (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). The development of technology that supports economic growth and employment presents the practical reason the youth must secure the new training program by acquiring skills and knowledge to meet the highest level of competition (Filho et al., 2019).

Many factors influenced the career and technical education program, including the attentiveness to industry orientation, the urban versus rural geographical location, the program development, and the advisory committee's influence. However, these programs need a unified definition of sustainability (Ruppel & Gregson, 2017). The community becomes the living reference for every member involved in the collaboration process to solve the crucial problems affecting the community members' lives regarding education, health, employment, food, and transportation (Cobigo et al., 2016).

Social constructivism is a living process, a lifelong education that every country's education system provides for understanding and definition (Andrews, 2012). Learning starts from when the human being comes to life till the end of life; it can mean adult education, training for a career, or learning a new language (Andrews, 2012). In the European community, collaborative leadership extends its application to various activities in different valuable stages to support the sustainable leadership initiative linked to the shared beliefs among the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) leaders of the European Union, which reflects the level of cognitive proximity in leaders' views, aligning with the perceived success with which they extend the

participation from every European leader (Müller & Van Esch, 2019). Universities play an essential role in community development, initiating activities outside the classrooms in partnership with stakeholders (Katsamunská & Rosenbaum, 2020). HEIs' stakeholders participate in different activities, including the enrollment campaign, the fundraising to support the learning activities, and their professions and experiences to benefit the HEIs and the community (Labanauskis & Ginevičius, 2017). This study considers the SSC living in a city in the North-Central United States. The South Sudanese immigrants have a committee in their community that supports them by finding alternative solutions to facilitate their educational, social, and economic inclusion process. Students' participation requires frequent communication and identifying realistic goals following the available budget, allowing this collaboration to influence early career outcomes. The partnership reinforces the relationships between the stakeholders in HEIs, the IS, and ES and supports the students' experience acquisition (De Freitas et al., 2020).

The CCTE provides a new adventure and is attractive in a learning community based on low student enrollment (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). Further, the CCTE estimates the value and builds community support with a small, safe, and successful academic and learning climate, focusing on students' attention and expectation to reinforce community participation (Cavallone et al., 2020). The CCTE and the HEIs share the same challenges of declining student enrollment and recruitment relative to the factors related to technology integration, program funding, maintaining online courses, and supporting the diversity program (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). Social media's advantages include supporting communications and relationship reinforcement in favor of distance reduction and encouraging alum interaction, especially during fundraising in the HEIs, which promotes alum engagement behavior and supports the alma mater (Sutrave et

al., 2020). The administrators of the HEIs have opportunities to apply solutions to these crucial problems by considering the valuable support from every internal and external stakeholder (Beerrens & Udam, 2017). The CCTE graduates promote the substantial presence and impact of the CCTE within the community through multiple actions to convince many individuals to follow successful alums and register for the same purpose (Phillips, 2018).

Stakeholder theory in HEIs initiates strategic organizational management, reinforcing the IS and ES collaboration. The community offers active support when their collaborative leadership keeps the community members on a strategic plan involving comprehensive support in a multisectoral dimension. The SSC members are still in need of different supports and information about the areas of school choice for their children, the nearest health centers and the services offered, the employment. HEIs focus on producing the stakeholders' long-standing experience (Avci et al., 2015). The stakeholder theory focuses on business, in which profitable production is at the center of the action, involving every individual or group directly or indirectly affected by the firm or the organization (Freeman, 1984). The ESs provide vital information to support the strategic management of the HEI (Azman et al., 2019).

The success of stakeholder management suggests conditions for establishing, maintaining, and governing stakeholder collaboration in higher education by connecting the members and mitigating the challenges in addressing complex environmental issues through the cooperation of ESs (Mampaey et al., 2017). The proactive organization of collaboration among multiple education institutions' stakeholders reinforces their activities (Jensen et al., 2018). The partnership between the HEIs' stakeholders starts with their identification and analysis to evaluate their potential participation (Achhnani, 2019). Inclusive and holistic community development requires low-income members to collaborate with their community leaders to

identify and address local issues. Students' participation requires frequent communication and clear goals for the opportunity to influence early career outcomes (Dollinger et al., 2019).

Stakeholder theory applies to the HEI to initiate strategic organizational management, reinforcing the collaboration with the internal and ESs (Beerkens & Udam, 2017). The community will offer an active collaboration when the collaborative leadership keeps the community members informed about the strategic plan, which involves comprehensive support in inclusive multisectoral activities.

Stakeholder theory refers to a business with a growing interest in strategically managing the role of primary and secondary stakeholders for the benefit of the enterprises (Parmar et al., 2010). These are the employees, communities, stakeholders' creditors, government, customers, and enterprise owners. The stakeholders in education are individuals, groups, or organizations that directly or indirectly impact training for the sustainability and success of the education programs, such as students, families, community members, local business and organization leaders, school boards, and students and teachers' organizations. The stakeholder theory also applies to the local community. Citizens realize their American dream by taking advantage of the correct information to the community members about employment, health activities, education, and transportation. The local community leaders are involved in addressing the problems impacting the community members' social and economic issues and searching for their participation. Stakeholders participate in the development of quality assurance with the aim of the control of public funds. They support the internal and external operations to ensure the labor division, competition planning, diversity integration, the release of accurate information, improved governance, student mobility, and adoption of international agencies' requirements for the instauration of sustainable institutional development (McCaffery, 2019). U.S. colleges and

universities are changing their identity to adapt to the evolution observed in the HEIs. This change imposes a shift to integrating the collaboration between HEIs and the public, transferring the responsibility to the stakeholders for the knowledge creation and distribution that benefits the institution's society (Weerts & Freed, 2016). South Sudanese students' experience starts with the initial enrollment and maintaining enrollment until graduation, a long way through the learning process and participation in different activities like sports, volunteering in the community, participating in the student union, and receiving information about career preparation (McCaffery, 2019). These steps constituting the student experience play an essential role in career preparation, adding more knowledge on the learning procedures happening in face-to-face classes or online in a safe environment. Safety and quality assurance are two critical components of learning success. In contrast, in many HEIs, the student's presence is unavoidable in securing the accountability framework.

The value of collaboration in the leadership challenge acknowledges how to be an exemplary leader, knowing that it takes work to make change happen by oneself in the HEIs or organizations, considering that sustainable collaboration is the fruit of long-term relationships. The sense and feeling of support and trust for success are necessary for teamwork in the group to achieve progress and work together for a bright future (Bischoff et al., 2017). Fletcher and Gordon (2017) reviewed the status of career and professional education. They recommended qualitative research with an in-depth description of the CTE administrators related to the demand for new programs and enrollment. Previous research presented some difficulties HEIs, including declining student enrollment in the CTE programs due to funding and initiation of the online programs (Dortch, 2014; Gauthier, 2018). Lyytinen et al. (2017) recommended further research to explore how Finnish and other European HEIs develop their ES relationships. Jensen et al.

(2018) expressed the need for more research to understand the collaboration between HEIs and the surrounding environment. Heyward (2019) compared traditional vocational-technical education to the Cnd and confirmed that CTE educators are developing learning opportunities in the workplace. Heyward (2019) stated that CTE schools break the boundaries between school and community, trade unions, and 4-year institutions. It offered collaboration with the practitioners through internships and job shadowing, inspired by the fifth reauthorization of the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Professional Education Act (Perkins V), effective in July 2019. Perkins V, this new federal legislation supports workplace-based learning, postsecondary training, industry credentials, students of various backgrounds, and STEM career programs. This new policy will promote collaboration among the ESs, who will positively support the program's success (Beerens & Udam, 2017).

Summary

The research reviewed on this topic primarily centers on traditional stakeholders of HEIs as well as administrators' managerial style without creating a pathway for understanding or listening to their voices (Wise et al., 2018). This literature review presents the theoretical framework containing the fundamental theory that supports this, followed by related literature on HEIs' internal and external stakeholders and their collaboration. The partnership among the ESs has yet to be a topic of research interest. The ESs continue to activate their support of the HEI and the CCTE management and remain essential due to their participation in developing the education programs.

The U.S. HEIs and the CCTE are getting the necessary legal permission from Congress to receive essential financial support for implementing diverse training programs. However, this support must present the expected societal impact, an ongoing process facing the unstable

economic environment. This continuing support will produce a favorable implication for this training in human capital development. Alums, firms, communities, and multiple organizations are involved in training activities. Researchers have not yet examined the collaboration between these groups in order to fully understand how far HEIs and the CCTE leadership can develop their strategies. This literature review targeted the following research areas: the theoretical framework of the stakeholder theory, the internal and external stakeholders, and the external stakeholders' collaboration. Based on this literature review, there is a need to study the cooperation among the ESs of the CCTE.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This case study focused on the impact of the collaboration among the external stakeholders (ESs) of the college of career and technical education (CCTE) in the North Central United States. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the impact of the collaboration among the external stakeholders (ESs), the South Sudanese community (SSC) leaders, and the alums of the CCTE on the enrollment of South Sudanese students in the CCTE. The ESs for the research site in a city in the North Central United States included the CCTE alums, the local SSC leaders, the church pastors, and South Sudanese tribal leaders. The aim was to understand the participants' experiences in their natural setting, how the alums living in the SSC organized their collaboration with the local community leaders, and how this collaboration affected new student enrollment. CCTE faces the crucial challenge of declining enrollment for many reasons, including the impact of COVID-19 on the global economy, support from the government, and external donors' contributions. Alums play a vital role in implementing CCTE activities both within and outside the institution. The 12 participants included 10 CCTE alums and two community leaders. Three data collection methods were implemented for this research in order to gain the participants' perceptions of the phenomenon and support triangulation: reflective journals, focus group meetings, and individual interviews. NVivo software assisted with the data coding and analysis of this qualitative research investigation. This chapter discusses the research design, the central research question and subquestions, the setting and participants, the procedures, the data collection and data analysis process, the researcher positionality, and the trustworthiness of the study .

