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Acculturation Stress and the Coping Skills of African Immigrant Men in the United States

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Abstract

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MPhil, Walden University, 2020

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

African immigrant men living in the United States experience the process of acculturation and encounter varying stressors while adjusting to their new society. Despite the growing population of African immigrant men living in the United States, research on acculturative stress and coping excluded first-generation African immigrant men. The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences of African immigrant men, the types of acculturative stress experienced, and the coping skills used in managing acculturative stress while living in the United States. Berry's acculturation theory provided the framework for the study. Data were collected from 10 semistructured individual interviews with participants over 18 years old. Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological guidelines were used to guide the analysis plan. The study results showed that five themes include cultural shock, social isolation, unmatched expectations, self-efficacy, and connectedness and belonging. Cultural shock, social isolation, and unmatched expectations were linked to the acculturative stress experienced by participants, and self-efficacy, and connectedness and belonging were connected with the coping skills developed by participants. The results identified opportunities for positive social change with professionals to advocate for culturally sensitive care and gender-specific programs for African immigrant men living in the United States.

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Dedication

I dedicate this to God Almighty for the strength and making this journey possible.

I also dedicate this to my loving family and friends across the globe for the

encouragement, prayers, and unwavering support I needed to achieve my goal.

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I give thanks and praise to God Almighty for granting me the strength, wisdom, knowledge, and perseverance to complete my dissertation. To my friends and family, both at home and abroad, for the unconditional love, unwavering support, prayers, and encouragement to seek greater heights.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The African immigrant population living in the United States grew by 246% from 2000 to 2019 (Tamir, 2022). As with many immigrant populations, research on this population has identified the challenges and barriers to successful integration into their newfound home (Udah et al., 2019). Studies of acculturation examine cultural and the psychological changes immigrants experience as a result of being the minority culture integrating with the dominant culture (Nkimbeng et al., 2021). Being minoritized encompasses a host of stressors, including loneliness, separation from families back home, discrimination in housing and employment, financial hardships, language barriers, and differences social norms (Covington-Ward et al., 2018; Kyeremeh, et al., 2021). In addition, changes in economic, health (i.e., post-pandemic), social, and political systems may have made the process of acculturation more stressful, creating the risk for adaptative as well as maladaptive coping (Lewis et al., 2022; Wagaman et al., 2022). The elevated stress and anxiety caused by COVID-19, the economic hardship, and the racial and political divide in the United States have negatively interrupted the acculturation process of minority immigrants and their ability to adjust regardless of the duration of their settlement in their host country (Lewis, 2022), Therefore, more studies are being called for to better understand how this group experiences and copes with the changing landscape of acculturation in the United States.

The focus of this descriptive phenomenological study was to examine the lived experience of African immigrant men, the types of acculturative stress experienced, and the coping skills they developed while living in the United States. The perspective of

African immigrant men on acculturative stress and coping skills can influence policy development and educate professionals on gender-based programs for the population. Positive social change from the outcome of this study includes educating professionals to advocate for culturally sensitive care and gender-specific programs for African immigrant men. The results of this study can be shared with mental health professionals, service providers, businesses, schools, cities, and policymakers so that they can incorporate more culturally appropriate strategies and services to assist African immigrants (Covington-Ward et al., 2018). Chapter 1 includes the background of the research, problem statement, purpose of the study, and research questions. This chapter also contains the theoretical framework, nature of the study, definition of key terms, limitations, and significance of the study.

Background

African immigrants are considered the fastest-growing population in the United States (Tamir, 2022). Despite the growing number, there has not been much attention on how men and women experience successful integration, acculturation, and the coping skills developed while living in the United States (Kyeremeh et al., 2021). Most African immigrants move to the United States without going through a sponsored refugee resettlement program (Ikafa et al.,2022; Saasa et al., 2021). African immigrants are considered a vulnerable group due to climate change, housing, laws, dress, and values that are significantly different from their originating countries in Africa (Ikafa et al., 2022). African immigrant men encounter varying stressors while adjusting to their new society. The population battles with racism, social isolation, and financial challenges and

must navigate from a normative collectivistic culture to a complex individualistic American culture and values (Nkimbeng et al., 2021). Some of these stressors negatively impact their mental health and ability to succeed. These struggles have worsened, as the global economy has slowed down during COVID-19, and the social and political agendas have become more stridently anti-immigrant (Aigbogun et al., 2021; Lewis et al., 2022; Wagaman et al., 2022).