Research Design

A case study is one of the seven approaches of qualitative research methods that originated in the 18th century: case study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, action research, and critical genres (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Frederic Le Play (1806-1882) wrote 36 monographs based on the observations of 300 families in his book, *Les Ouvriers Europeens*, published in 1855, which is among the first empirical research in social sciences (Mogey, 1955). Stake (1995) described the intrinsic case study as a method of studying the particularity and complexity of a single case to understand its activity from a crucial circumstance. Using a qualitative case study to address the fundamental questions about an issue helped me to explore, explain, describe, evaluate, and theorize to collect the critical ideas and themes about this complex phenomenon (Weller et al., 2018). Yin (2018) defined the essential trilogy of case study research as the mode of inquiry, the case studies as the method of investigation, the research method used in case study research, and the case as the standard unit of the investigation case study. A case study involves an in-depth description and analysis of data collected from a bounded environment (Yin, 2018). The fixed environment for this study is the South Sudanese alums of CCTE, their local community leaders, and a bounded sample of 12 participants, considering the declining enrollment in technology training institutions (Gordon & Schultz, 2020).

Designing a qualitative study is a challenging process that requires knowledge of the interactions of different fundamental aspects of activities involved in the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I used this qualitative case study design to investigate the contemporary events in the SSC because it allowed the investigation of a recent phenomenon within a real-world setting (Yin, 2018). This qualitative case study followed the principles

developed by Stake (1995), the intrinsic case study, the study of a case, and a group of ESs of the CCTE, which rely on the paradigm of social constructivism. The research design that uses a qualitative approach encompasses methods involving the exploration of shared experiences, the shared culture of a group of people, or individual stories, developing a theory, knowing a group of people, or describing their lives in their natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The qualitative investigation strategy for the current study included the use of open-ended questions from a small number of participants identified through the demographic form (see Appendix E). Through the reflexive journal, individual interviews, and focus group meetings, I explored the perspectives of 12 participants regarding their field of activities and the impact of their collaboration on the enrollment of international students at the CCTE. I organized the reflexive journal with seven CCTE alums, contacted them by telephone to find three more alums for the individual interviews, and conducted focus group meetings with two participants, leaders from their community. CCTE is seen as a unique program for immigrants that helps them obtain the necessary training required for employment with local businesses. This education further facilitates their adaptation to the local society by earning employment after their training. The central phenomenon was the impact of the collaboration among the CCTE's ESs, which involved new relations and their effects on the enrollment of new international students in the CCTE. The alums of the CCTE and their local community leaders are the ESs. The theory guiding this research was the stakeholder theory applied to the CCTE.

The reflexive journal helped me to understand the collaboration among the ESs. By asking open-ended questions for the interview and organizing the focus group meeting, this qualitative case study revealed important information from the SSC who participated in this research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After having each interview participant read and sign the

consent form, I conducted the individual interviews which proceeded until saturation was achieved (Weller et al., 2018). Like any other qualitative approach, qualitative case studies search for meaning and understanding, for which the researcher collects and analyzes the data from an inductive investigation for a descriptive result (Yin, 2018). The focus group meetings allowed me to gain additional wisdom and insight into the participants' real-life experiences (Breen, 2006). This study aimed to produce a definitive case study covering the following characteristics: being significant, basing it on the public interest, and applying a rationally critical theory. Stakeholder theory in this case study deepened the theory's application in the CCTE (Brazer et al., 2014).

A complete case study has limited boundaries, gathers all the crucial evidence, uses proper resources, and considers time management. Considering alternative perspectives, a case study also engages in a clear report production with a possible evaluation, displays sufficient evidence, collects sufficient data, covers validation, and interprets the findings (Yin, 2018). In a qualitative case study, the investigator explores the site based on the limited time and a current bounded system using multiple sources of information for the data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This research explored an intrinsic phenomenon, and the inherent case study was appropriate (Stake, 1995) for developing an in-depth description and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The critical criteria supporting a study's integrity and rigor include extending the theory, defining boundaries for the approach, and addressing the empirical literature review (Gaya & Smith, 2016). The investigation site for the current study was bounded in the SSC in a city in the North Central United States, within a limited time frame of a maximum of two months and used different sources of information. The participants included alums who are members of the SSC and had attended the college of career and technical education, as well as the South Sudanese

community leaders. I was interested in conducting this intrinsic case study research because of my experience of living with SSC members, and thus had an intrinsic interest (Stake, 1995).

Research Questions

Central Research Question

How does the collaboration of the external stakeholders of the college of career and technical education, the alums (international students), and their local community leaders impact new student enrollment?

Subquestion One

How do the local community leaders support South Sudanese student enrollment in the college of career and technical education in a city in the North-Central United States?

Subquestion Two

How do alums support the South Sudanese student' enrollment in the college of career and technical education in a city in the North-Central United States?

Site and Participants

Site

This case study took place in the North-Central United States. Eight male alums, two female alums, and two community leaders, including church leaders and tribal leaders, live together in the SSC in a city in the North-Central United States. This location was chosen because of the vicinity and the relationships the researcher has built with the South Sudanese. The immigrants living in this city organized different groups related to their countries of origin. The distance separates them, as they live in desirable areas of preference corresponding to their employment location, healthcare, schools, and the market. The South Sudanese live in a few different groups; two community leaders participated in the focus group meeting by sharing

information about their experiences in collaboration with the CCTE alums. Cobigo et al. (2016) defined a community as a group of people that interact and support each other and are bound by shared experiences or characteristics, a sense of belonging, and often by their physical proximity. Many community members have attended the CCTE in this city, and I have developed and maintained good contact with the SSC members for a period of 13 years.

Participants

The SSC includes all immigrants from the new country of South Sudan living in Cass County, Fargo, North Dakota. There is an enormous sense of community, even though these community members do not live in the same house, avenue, or street. Their mutual point of reference is the fact that they have all emigrated from the same country, South Sudan. They interact with each other by organizing frequent meetings based on community events such as back to school night. The participants included 10 CCTE alums, eight males and two females, all over 18 years and members of the SSC, as well as two South Sudanese community leaders with constructed experiences in the context of this study. I applied the snowball or chain sampling technique to collect data for this case study to identify cases of interest from people who have clear information on the potential participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ten CCTE alums participated in the reflexive journal and the individual interviews. The focus group meeting involved the two community leaders and was organized in a convenient location to respect the confidentiality of the participants. Since I live in the same area, frequent contact opened the door for this research, and encouraged openness from the participants and allowed me to answer the research questions confidently. Pseudonyms protect the participants' identities (see Appendix D).

Fargo is a growing city where students face challenges in selecting higher education

training programs due to the increased competition in the employment market. The criteria for the participants' selection included being a member of the SSC leadership for two participants and being CCTE alums for the other 10 participants. These alums graduated from one of the following 16 career clusters and specialties approved by the U.S. Department of Education: agriculture, food, and natural resources; architecture and construction. arts, audio, video technology, and communications; business, management, and administration; education and training, finance. government and public administration, health science, hospitality and tourism, human services, information technology, law, public safety, correction, and security; manufacturing, marketing, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; or transportation, distribution, and logistics (Gordon & Schultz, 2020). I applied my managerial knowledge in developing this case study, which attracted my attention to the environment in Cass County, Fargo, North Dakota.

Researcher Positionality

During my experience of living with the SSC members for 13 years since I immigrated to the U.S. I was continually impressed with how many local CCTE graduates had successfully adapted to American society. Their new technical skills that made them attractive to local businesses for employment opportunities, and I was pleasantly surprised to note their participation in the development of the city, their support of their families and sending their children to school, where many of them are also joining the CCTE. A rectangular relationship between the CCTE, the alums, the community leaders, and the new international students facilitates understanding of this issue through the reflexive journal, interview, and focus group. The selection criteria for the community leaders included the quality and frequency of their participation in community activities.

I knew the South Sudanese people when I was a teacher and high school principal in Kenya, having 75% of the total number of students originating from the same country of South Sudan. I accepted a contract to supervise an education project in Tonj, an important city in the middle of South Sudan. I then immigrated to the U.S., where I met the SSC members and continued my relationship with them.

Interpretive Framework

Stake's (1995) case study approach enabled my understanding of the current study's phenomenon from the perspective of social constructivism for the knowledge of the participants' living experiences (Harrison et al., 2017). My work experience from three significant employment opportunities supported my previous training to navigate this study with trust and confidence. Before I earned my master's degree in project management in the U.S., my managerial training at a Congolese university allowed me to gain experience in the field through two critical projects. First, I supervised an education community project sponsored by World Vision in Congo. This experience helped me to understand the collaboration among South Sudanese students and community members in the city where the study took place. Second, I supervised an education project in partnership with UNICEF, the World Food Program, and World Vision, serving seven local communities to implement and reinforce schools in South Sudan. From this experience, I developed new thinking for the scientific community and a unique solution to sustaining CTE in HEIs through ESs collaboration. My motivation was supported by frequent communication with different members of this community, the community leaders, and the local CCTE alums.

The qualitative researchers' knowledge has yet to be discovered but constructed, and the contribution to the reader's experience depends on the participants' perceptions of reality

(Harrison et al., 2017). This reality's construction focused on how the ESs acquire knowledge to develop the current phenomenon. My interest and strategy were to examine the phenomenon through the basic investigation principles of qualitative research methods. These activities took place in the participants' natural living environment to deepen their living realities and focused on their collaboration to build their life experiences.

Each human participant has proper value, which is accurate and observed by others. I wanted to understand how different ESs organize their collaboration and how it affects the enrollment of new international students in the CCTE. The interpretive framework from the social constructivism paradigm guided this case study, focusing on understanding this problem through the main research question and subquestions, the data collection, and the interpretation of the findings, and constitutes the underlying epistemology of this case study. The reality is socially and culturally constructed, allowing individuals to develop the objective meaning of their experiences that I planned to understand (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Social constructionism supports the knowledge in the career and technical education program, where the indication of the continuous construction of social reality is found in the training process (Andrews, 2012). At the CCTE, students acquire knowledge and skills that open the door to new and decent employment. In frequent contact with the community members, students also enter a transformation process that positively changes their life, habits, and experience. In addition, students become more focused on their studies while consolidating collaboration with other college stakeholders: the faculty, the staff, student organizations, the business, and the community.

Philosophical Assumptions

In qualitative research, the researcher is the human instrument. The philosophical assumptions are the expressions of the researcher's beliefs about the phenomenon including the investigation, the research question, and the data collection process. Philosophical assumptions are acquired during the learning process and are addressed in three aspects: ontological assumptions on the nature of reality, epistemological assumptions that can be known from conducting the research, including the methodological assumptions defining the applicable methods and procedure from the paradigm; and axiological assumptions, which reveal the goodness and value of the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These are the assumptions I believed to be trustworthy when I took my first step with this intrinsic case study; a stimulating environment enriched with years of experience in social life.

Ontological Assumption

Ontological assumptions address the reality that students use their language in their interactions to construct their perceptions by interpreting the external world. Their learning is influenced by the interaction between individuals and the environmental context (Andrews, 2012). My beliefs on the nature of reality about the ESs' collaboration lay in the importance placed on the success of a business, community, and organization, (in this case, the CCTE). The world embraces a new way of doing business by operating on international grounds, called globalization, which erects barriers to isolationism. I reported the reality and brought the values known in this study based on the findings from the themes developed in the data analysis process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Epistemological Assumption

The knowledge built upon completing this case study research resulted from the triangulation techniques of inquiry using the reflexive journal, the focus group meetings, and the individual interviews, after asserting the gap from a thorough literature review synthesis. “With the epistemological assumption, conducting a qualitative study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 21). The literature review helps gather important information about the studies organized by different researchers in the same area of knowledge to build a new perspective that facilitates the application of the stakeholder theory in the CCTE. The participation of the South Sudanese alums and their community leaders provided important information derived from their living experience in making life better by mobilizing their energy to adapt to American society through work and discipline. Many questions refer to the knowledge building from the origin of the case study, the justification, and the relationship with the researcher by keeping a distance from the data collected and honestly handling quotes from participant quotes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Axiological Assumption

Having lived with the South Sudanese refugees for 10 years in Kenya and South Sudan, and having immigrated to the U.S. with the belief that education, employment, and living conditions are free, I soon learned that successful social and economic adaptation results from strong learning discipline and hard work. As I conducted this case study, I progressively identified the weakness and assessed the efficacy of the research method and the accessibility of the research field to overcome the challenges that arose during the data collection process. The most critical question related to the role of values, where I continually addressed biases, including my own interpretations as well as those of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Researcher's Role

The SSC members live in different locations in the same city. I worked on each data collection activity by creating a positive environment previously accepted by the interviewee to facilitate the participants to produce complete information. After I collected the reflexive journals written by the CCTE alums from the SSC, I used an audio recorder to gather data from the participants' voices, clearly expressed during the focus group meetings and the individual interviews; in one-way dialogue to obtain more information from the participants' lived experiences, based on my agenda (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I monitored the participants' interactions and activities during the focus group meetings. I took care that my personal biases did not affect the data collection process. I maintained the confidentiality of the participants by assigning pseudonyms. Knowing the culture of the South Sudanese in general, and particularly those living in the particular city where the study took place, helped to adapt the research strategies as necessary. This knowledge helped me discover and understand the meaning of the participants' experiences in this intrinsic case study that I initiated based on my previous field experience, sharing living social values with the South Sudanese.

Procedures

This study focused on discovering the lived experience of the problem of the impact of collaboration among the ESs of the CCTE, the South Sudanese community leaders, and the alums on new student enrollment, which has never been identified. The research began with the information letter addressed to the South Sudanese community chairperson (see Appendix B), followed by the recruitment plan (see Appendix C), the data collection plan using the reflexive journal (see Appendix F), the individual interview (see Appendix G), and the focus group meetings (see Appendix I). I prepared and conducted the interviews using open-ended research

questions. I identified the interviewees, obtained consent, found a mutually convenient place to conduct the interviews, and collected data using the interview's opened-ended questions with an audio recorder. After collecting the data, I decided on practical transcription strategies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the living instrument, the researcher's role was to collect data and interpret the participants' experiences (Stake, 1995). I was the facilitator, introducing the activity and guiding the participants' interactions. I explained the confidentiality, added comments and questions for active participation, validated the participants' comments, kept the conversation on track, summarized the debate, and closed the activity with triangulation (Then et al., 2014). The data analysis was performed by recording the participants' experiences, understanding, and interpretation of their knowledge through the reflexive journal, the focus group meetings, and the individual interviews, before writing the final report. I used NVivo software to support the coding and analysis of these data. In the focus group meeting, the researcher's role was to organize the conference, present the introduction, ensure consent forms were completed, discuss agreement regarding complementarity, facilitate interaction, and comments, and probing questions to help the focus group validate what was being said, acknowledged comments from participants, encouraged expansion and discussion, encouraged all participants to discuss their experiences, kept the conversation on track, summarized the debate, and finally, thanked the individuals for their active participation (Then et al., 2014). CCTE alums, members of the SSC, and their community leaders were involved in this research. The interviews were organized by a snowball or chain sampling, using contact by telephone or direct contact. the city where the study took place. After the participants completed the reflexive journal, I organized a 45 minute semi-structured interview with three CCTE alums in a location convenient for each participant, using pseudonyms to protect their identity. The pseudonyms were taken from external individual

names, plants, trees, flowers, and fruits chosen by each participant. The focus group meeting was conducted with two SSC leaders, c who were also given pseudonyms to protect their privacy. The following steps guided the data analysis after data collection: managing and collecting the data; reading and writing new ideas: describing and classifying codes into themes; developing and accessing interpretations; and representing and visualizing the data before providing the account of findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Permission

The proposal approval opened the way to the data collection, but first I applied for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, which determines and fixes the conduct to follow when the researcher is dealing with human participant (see Appendix A). Most of the communities' chairpersons were known by the public. Many nationalities are represented, such as the Burundian, the Somalian, the Iraqi, the Liberian, the Sudanese, the South Sudanese, the Nepalese, the Bhutanese, etc. I had known the SSC chairperson because of my living in the SSC, so it was easy to communicate with him. I started with the local South Sudanese community chairperson, who provided the information about the first recruit. I continued the recruitment process (see Appendix C) after I had presented to him the necessary information about my study. I explained all the data collection activities to gain his confidence and seek his permission to conduct the study in this community (see Appendix B). The participants completed and signed the consent form (see Appendix D) and provided their demographic information (see Appendix E) before the implementation of the three research methods: the reflexive journal (see Appendix F), the individual interviews (see Appendix G), and the focus group meetings (see Appendices H & I). The content of these documents was shared with the chairperson and the participants. The permission facilitated contact with the SSC members who agreed to participate in the study.

Obtaining the completed consent forms from the participants confirmed the decision for the beginning of the data collection process, following requirements indicated in Appendix C.

Recruitment Plan

The recruitment plan consisted of the sample group, the sample size, and the convenient type of sample that I identified through the snowball or chain sampling strategy, which helped to identify interesting cases from individuals who knew this case and had valuable information or experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Two stakeholder targeted respondents who participated in this qualitative case study are the South Sudanese CCTE alums and their community leaders, who were part of the external stakeholders. I considered 12 participants for the size sample, where it was possible to collect important data from the lived experiences of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Seven participants completed the reflexive journal, eight engaged in individual interviews, two community leaders participated in the focus group meeting. Through the process of active snowball sampling, three alums provided a personal consultation to identify the participants from the community leadership who had CCTE students in their families, as well as any alums who may have provided information about any other former CCTE graduate.

A South Sudanese community leader may include a designated community member, a tribal leader, or a church leader. This contact increased the number of participants by two. Once two community leaders agreed to participate, I presented them with the consent form, which not only provided permission to be involved in the research but was a significant agreement between the participants and me. I then discussed their roles and responsibilities during the research and assured them their data would remain confidential (see Appendix D). We then agreed on the place and modality of the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

After identifying the CCTE alum participants, I contacted them by telephone and explained the reflexive journals. The journal prompts included three areas of interest from the CCTE alums' experiences: before the collaboration experience, during the collaboration experience, and after the collaboration experience, as well as a description of their journey post-graduation, to include their employment and participation in community activities. The person I contacted for the individual interview choose the convenient meeting location, the date and time.

Data Collection Plan

I used three data collection methods as required for the triangulation in qualitative research, starting with the reflexive journal, then the focus group meeting, and ending with the individual interviews. During the data collection, confidentiality characterized all the functions. The participants signed the consent document using their proper names; however, I did not disclose this information to anyone else and assigned pseudonyms to each participant. I collected the info through semi-structured face-to-face interviews, using open-ended questions to collect essential ideas and themes from the participants (Weller et al., 2018). The database was organized to improve the case study's reliability, keeping the critical documents such as the linking document and the reflexive journal for easy retrieval in a secured drawer, and the research treatment in a computer locked with a password for three years.

The in-depth interview questions were developed to align the research questions with the sub-questions, using the cross-reference interview items to ensure adequate progress. They identified minimum information to collect from the participants. I used the coding electronically because of its efficient data storage and organization, using the second cycle coding and the pattern analysis for all the data collected (Saldaña2016).

Ten alums from the CCTE and two South Sudanese community leaders participated in

this study. This composition created an equilibrium that reinforced the validity of the data provided by the participants. I considered the demographic information such as age and gender; only for the participants, members of the South Sudanese community, male and female 18 years old or more, who studied at the CCTE, and the leaders of this community living in a city in the North Central U.S. The demographic data provided a more holistic picture of the participants.

Reflexive Journal

Reflexive journaling means describing a recent experience and unpacking salient aspects (e. g., people, resources, abilities) that affect living and doing so in an ongoing manner over time (Lutz & Paretti, 2019). This described the self-reflexive journal of the CCTE alums, which facilitated the track of the participants' daily lives and presented the reflections on their experiences for the research activities. The reflexive journal may show relevant findings that would otherwise have been missed during the different phases of data collection; a tool for observing, questioning, critiquing, and synthesizing during research activities (Annink, 2017). The data collected using the reflexive journal began as soon as the IRB granted approval to conduct the study. I started the reflexive journal activity before the interviews to avoid losing any critical event during the investigation, from the beginning to the reporting. I addressed the prompts to the seven selected alums in the following order: at graduation, before their collaboration experience of participation in community activities, during their search for employment, and after the experience of getting a job, providing supportive advice to the new international candidates. The data collected from the reflexive journal contained accurate descriptions of what the participants saw and heard in the field and their lived experiences about their collaboration in the community. This journal provided meaning and support for understanding the phenomenon (Lutz & Paretti, 2019).

Reflexive Journal Questions

1. Before the collaboration experience, how did you succeed in learning the courses related to career and technical education in your field of study? How did you interact with other alums after graduation? How do the community leaders support new candidates joining the CCTE? (CRQ, SQ1)

This question refers to the central research question, which explores the collaboration aspect, the transition from high school, and the enrollment process to the CCTE. Qualitative research questions are open-ended, where the researcher does not indicate the direction (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

2. During the first step of the collaboration experience, how did you succeed in finding a job? How did you interact with other alums and community leaders? (CRQ)

This question explores the other side of stakeholders, who the alums are, and their relationship with their alma mater, which helps to support the enrollment of new students.

3. Gaining the collaboration experience, how do you participate in community activities? How do you support new candidate students to join the CCTE? How does your new qualification impact your family? (SQ2)

An essential side of this question is related to the second sub-question, where the interaction of the community members creates an opportunity to support each other when dealing with the CCTE enrollment and the employee through community collaboration, providing support to the community members such as apartment renting, health, and learning issues.

Reflexive Journal Analysis Plan

This step happened after the data collection and coding, where eight participants responded to the reflexive journal prompts by writing their lived experiences. The following

steps from the data analysis spiral (Creswell & Poth, 2018) guided the coding by managing and organizing the data, reading, and writing new ideas, describing, classifying codes into themes, developing, and accessing interpretations, and finally representing and visualizing the data before providing the account of findings. I used queries and auto-coding to create nodes; the same process for all the data analysis (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019).

To identify the codes, I looked for the representations and the regularities, using the text questions to generate codes, comparing, and contrasting passages of texts (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). The data analysis with NVivo software presents different advantages, like efficient data stockage and transforming teamwork to produce one consistent result (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). This software facilitates clarity and detail and ensures the logical control of data collected, reflecting the research topic content (O'Neill, 2013). I used content analysis to facilitate the interpretation of the content from the classification and to identify themes or patterns. The following steps covered the necessary analysis activities: organizing the data, finding and organizing ideas and concepts, building over-arching themes in the data, ensuring reliability and validity in the data analysis and the findings, and presenting possible and plausible explanations of the results (O'Connor & Gibson, 2003).

Focus Group

The focus group participants from the SSC were the tribal and local church leaders. They could know each other but had different qualifications and work experiences to share from the individual interviews (see Appendix F). In the 1930s, Herzog was among the first researchers who used focused discussion in group interview situations (Tadajewski, 2016). This activity was an essential step because of its advantage of having the two participants together in one place for about 45 minutes. The focus group meeting location was suggested by one of the focus group

participants and was audio recorded with a recorder and a laptop for backup. Focus group meetings present several advantages for containing sensitive and personal disclosures (Guest et al., 2017). Other benefits include time, availability, and a focus on comparing and sharing individual experiences to generate new ideas (Breen, 2006). According to Then et al. (2014), the role of a focus group moderator is to introduce the discussion, encourage the participants, monitor the interaction, supervise the completion of the consent forms, have the group agree on the confidentiality, elaborate the summary, and provide a final word of thanks to the participants.

The first challenge was determining the meeting time with the participants. As the focus group moderator, I selected two participants from the SSC leadership (Stake, 1995), based upon their accessibility, responsibilities, and willingness to share their ideas regarding ESs' collaboration experiences. The focus group activity included the welcome, the two participants' written background information, the topic overview, the presentation of the rules to preserve the assurance of confidentiality, the submission of questions from the general to the specific, and the expression of privacy (Breen, 2006).

Using a document in qualitative research requires a complete documentation analysis to deliver quality rather than quantity (Wood et al., 2020). The reason for using both individual (interviews) and focus group meetings was that the complementary results obtained from these two approaches produced a broad range of items I developed in Chapter Four. In contrast, focus group meetings often disclose more sensitive information (Guest et al., 2017). Focus group meetings also allow the researcher to delve deeper into themes generated by other data collection methods. For this reason, I introduced those themes as questions during this process whenever it felt most natural to do so. . Other questions included the engagement questions, exploration questions, and an exit question.

Focus Group Questions

1. How do alums maintain their favorite period for work? (CRQ)
2. How do they collaborate with other people doing the same job? (CRQ)

Exploration questions

3. How do they join the college of career and technical education? (SQ2)
4. How did the community leaders support them during their training? (SQ1)
5. How do they explain their success in their respective specialties? (SQ2)
6. How do you collaborate with these graduates from the career and technical education college? (SQ2)
7. How does their work impact the community? (SQ2)

Exit question.

8. Please explain something new about your training, work, and community. (CRQ)

The engagement questions introduced the participants and created a comfortable environment for discussion. The exploration questions took the participants to the topic's in-depth content to get their views on the college of career and technical education enrollment, the candidates, the community support, the training, the alum collaboration, and their impact on the community.

The candidates needed to perceive the students from secondary and postsecondary education, their career, and the professions necessary to achieve a successful professional life (Castellano et al., 2017). Students understand and decide on the option for the skills they learn from each training activity. They know what their peers have found necessary, allowing them to recall previous successful experiences (Phillips, 2018). Sharing the alum experiences supported the decision-making for new enrollment to the CCTE (Gabriel et al., 2018).

Focus Group Analysis Plan

After collecting data from the disposition of two community leaders, the focus group recording was transcribed for initial coding. I considered the same steps indicated in the reflexive journal analysis plan, and continued using the NVivo software to organize the codes that constituted the nodes. I applied the query or word frequency that I reflected on and visualized before writing the memos or notes for the articles, the nodes, or folders from the data, considering the demographic indications (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019).

Individual Semi-structured Interviews

Creswell and Poth (2018) identified the general steps to follow when conducting interviews: starting with the interviewee's identification, choosing the type of interview, preparing an audio recording of the questions and responses, taking brief notes during the interview, locating a quiet and suitable place for conducting the interview, obtaining a consent form signed by the participants, having a flexible plan, using probes to get more information, and being courteous at the end of the interview. Each recorded interview lasted about 45 minutes, took place at a location chosen by the participant, and started with the reinforcement of my frequent contact with the South Sudanese community members. The development of the interview questions aligns with the central research question and the subquestions, ensuring good progress and identifying minimum information to collect from these approaches.

My regular contact with the SSC was an advantage for my introduction to the community chairperson in order to access any community member qualified to participate in this study. The interview questions covered three areas of interest: collaboration, registration, and community. The individual interviews produced information from the participants regarding their opinions, behaviors, and experiences to better understand this phenomenon. The interview contained the

field procedures, the questions, the space to include notes from the meetings, a guide for the study report, and reminders about the case study's problems. Weller et al. (2018) suggested that open-ended questions or other interviewing techniques help explore topics in depth, understand processes, and identify potential causes of observed correlations. These included the appendices, ensuring interview questions aligned with research questions, constructing an inquiry-based conversation, and receiving feedback on interview appendices (Gaya & Smith, 2016). The open-ended interview questions covered three areas of interest: alums, collaboration, and enrollment, with the central research question and the research subquestions, noted in parentheses for each CCTE alum.

Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself. (SQ2)
2. After you graduate from the college of career and technical education, you become a member of the alumni. How do you plan to continue participating in the activities of the college of career and technical education? (CRQ)
3. How does your job change your living conditions? (SQ1)
4. How do you continue participating in local community activities? (CRQ)

Alums of the college of career and technical education and the South Sudanese community leaders' collaboration:

5. How do you get support from other college alums of career and technical education? (CRQ)
6. How do the local community leaders support the activities of the college of career and technical education? (CRQ)

7. Tell me about your relationship with the college of career and technical education registered students. (SQ2)
8. How do you keep your relationship with your employer? (SQ1)
9. As an alumnus and community member, how is the relationship between the alums and the community leaders? (SQ2)

New student enrollment in the college of career and technical education:

10. How did your training facilitate your employment? (SQ2)
11. How is your community involved in the education programs at a higher level in this city? (SQ1)
12. How do your community leaders maintain a relationship with the college of career and technical education? (SQ1)
13. Please describe how your work inspires youth to enroll at the employment and technical education college. (SQ2)
14. Experts identified that enrollment is declining in career and technical education colleges. How does the collaboration among the alums improve new students' enrollment? (CRQ)
We had a good conversation about this phenomenon, and I appreciate your participation.
I want to ask a final question.
15. How do you observe the relationship between the alums and the community leaders that can improve enrollment in the college of career and technical education? (CRQ)

HEIs face substantial challenges in establishing stable and productive relationships with their stakeholders, supporting the development of a positive response to society's relevance (Jensen et al., 2018). The rapid change generated by technology produces an increasing need for STEM experts earned by students from STEM programs, which deliver increased favorable

conditions observed in society (Fletcher & Gordon, 2017). HEIs' CR is supported by the desire to share experiences, offer help, and participate in alum meetings (Pedro et al., 2020). Improving communication between HEIs and their alums will produce a positive result from their involvement in supportive, active activities for their alma mater (Anthony, 2020).

Question one is introductory, which opens the participant's free expression of ESS's collaboration experiences. Questions two through four ask about the alums' relationships while living in the local community. Students and alums benefit from the alums mentoring program supporting university engagement (Dollinger, 2019). Questions five through nine focus on the stakeholder collaboration that requires an effort encompassing resources, time, and commitment to realize the objectives and goals (Lawson, 2004). This collaboration creates an opportunity and encourages young students to register for the CCTE. HEIs play an essential role in developing alum relationships, which produce various advantages for these institutions' support (Pedro et al., 2020). Questions 10 through 15 focus on the enrollment that would be affected by different factors, including the individual and social elements related to the education goals, gender, ethnicity, language, parents' education, geographic location (White & Lee, 2019), and family socioeconomic status (Xing et al., 2019). I used these questions to explore the participants' experiences while attending the CCTE, their interactions in the local community, their employment status, and their impact on CCTE enrollment.

Individual Semi-structured Interview Analysis Plan

All interviews were transcribed for coding. As this is a qualitative case study, I used the same NVivo software for coding and analyzing the data collected from the open-ended interviews after the initial coding. This procedure followed the same steps used for the reflexive journal analysis. The individual interviews also included eight participants from whom I

collected the data for this research stage. Thematic coding followed initial coding, and the codes generated in this step were used to help guide the focus group meetings.

Data Synthesis

Qualitative research uses rigor in the thematic analysis and supports the findings' credibility following the participants' knowledge and confidence (Roberts et al., 2019). The data analysis focused on considering first impressions and final compilations, freely deciding on the appropriate research (Stake, 1995). NVivo software was used to support the organization of the existing data for coding, placing codes in quotations, an essential tool used for codification, after identifying the central and subcategories (Trigueros et al., 2017).

The recorded audio and the written notes of the interviews from the three different data collection methods were transcribed into the NVivo software for inductive coding. This process started by importing files into the NVivo software for inductive coding creating the categories and the coding structure. Lastly, it was imported and organized with the reflexive journal results to produce the final report. Stake (1995) discussed the issues regarding validating the gathered data and offered strategies for triangulating data, including data source, investigator, and methodological triangulation. Through these procedures and member checking, the research gained the needed confirmation that increased reliance on the interpretation. It demonstrated an assertion from the reflexive journal, the focus group meeting, and the individual interviews.

Using NVivo software, data collection provided verbatim transcription from the audio recorder, and participant responses offered from these data collection methods, which highlighted the most important themes, quotes, and any unexpected findings through the analysis (Trigueros et al., 2017). Breen (2006) suggested three steps, starting with the most critical pieces, followed by the most meaningful quotes, and lastly, any surprising results. NVivo

software is developed by QSR International, which manages, shapes, and supports qualitative data analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Trustworthiness

Four criteria dimensions will address the rigor: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. The analysis will consider the data collection guidelines, participant criteria selection, and data saturation. Trustworthiness ensures sufficient detail through transparency and helps the reader assess the validity of the work. The reflexive journal, the focus group meeting, and the individual interviews, focused on particularization rather than generalization (Stake, 1995).

Credibility

The study's credibility confirms that the researcher's description is equivalent to the participants' perceptions of internal validity (Gaya & Smith, 2016). I maintained credibility by clearly and accurately reproducing the participants' data by addressing, clarifying, and explaining all the difficulties found in the patterns, themes, and other issues to make them easier to understand. I ensured that the conclusions resulted from the data analysis and synthesis, which stemmed from the coding of the collected data. I applied the triangulation by using three different data collection methods: the reflexive journal, the focus group meeting, and the individual interviews to support the credibility of this qualitative case study, which helped to confirm what the participants shared during the data collection process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Transferability

The goal of a qualitative case study is undoubtedly transferability and not generalization. Transferability means the degree to which the results can be understandable and knowledgeable so that another researcher can apply the same research in similar contexts and settings.

Transferability reflects the external validity of the research (Gaya & Smith, 2016). The qualitative case study presents the goal of transferability. It is not generalizable, but researchers can apply it in similar contexts and settings. At the same time, qualitative research validates the accuracy of the findings from the process, including different aspects of triangulation related to the data, the investigation, the theory, and the methodology (Stake, 1995). The transferability of this study was possible through the clear data organization containing the original information I collected from the participants in this qualitative case study, selected through the snowball sampling method. The results of this study provided an excellent experience that may be applied in the college of career and technical education to improve the enrollment of international students.

Dependability

Dependability focuses on the processes and procedures for collecting and interpreting the data. Data dependability results from the data collected from the participants reported after the evaluation of findings, covering the reliability (Gaya & Smith, 2016). It helps to check if more options exist to address and support the study. Using the database facilitated keeping the data I collected from the field with transparent, logical, and traceable documentation that any researcher can easily access to track the process and procedures adopted in this study, which helps confirm the dependability. Therefore, the entire method was evident in the final report, from the data collection and analysis, record keeping, field notes, and transcripts for an audit trail.

Confirmability

The reflexivity in this case study was covered by my training and experience, which supported the treatment of data received from the participants with objectivity (Gaya & Smith,

2016). A trained specialist in management and project management, I have experience in the field, worked as a high school principal in Kenya with most students being South Sudanese, have worked in South Sudan as an education project supervisor, and have lived amongst them now for 13 years, which began in Kenya, then South Sudan, and finally in the United States. Writing this case study reflects my interpretation of culture, gender, class, and socio-politics, which combined my views and the participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Confirmability is established if the researcher used the findings from credible sources. The objective was to confirm the findings and the interpretation resulting from the data collected from the research field, which produce logical performances for the study. Setting confirmability helps identify biases and prejudices, confirms the results originate from the data, and ensures they stem from documented, logical, and traceable data, producing clear findings and interpretations. I considered providing an answer to the question asked by Stake (1995) about knowing if the story is rightly recorded, analyzed, and reported in this study, where I included an accurate account of the participants' experiences, which was validated through three strategies of data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

Among the significant ethical issues that a researcher needs to anticipate and then address during the studies is the interchange and review of participants' benefits as the researcher interacts with the participants during all stages of the research (Sanjari et al., 2014). Moral problems appear at all stages of the research activities and must be addressed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Obtaining site/participant access were considered in the information sharing with the SSC chairperson, whom I personally occasionally contacted. Conducting this research required permission from the SSC chairperson, so that he could be aware of this activity going on in his

community, and that the participants had voluntarily agreed to participate by signing the informed consent(see Appendix D). This step was a critical issue to be addressed, as the South Sudanese immigrants kept developing practical strategies for adapting to the challenging life in the North Central United States. I used pseudonyms, stored the data, and will secure the password on my computer for a period of three years, covering the protection condition to ensure data were collected from the participants. This process started from the reflexive journal and included the memo for potential themes, coding segments, a list of codes, code to identify quotes, notes for the description of each code, and notice for ideas (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I developed the systems for organizing the categories and data themes, presentation, discussion, and interpretation. I presented the findings with the data themes resulting in systematic analysis and reporting.

The focus group meetings presented an ethical challenge involving confidentiality, anonymity, and risk of harm. The researcher was mainly concerned with the comments produced outside the site where focus group discussions occur. Harm may come out from the words in a sensitive question. I prevented such a statement by avoiding debate on a sensitive question or directing this type of item to any participant who presented an extra comment on private or public practices. The consent form included the participants' withdrawal option, affecting the data before analysis (Sim & Waterfield, 2019). I decided to mask participants' names to avoid information that could be identified in the analysis file after the case study reporting (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the methods I used to collect the data, the setting and the participants, the researcher's positionality, the procedures, the data collection plan, and the

trustworthiness. The research field was in the SSC, in Cass County, Fargo, North Dakota, where I collected data using the reflexive journal, focus group meetings, and individual interviews. These three methods covered the strategies to answer the research questions for this qualitative case study, from 12 participants' experiences: seven alums participated in the reflexive journal, two community leaders participated in the focus group meetings, and three alums participated in the individual interviews. These three data collection methods ensured triangulation's scientific condition in qualitative research for trustworthiness. During the investigation, facilitated by the snowball technique, I successfully met SSC members who actively participated in this study. I maintained confidentiality by using pseudonyms. My role was to facilitate the free expression of the participants. The aim was to examine the impact of collaboration among the ESs of the CCTE. After collecting data from these three techniques, the findings report was produced by developing the codes and themes that I analyzed through the NVivo software.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This intrinsic qualitative case study aimed to understand the impact of the college of career and technical education's external stakeholders' collaboration, the South Sudanese alums, and their community leaders on the enrollment of new international students at the CCTE in a city in the North Central United States. Chapter Four presents the findings from this qualitative study, following the central research question and two subquestions formulated to elaborate the process of searching for the answer through practical methods. I present the participants' expressions of their experiences, their demographics, and the findings that emerged from the thematic analysis.

Participants

Ten South Sudanese alums from the CCTE and two South Sudanese community (SSC) leaders aged over 18 years participated in this study, selected through the snowball sampling technique. Thirty-six persons received a call inviting participation; 10 alums responded positively: two females and eight males.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

No	Name	Gender	Age : 30+	Field of study
01	Aoka	M	30+	N/A
02	Bibya	M	30+	IT
03	Embi	M	30+	Geology
04	Hadden	M	30+	IT
05	Khol	M	30+	Electric Engineer

06	Kuyu	M	30+	Geology
07	Laile	F	30+	Nursing
08	Morhin	M	30+	Auto Mechanic
09	Papy	F	30+	Nursing
10	Passy	M	30+	Photography
11	Piya	M	30+	Education
12	Tika	M	30+	IT

Aoka

Aoka was a leader of the most important South Sudanese tribes, living in the SSC in the U.S. His children graduated from college; he enjoys his retirement while providing advice to his community members on different occasions, such as at the graduation parties.

Bibya

Bibya was an IT graduate and a member of the SSC. He is actively involved in advising families on taking care of their children morally and spiritually, to be responsible for the development of the family members, building the attitude that would positively affect the whole community.

Embi

Embi was a Geologist, and a member of the SSC. He was not optimistic about getting involved in projects related to his profession. So, he decided to take any job offered to support his family but kept the skills that he could exploit in any positive opportunity. He participated in community activities on different occasions, but not in the college activities as an alum. Embi

remained an active alum receiving information from the college through the mailing list about the alum activities and opportunities.

Hadden

Hadden was an IT specialist and member of the SSC. He was one of the proud skilled South Sudanese for his success in his technical studies. He got the job after graduation and recognizes that his performance is due to his previous training, although he was not working in the field of the study he accomplished at the college. He has taken any occasion in the community to encourage the youth to join the technical college.

Khol

Khol was an Electrical Engineer and a member of the SSC. He is proud of his training and is among the South Sudanese who completed the technical college studies. He kept encouraging the youth to persevere in the field of study they decided to pursue, although it was challenging to find a good job because of the experience needed of three to five years to apply for a career in this field of study.

Kuyu

Kuyu was a Geologist and an active member of the SSC. Although he cannot find a job in his field of study, he prefers to take any available job to support his family. He regrets that there are no organized programs from the community leaders to benefit from the talented community members.

Laile

Laile was a nurse and a member of the SSC. She is one of the thriving South Sudanese who completed her college studies. She spends her energy supporting her family and helping her

children achieve good educational performance. Laile did not interact with the community leaders and focused on relations with colleagues and connections through social media.

Morhin

Morhin was an Auto Mechanic and an active member of the SSC. He had a great deal of experience in his profession, which created opportunities to support his family and assist the community members as much as possible by repairing their vehicles. Morhin found that every alum was very busy after college and were attached to their jobs to improve their family situations.

Papy

Papy was a Nurse and a member of the SSC. She was also among the successful South Sudanese who frequently provided support to the community members in different opportunities, not only in her profession but sometimes during other occasions that bring together the community members. She previously served as SSC committee member.

Passy

Passy was a Photographer, and an active member of the SSC. He completed his studies at the college of career and technical education. He was enriching his experience, which helped him search for and exploit different opportunities through employment. His activities made him busy such that he had no time to meet with the community leaders, a part in the ceremony where they were involved or invited.

Piya

Piya had a higher level of education with a great deal of experience in his domain. As a member of the SSC, he kept sharing his experience with the community youth members. He

encouraged them never to engage in inappropriate and prohibited activities that would stop them from preparing for their future life.

Tika

Tika was a specialist in IT and a member of the SSC. He was among the South Sudanese who graduated from the technical college and applied his educational experience to performing his job. On any occasion, he kept advising the youth to choose a career that would help them improve their lives and to never regret their time spent in college.

Results

I gathered the results of this study from the analysis of data collected using three methods to comply with the principle of triangulation: The reflexive journal, the focus group meeting, and the individual semi-structured interviews. I found data saturation from the same experiences explained by the participants during the data collection, which I exploited with the software NVivo 12 (Croswell & Poth, 2018). I uploaded their audio-recorded declarations on my computer, which I later transcribed in Micro Soft Word for coding and analysis. I generated the codes for thematic analysis after checking the conformability of the data compared to the research questions, and I found seven themes: community, alum, career, college, leaders, student, and support; and six subthemes: volunteering, communication, opportunity, choice, advising, and collaboration (see Table 2). I finally invited the participants to check my results. They confirmed the accuracy of the content developed from the transcription and the interpretation. The data triangulation produced these results, which cover the validity of this qualitative study after exploiting all the necessary aspects of the participants' experiences found in the common themes and subthemes (Croswell & Poth, 2018). The themes and subthemes expressed clearly that there was a collaboration between alums from the same field of study, there was no collaboration

between the alums from the same college, alums and community leaders provided the same type of support only advising the new international college students, there was no financial support due to the living standard of the SSC members. The main practical fields of study remained the nursing, the IT, and auto mechanic, because of their frequent participation in the community life, reinforcing their collaboration.

Table 2

Theme Development

No.	Themes	Files	Sub-themes
1	Alums	12	Communication
2	Career	11	Opportunity
3	College	9	Choice
4	Community	11	Volunteering
5	Leaders	5	Advising
6	Support	11	Collaboration

Theme One: Alums

The participants recognized the activities of their alums in the community, but many did not participate in college activities for reasons not included in this research. Hadden expressed his involvement by saying that he encourages individuals so they can start their academic studies in college. He can recommend this by knowing some people there, “He knows teachers who taught him, he still knows them, and if anybody needs help, he recommends meeting with them.” Kuyu stated, “We kept connected most of the time, but everybody had his lifestyle, which sometimes was hard to come together. We do not have an organized program from the community leaders to benefit from the talented members.” Morhin said, “Everyone is busy after

graduation. I manage to let my children join a private school”. Khol explained: “I am not active in the community, I do not participate in any activities, but I support them by giving them advice.” Active alums come from the nursing department and the mechanic, two important careers the community needs most. 108ng example, during COVID, and the regular auto problems that need to get fixed. Passy said: “I did not interact with community leaders. I depended on others who attended the college or were still in college, and we helped each other. Laile said: “I can provide for my family and help my children reach a higher level of education because of the foundation I have set up for them.”

Subtheme: Communication

The SSC members have maintained communication through church announcements, telephone calls, or texting. During any occasional meeting they take time to share any important event happening in the community. Communication plays an important role in the life of this community, and contact between the alums and the community members, who come together for a graduation celebration or during an organized discussion to find a solution for any community problem is important. Embi said he maintained communication with the college “by being on the department mailing list, thereby receiving updates and any information about alums and career interest.” He continued by saying that they shared information through networking, keeping in touch with other alums. “We kept connected most of the time, via social media.”

Theme Two: Career

The theme of career was at the center of the South Sudanese community members, searching all reliable means to realize the “American Dream.” The community leaders and the alums “occasionally meet, sit with the youth, talk to them about those careers, and encourage them,” said Piya. Tika added: “My new job gives me many occasions to meet important people

who share their experiences to help me progress in my new profession. The work I am doing is different from what I achieved in college. My training enables me to get the necessary information benefit for my new activities.” He continued by saying: “Working in different companies while going to college, cannot leave the job due to the level and grade they perform, which help them to support their families. Having study in college is helping me a lot to work with individual officers in the company.” Papy said: “It was easy for my company to receive and give me an offer I am doing. It was easy, and cooperation with the staff in the office or the company was so good. Such opportunity does not exist in many companies since most jobs today require a minimum of three to five years of experience, especially in my field of study.” Kuyu shared his experience by saying: “It is hard for us to find a job in our majors, simply because we would not find a good recommendation from the faculty staff. Most of us started school in Africa, and our accents are a little bit different, and never changed me a lot since I am not working in my field, but it is the knowledge that never expired and made to work in a variety of environments.” Laile happily stated: “I did internship during college and had a job offer before graduation. Through the recruiters that came to campus. I became too stressed and worked, worked and I did not have time for the family. It was terrible due to my lack of actual work experience. Getting my career, my employer who is satisfied, and my training based on the internship.”

Subtheme: Opportunity

The SSC members were constantly looking for any opportunity to survive during the difficult conditions created by COVID-19 and inflation. Morhin said: “Having studied in the college is helping me a lot to work with individual officers in the company. I interned during college and had a job offer before graduation. I got my first job through a friend that we used to

study together.” The present opportunity is a reason for the alums and their community leaders to call upon the hard work of the youth to seriously focus on their future employment. This is a reason why family members are concerned, about engaging the youth in a successful commitment.

Theme Three: College

The South Sudanese youth graduating from high school kept dreaming bigger to prepare for their future, constantly thinking about the type of college that would provide a good job, which was also their parents’ concern. Aoka stated: “Students choose a college where to go to without asking for the opinion of their parents. This is not addressed in the community.” Piya added: “Studying in the technical college needs hard work and decision.” Hadden said: “At my age, I had to study so hard with the guidance of my instructors. I participated in college-bound and learned about the higher education experience I also had. We formed a study group with few friends in college and stayed focused there. Asking questions and choosing friends whose career is derived helped me succeed. I applied for a student loan to finish my study. It demands graduation; you can get employed immediately. I succeeded by having an in-depth understanding of what the course requires and preparing well to tackle the challenges that come along with it.”

Subtheme: Choice

Having a son or daughter in college or the military made the community families proud and respected by other members. Bibya expressed his support to the youth by saying: “My participation is about advising the youth in my community about the importance of registering in the technical college.” Piya said: “If you come from high school, they go through the recruitment process to affect every student in the college according to their performance. After high school,

students choose college according to their performance and cost. They choose colleges having cheaper tuition fees. Parents do not choose for them.” “I must advise them to start college to sustain their knowledge. Beginning to know the hardest thing in college is step by step”. Embi participates in the orientation of the youth, saying: “By advising them on what to do during their break time from college and to use the break wisely to get some experience through an internship.” A good example presented by the alums through their participation in the community activities in collaboration with the community leaders is when they frequently invite the youth to make a responsible choice during the selection of their future career, which would be oriented by the field of study selected in the college. Aoka said: “During the graduation celebration, “the South Sudanese youth were asked by their parents to make good choices after high school graduation to seriously prepare for their future careers. But students do not ask parents where to register for college.”

Theme Four: Community

This was one of the themes expressed by the participants during the data collection related to life and community organization. Hadden said: “Volunteering time and knowledge whenever necessary, helping the community with either resources or skills, but most importantly getting involved in the community activity. I regularly participate in the community activities following different occasions like when our youth graduate from high school, I take this chance to advise the young boys and girls on their way to the college that will build their future.” Bibya said: “Community leaders can show support by encouraging students to pursue technical education and making it possible to practice projects within the community.”

Subtheme: Volunteering

All the activities in the SSC were organized based on volunteering. Pasy added: “help if you can, participate if you can.” The mostly paid activities in the community occurred only in two different ceremonies: when there was marriage, and death, where the SSC members had to financially participate for the success of the wedding having invited many people from their tribes and families who were living across the U. S. and Canada, or in the case of death of one of the SSC, though there was no formal paid participation in the community activities, members give what they could or what they simply had in their pockets. This subtheme frequently appeared in the declaration of the participants: Volunteering time and knowledge to participate in community activities.

Theme Five: Leaders

The SSC adopts their culture of origin from their country of South Sudan, where they still recognize their church leaders, tribal leaders, and community leaders, which they carefully implemented in the U.S. The community members refer to their leaders when there is an occasion for coming together, or for any crucial need for intervention such as the death of one of their members. Papy said: “Most of our community leaders do not have important financial business that could positively influence the outcome of support to the college for the youth from our community. The involvement of my community in higher education is limited to the advice provided to the candidates or the active students.”

Subtheme: Advising

Most of the community activities are organized based on their established relationship to occasionally participate in any action or find a solution for any problem. Hadden said: “Boys are spoiled because of bad friends and are advised to stay focused in college, but after consuming

student loans, they leave college and damage their life. That relationship is maintained from the youth boys and girls who register in the technical college, so they do not stop and divert into distractive activities before graduating.” Advising remains an essential part of the SSC, where a member in need refers to an alum for college orientation, or the community leaders when family issues need to be resolved.

Theme Six: Support

Everyone needs support, but in the case of the community leaders or the alums, they organize support in their own way . Laile said: “I find it difficult to support anyone not a member of my tribe. I depended on others who attended or were still in college, and we helped each other. I can provide for my family and help my children reach a higher level of education because of the foundation I have set up for them. My community has no program for the new high school graduation orientation to join the college. Still, they might encourage individuals or when parents plan for graduation parties for their kids. There is no community support regarding higher education in the South Sudanese community. Every tribe did its own thing, in my opinion. I find it difficult to support anyone not in my group because they might have a negative perception of what I am trying to do.” Pasy said: “I interact with them through project collaboration. I never had any support besides words of encouragement.” Khol said: “They recognize us, helping the community members. Most of our community leaders do not have important financial business that could positively influence by any means the outcome of support to the college for the youth from our community.” Bibya said: “The involvement of my community in the high level of education is limited on the advice provided to the candidates or the active students.”

Subtheme: Collaboration

The success of the SSC members was reinforced by the collaboration between the alums, nurses, such as during COVID-19, or the auto mechanic for those with driving problems. Papy said: “For the impact on their families, the community asks for help from alums. There is a collaboration among the alums. The youth come together and understand themselves; they are more cooperative than the adults regarding the participation in different occasions.” Embi said: “We met once a year but always stayed connected via social media. I did not interact with community leaders.” Kuyu said: “There is a collaboration among the alums, especially those who completed the same field of study.”

Outlier Data and Findings

An unexpected finding occurred when Pasy expressed his hesitation about encouraging young students to join his career due to its characteristic of self employment, where he feels free to join any ceremony, request for photography job, taking photos, and submit to the organizer, and finally obtain a payment. He could move freely through two or three organizations per day, produce the photos and request the payment at the end. However, when I asked about the interest expressed by the youth about his profession, he sadly said that he has no followers because most of the youth think they can just buy a camera and openly start performing that job without any rigorous rules or challenges. They pointed their learning interest to the technical options that eventually lead to the company jobs, where they would have higher salaries and better benefits.

Research Question Responses

The most exciting part of this qualitative research study was when I moved to the field to collect data in the South Sudanese community. The central research question and two subquestions constituted the fundamental orientation for the development of this intrinsic case study aimed to understand the lived experiences of the participants: the South Sudanese alums

from the college of career and technical education and their community leaders. Although their collaboration did not happen frequently, they did have a positive influence on the enrollment of the international students in the CCTE through various avenues within the community.

Central Question

The central question was: How do the collaboration of the external stakeholders of the college of career and technical education, the alums (international students), and their local community leaders impact new student enrollment? Alums and the SSC leaders expressed their experiences about their collaboration that impacted the enrollment of international students in the CCTE through different events organized in their community, especially during the graduation celebration day, where they come together to address the candidates and their experiences. This event was a strong influence on CCTE enrollment. These conversations were seen as a campaign for students to join the CCTE, and when students observed how nurses were helping sick members during the COVID-9 and the flu, as well as assisting them in different health cases, in contrast, the SSC members specialized in the IT advised the high school students how to conserve functional their computers. The alum participants discussed their careers, although two said they were unhappy because their training did not help them find a good job. Conversely, other alums shared that they felt fortunate, such as Laile who said: "I did an internship during college and had a job offer before graduation." Embi and Kuyu stated: "It is hard for us to find a job in our majors, simply because we would not find a good recommendation from the faculty."

Subquestion One

Subquestion one was: How do the local community leaders support South Sudanese student enrollment in the college of career and technical education in a city in the North-Central United States? I found that the SSC leaders' main support for student enrollment was based on

providing advice during the graduation events. Most participants did not have important financial business that could positively influence the outcome of support to the college for the SSC youth. Morhin said: “The involvement of my community in higher education is limited to the advice provided to the candidates or the active students.” Considering the tuition fee payment in the CCTE, and the lower socioeconomic status of the South Sudanese families, CCTE candidates apply for student loans, which remained the only way of obtaining the amount of money necessary for tuition. A concerted effort must be made by students to be successful in their studies, which in turn could eventually provide multiple opportunities for employment. Realistic goals towards the repayment of the government student loan need to be in place before candidates enter college. One positive impact of the collaboration between the community leaders and the CCTE alums would be to address these issues before the candidate applies for the loan. The community leaders and the alums knew the importance and consequences of engaging in a student loan, and they addressed this issue during their meetings.

Subquestion Two

Subquestion two was: How do alums support the South Sudanese students' enrollment in the college of career and technical education in a city in the North-Central United States? From their experiences, alums declared that they were interested in encouraging the younger generation to study at the CCTE; however, the alums were financially limited in creating funding opportunities that could provide support to new CCTE students. They did give advice to the youth about keeping their college performance high in order to earn excellent credits that would eventually open the door to jobs after graduation. The alum participants shared that the youth were motivated by seeing how their elders were performing their jobs, either through self-employment, or through public or private companies.

Summary

This qualitative intrinsic case study aimed to understand the impact of the CCTE's ESs' collaboration, the South Sudanese alums, and community leaders on enrollment at the CCTE in a city in the North Central United States. I invited 36 community members to participate in this study, with 12 responding positively (two females and 10 males). The findings reflect the expression of their lived experiences. Data collected included responses from a reflexive journal, a focus group meeting, and individual interviews. Six themes emerged, including: career, alums, the college, community, leaders, and support, as well as six subthemes: communication, opportunity, choice, volunteering, advising, and collaboration. The alums who participated in this study noted that collaboration existed among those who completed the same field of study in the college. The community leaders interacted occasionally with the CCTE in different circumstances related to their living environment; therefore, collaboration happened with the alums during community events. These community activities were mostly based on the tribal consideration from the alums and their leaders, with their support limited to advising and supporting community members in need. There was no specific activity for the alums apart from the nurses and the auto mechanic who frequently supported different community members, realizing that after the struggle they went through in college, they still could not find good jobs to reinforce their careers despite their achievement in college. Only a few CCTE graduates were successful, those who had completed a practical field of study such as nursing, IT, or auto mechanics. The South Sudanese community had a strong community connection due to the acquired tribal and cultural values that they still reflected in their daily life in the U.S. Based on the central research question, the alum participants shared that they did not engage in active collaboration with the community leaders that could impact the enrollment of youth in the

CCTE. Their support was limited to the formal level of participating in the high school graduation celebration where they only provided advice during the opportunity offered to address the families gathered at that occasion. On this question, Khol said: “I have not seen any support from the community for the new student.”

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative intrinsic case study was to understand the impact of the college of career and technical education's external stakeholders' collaboration, the South Sudanese alums, and their community leaders, on the enrollment of new international students at the CCTE in a city in the North Central United States. This chapter presents the interpretation of the results and a summary of the thematic findings, followed by the implications of policy and practice, the theoretical and methodological implications, as well as the limitations, delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

This qualitative intrinsic case study aligned with the thematic framework in the previous pages. This chapter presents the lived experiences of the participants as shared through the three different techniques used for data collection, regarding the impact of the South Sudanese alums and their community leaders on the new international student enrollment in the CCTE. This chapter includes the interpretation of findings, containing a brief summary of the themes from the findings, the implications for policy and practice, where I present specific recommendations for the official decision-makers from the government and the administrators from the CCTE; theoretical and empirical implications, with regard to the previous research related to this study; the divergence compared to the previous studies, the contributions to the field of study, the key points that emerged from this study, the different considerations for using the stakeholder theory in this study, the limitations and delimitations, and the recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

The discussion of the thematic findings developed from the data revealed six themes: alums, career, college, community, leaders, and support. Six subthemes included communication, opportunity, choice, volunteering, advising, and collaboration. They addressed the collaboration cooperation in the SSC, which could impact the enrollment of international students in the CCTE. The following thematic presentation provides the most critical areas reflecting the specific activities defined by the participants during the data collection.

Summary of Thematic Findings

The findings revealed that alums did not continue to relate to the CCTE after graduation; They did continue to receive information about the activities organized by this institution, but they were no longer involved in what whatever happened there. Students' main interests centered on the search for a better career, and when they completed their education, they worked to help their families. Once their job objective was met, there was no more interest in their alma mater despite the possibilities for new employment that the CCTE may have offered. They also continued to refer relatives for enrollment in the CCTE after these relatives saw the accomplishments in the alums' lives. Improved accessibility, convenience, and working conditions for students are key issues that are transforming the higher education environment in the United States and globally (Hanna, 1998).

CCTE International Student Choices. Choosing the CCTE was based on finding a good job to support their families after graduation from the CCTE. Gender, age, marital status, English knowledge, citizenship, education level, and years of living in the U.S. have also been found to be essential factors determining the employment and income of immigrants (Dudu, 2022). The sense of community helped the local political administration to monitor what was

going on in the different local communities for better management of the immigrant population. Also, they were more comfortable living together supporting each other, sharing the same familial and cultural values, which indeed fade during the process of integration into American society. The immigrants kept voluntarily helping each other under community leadership they selected themselves without interference from the political, and administration institutions. The leaders and the CCTE alums served as advisors and spontaneously collaborated during various community events, sharing the knowledge acquired from the CCTE. They also managed community affairs in continuous development and many of them opened shops within the community. However, on the CCTE campus, they felt somewhat invalidated due to the administration's insufficient information about international students or lack of collaboration with the faculty (Zang, 2016).

Six Themes and Subthemes. Six themes emerged from the data analysis, including alums, career, college, community, leaders, and support, and six subthemes included communication, opportunity, choice, volunteering, advising, and collaboration. The first theme, alums, included all 12 participants due to the necessary involvement of all the South Sudanese community in the well-being of every member of that community. It was noted that the alums should be more active in the college enrollment process of the youth graduating from high school. As identified through all six themes, the alums were only involved occasionally in this process, and there was little impact on the enrollment of new international students, who eventually chose a college that would decide their ultimate future. In many cases, these students would regret their inability to gain employment related to their field of study. Using new technology to improve their communication could support their organizations to successfully

perform in favor of their youth, who could find the opportunity of selecting a profitable field of study to ensure a marketable career from local companies.

CCTE's External Stakeholders' Collaboration. The ES collaboration reflected the active participation of the college in the life of the community members, who were direct or indirect beneficiaries of the outcome of the involvement of this institution. The external stakeholders included the active students, who continued to benefit from what they had learned at the CCTE. Most successful voluntary work needs good communication and mutual support. The alums played an essential role in the recruitment process by being involved in the organization of workshops, presenting the image of the CCTE to high school graduates, and participating in the mobilization of the organizations supporting CCTE student activities (Dollinger et al. 2019). The alums and community leaders were also CCTE external stakeholders; however, few of them knew the current CCTE students. The community leaders did not know the other ESs, except for those associated with the government.

Alum Collaboration. Alums presented two significant concerns for the regular interaction between themselves. There was initial collaboration between the alums who graduated in the same field of study from the same college; however, they did not maintain this collaboration over time. The CCTE tried to reach out to alums through social media; however, the SSC alums have yet to come together for any activity related to their alma mater and their community.

CCTE International Student Enrollment. The international students experienced different challenges that needed to be addressed by policymakers and administrators. Apart from mobilizing resources for the CCTE, alums were considered as ambassadors of this institution to external organizations, beginning with their own community (Beyl et al., 2016). These new international students need good information about different options or fields of study in order to make good choices regarding their future careers.

Implications for Policy or Practice

The findings revealed important empirical and theoretical implications for policy and practice. The results reflected a low level of collaboration among the alums and community leaders. Collaboration between these two groups could positively impact the enrollment of international students in the CCTE, reinforce the activities of the ESs, and improve the CCTE enrollment process. The CCTE could also receive financial support from official funding organizations.

Implications for Policy

The CCTE should still be in contact with their alums, who usually play a crucial role in the promotion of new student enrollment. The reduction of funding for the CCTE fundamentally affects the activities of these types of colleges, which essentially count on the number of their current students to create a positive impact in the communities they serve (Gordon & Schultz, 2020). The 10 alums all expressed the need for reinforcing the collaboration with their alma mater, which could build a vital channel for identifying potential candidates who could enroll in the CCTE. Federal funding as well as the state government funding agency could provide earmarked funding to support new students coming from families of lower socioeconomic status, which would provide an alternative rather than applying for a student loan.

Implications for Practice

After graduation from college, the CCTE needs to continue reaching out to alums, regardless of their field of study or the career they are exercising in their profession. The community leaders and the alums would be identified and supported through the CCTE communication system, supervised by the CCTE administration, to reinforce their enrollment process. Through frequent communication with the community leaders and the alums, the youth graduating from high school would be more interested in enrolling in the CCTE. The CCTE would thus be able to reveal this community initiative in order to motivate the federal fund authority to increase its financial support.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The theoretical implications of the stakeholder, as developed by Freeman (1984), may be applied to HEIs. The findings are supported by the application of the stakeholder theory in regard to HEIs, especially in the CCTE. The participants clearly expressed their lack of formal collaboration among the ESs of the CCTE, which could increase the enrollment of international student, and reinforce the actions of the CCTE in the community. Three key researchers in this field discussed the support of stakeholders' collaboration in HEIs (Bischoff et al., 2017; Oonk et al., 2016; Zhimin et al., 2016). However, current study specifically focused on ESs, including the alums s, who are important ESs, but were not considered to be external stakeholders by these previous researchers. The current study added a considerable contribution to this topic by bringing to light the importance of alums as ESs - identifying their collaboration and noting their impact on the enrollment of new international students. This study identified the ESs' collaboration through three qualitative data collection approaches that supported the findings. Bischoff et al. (2017), also conducted a qualitative case study on stakeholder collaboration, but

did not target a specific aspect. The current study shed a new light on the stakeholder theory as applied HEIs, clarifying the orientation of this theory for different aspects contributing to the development of these institutions. Implementing the same stakeholder theory, many more aspects may further be identified and explored by researchers to ameliorate the performance of different personalities handling important positions that directly or indirectly impact the administration and leadership of HEIs.

Limitations and Delimitations

The study's limitations concerned all the potential external factors that could affect the study's outcome: COVID-19, Snowfall, and participant' job activities. Multiple conditions arising in the course or at the end of research activities could affect qualitative case studies. These external weaknesses are generally linked to the credibility, which includes internal validity; transferability, which affects the external reliability; data dependability, which demonstrates the reliability; and conditionality, which reflects the objectivity. These were all potential weaknesses of the outcomes of the current study (Gaya & Smith, 2016).

Delimitations included the conditions I fixed in place as the researcher, such as meeting at the same time, the inclusion/exclusion of specific individuals for study participation or determining the study's scope and size. To participate in this study, there was an age limit of eighteen years or older, and the participants needed to be CCTE graduates. The participant must also be an immigrant from South Sudan living within the defined area where the study took place, known as the South Sudanese community.

Recommendations for Future Research

I met two challenging points during the data analysis after the participants expressed their lived experiences: they identified their worry about finding jobs related to their field of study and regretted that they were not able to financially support their CCTE students.

In the field of sociology, future research could carefully explore how CCTE alums could increase their employment opportunities upon graduation and find jobs related to their field of study. Using the quantitative method, the social law specialist could study how the CCTE could apply for more funding from the state government to help increase the activities in the community, in partnership with the alums and the community leaders. The participants expressed their regrets regarding the lack of community funding for the support to the new student. Implementing social capital theory (Hanifan, 1916), research could focus on collaboration between the community leaders and the CCTE alums, centered on sustainable local funding activities in the community (Zhimin et al., 2016).

Conclusion

This qualitative intrinsic case study aimed to understand the impact of the CCTE's ESs' collaboration, the South Sudanese alums, and community leaders on enrollment at the CCTE in a city in the North Central United States. This study aimed to discover how these ESs organized their collaboration and thus encouraged the youth to enroll in the CCTE. The participants clearly expressed through their lived experiences the need to reinforce the collaboration between alums and community leaders, and to have the CCTE actively participate by initiating various activities to positively impact the life of the community members. Six themes: alums, career, college, community, leaders, and support. Six sub-themes: communication, opportunity, choice, volunteering, advising, and collaboration. Six subthemes emerged from the data analysis, which

revealed the degree of activity of the ESs within the community., These activities were limited to the occasional advising of the youth to enroll in the college and volunteering in different activities. Both the community leaders and the CCTE alums engaged in occasional communication via social media that helped bring the community together. The alums also gave advice concerning career choices. The collaboration between the community leaders and the alums was not extended to the entire community because of the economic environment and tribal division that the South Sudanese still maintained despite having acquired American nationality.

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APPENDIX A:
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER

September 27, 2022

Chairperson *Chairman for South Sudanese Community*
South Sudanese Community



Dear Hassan,

I want to take this opportunity to inform you of the study I am about to organize in the South Sudanese community.

This study is about the collaboration experience of the community leaders from the church, tribal, and alums from the college of career and technical education.

I will use anonyms during this study to protect the participants from risks. The advantage will be to acknowledge the impact of their collaboration on recruiting new students in the college of career and technical education.

The study will take place in a convenient location for the participants, who have the right to withdraw at any time during the process.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT FORM

Date

Dear Sister/Brother,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. Last week, I received your contact information for participating in my research study. This telephone call is a follow-up to confirm if you would like to participate. The deadline for participation is the year 2022.

Participants must be 18 years or older, members of the South Sudanese community, and alumni of the College of Career and Technical Education (CCTE). Or participants must be community leaders in the South Sudanese community. CCTE alums will be asked to complete the reflexive journal, which will take 15 minutes, and an audio-recorded individual interview will last about 45 minutes. Community leaders will be invited to participate in a 45-minute audio-recorded focus group meeting. Names and other identifying information will be requested for this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Would you like to participate? [Yes] Great can I ask you some demographic questions and schedule the meeting for the journals/interview or focus group? [No] I understand. Thank you for your time.

A consent document will be given to you when we meet in person. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me before starting the journals.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project: The Impact of External Stakeholders' Collaboration on International Student Enrollment in the College of Career and Technical Education in a city in the North-Central United States: A Case Study

Principal Investigator: Jacques Buhendwa, Ph. D. Candidate. Higher Education Administration: Leadership, Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years or older, an immigrant from South Sudan, living in the South Sudanese community in Fargo, North Dakota, and have completed the training from the College of Career and Technical Education. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. In addition, participants may also be leaders in the South Sudanese community.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of the collaboration among the external stakeholders of the college of career and technical education, the South Sudanese alumni, and their community leaders, on the enrollment of new international students in Fargo, North Dakota.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study and if you are a CCTE alumni only, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete 3 reflexive journal prompts. This activity should take about 15 minutes.
2. Participate in an audio-recorded interview. The interview should take about 45 minutes.

If agree to be in this study and are a South Sudanese Community Leader, I will ask you to do the following thing:

1. Participate in an audio-recorded focus group with other leaders. The focus group should take about 45-minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include increased knowledge about the benefit of the collaboration among the external stakeholders in supporting the new international students to join the college of career and technical education.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. The published report will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by using pseudonyms. Interviews and focus groups will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews and focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, the data collected from you from the reflexive journal, or the individual interviews, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions will not be included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Mr. Jacques Buhendwa. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact me by email or by telephone. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations.

The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

The researcher has my permission to keep my demographic information to use in his dissertation as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHICS FORM

Date:

Time:

Place:

What is your specialty:

Higher Education Institution:

Graduation year:

Type of practice

Public 0

Private 0

Other 0

Your Gender: F 0/ M 0

Your Age:

30 to 40/ 0

Telephone number:

APPENDIX F: REFLEXIVE JOURNAL PROMPTS

1. Before the collaboration experience

How did you succeed in learning the courses related to career and technical education in your field of studies? How did you interact with other alums after graduation? How do the community leaders support new students joining the college of career and technical education?

2. During the first step of the collaboration experience

How did you succeed in finding a job? How did you interact with the community leaders?

3. Gaining the collaboration experience

How do you participate in community activities? How do you support new candidate students to join the college of career and technical education? How does your new qualification impact your family?

APPENDIX G: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions will cover three areas of interest: Alumni, collaboration, and enrollment.

Alums of the college of career and technical education:

1. Please introduce yourself to me.
2. After you graduate from the college of career and technical education, you become a member of the alumni. How do you plan to continue participating in the CCTE activities?
3. How does your job change your living conditions?
4. How did you continue participating in local community activities?

Alums of the college of career and technical education and South Sudanese community leaders 'collaboration:

5. How do you get support from other alums of the college of career and technical education?
6. How do the local community leaders support the activities of the college of career and technical education?
7. Tell me about your relationship with the college of career and technical education registered students.
8. How do you keep your relationship with your employer?
9. At the same time, being alums and community members tell me about the relationship between the alums and the community leaders.

New student enrollment in the college of career and technical education:

10. How did your training facilitate your employment?

11. How is your community involved in the education programs at a higher level?
12. How do your community leaders maintain a relationship with the college of career and technical education?
13. Please describe how your work inspires the youth to enroll at the college of career and technical education.
14. Experts identified that enrollment is declining in career and technical education colleges. How does the collaboration among the alums improve new students' enrollment?

We had a good conversation about this phenomenon, and I appreciate your participation.

I want to ask a final question.

15. How do you observe the relationship between the alums and the community leaders that can improve enrollment in the college of career and technical education?

APPENDIX H: FOCUS GROUP MEETING FORM

Welcome

I will introduce myself and my role as moderator to guide the discussion, the day's topic, and why I selected them. The guidelines include listening and respectfully accepting different points of view, even contradictory ones. Inform the participants about the audio recording of the discussion and only use their first names. If you receive a phone call, please move aside to talk, and come back as quickly as possible.

Statement of the Ground Rules

1. I expect active participation from everyone.
2. I may call any participant to present their opinion during the discussion.
3. I do not judge the right or wrong answers, but we want to hear your agreement or any different view.
4. I will audio-record to capture all the critical statements from the discussion.

APPENDIX I: FOCUS GROUP MEETING GUIDE

The focus group interviews disclose more sensitive information (Guest et al., 2017). Questions will include the engagement questions, the exploration questions, and the exit questions.

Engagement questions

1. How do college degree holders maintain their favorite period for work?
2. How do they collaborate with other people doing the same work?

Exploration questions

3. How do they join the college of career and technical education?
4. How do the community leaders support them during their training?
5. How do you observe their success in their specialty?
6. How do you collaborate with the college of career and technical education?
7. How does their work, male and female, impact the community?

Exit question.

8. Would you care to add something about their training, work, and community?