Although the African immigrant population is growing exponentially, less attention and resources have been directed to the health needs and challenges faced by the population (Covington-Ward et al., 2018). Current literature on African immigrants is centered on refugees from war-torn countries such as Somalia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo who migrate to the United States through refugee resettlement programs (Boise et al., 2013). There is also a body of studies on the effect of pre-migration trauma on refugee mental health and specific mental health disorders like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Barbieri et al., 2021; Bentley et al., 2019). While there has been ample research on the need for cross-cultural understanding and support among mental health professionals and social service providers for clients from different countries and cultures, there is limited research on African immigrant men specifically (Kyeremeh et al., 2021).

Acculturative stress is the exposure to conditions that cause stress because of cultural change, which can occur through immigration (Berry, 1997; Gonzalez-Guarda et al., 2020). The ramifications of acculturation stress are not limited to discrimination, economic challenges, language barrier, social anxiety, and healthcare challenges

(Nkimbeng et al., 2021, 2023). For example, acculturative stress can predict depression for students in their first year of graduate school (Ma, 2021). With this study, I added to the existing literature by examining how African immigrant men cope with acculturative stress. The results of this study are to help mental health professionals advocate for culturally sensitive care and gender-specific programs for African immigrant men (Boise et al., 2013; Covington-Ward et al., 2018; Nkimbeng et al., 2021).

Problem Statement

African immigrants are considered the fastest-growing immigrant population (Anderson & Tamir, 2022; Covington-Ward et al., 2018). From 2000 to 2019, the African immigrant population increased by 42%, and within the Black immigrant population, it increased by 246% during the same period (Anderson & Tamir, 2022). In 2015, there were 2.1 million African immigrants living in the United States. In 2018, Minnesota recorded 484,192 foreign-born individuals living in the state, and 18% of children residing in Minnesota were either born in another country or identified as a child of an immigrant (American Immigrant Council, 2020; Minnesota Compass, 2018). Voluntary migration and the Refuge Act of 1980, which supports the migration of Africans from conflict and war-torn countries, contribute to the wave of rapid increase of migrants from Africa (Anderson & Tamir, 2022; McCabe, 2011). African immigrants are likely to migrate to the United States through the diversity visa program instituted by legislation in 1990 to invite immigrants from underrepresentation countries (Anderson & Tamir, 2022). Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, and Kenya represent the most significant foreign-born-African population in the United States. However, studies on immigration in the United

States are heavily centered on Latin American, Asian, and Caribbean migrants (Anderson & Tamir, 2022; Covington-Ward et al., 2018).

Research on acculturation, stress, and coping skills excludes first-generation African Immigrants while other literature focuses on trauma, the migration chain of refugees from war-stricken countries, and its impact on their mental health (Barbieri et al., 2021; Bentley et al., 2019, Ikafa et al., 2022). African immigrant men experience discrimination accumulated over a period that can significantly impact their physical health (Covington-Ward et al., 2018; Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2019). Housing, job promotion, race, and national origin discrimination are a few examples of overt biases and inequities encountered by the population. The population undergoes language and cultural barriers, loss of family support, and acculturation challenges as they settle in their new country (Covington-Ward et al., 2018). Thus, the problem this study sought to explore is to understand how African immigrant men cope with acculturative stress. The problem is that research on acculturative stress and coping excludes first-generation African immigrants despite the growing population of African immigrants living in the United States (Ikafa et al., 2022; Nkimbeng et al., 2021).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to examine the lived experience of African immigrant men, the types of acculturative stress experienced, and the coping silks used in managing acculturative stress while living in the United States.

Research Questions

Research Question (RQ) 1: What is the experience of acculturative stress in

African immigrant men living in the United States?

RQ 2: What is the meaning of coping for African immigrant men who experience acculturative stress?

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Berry's (1997) acculturation theory. Acculturation is the process where an individual or a cultural group experience cultural and psychological changes (Berry, 1997, 2005; Ma, 2021). The change occurs when cultural groups or individuals become exposed to each other. Berry's acculturation theory adopts two levels of acculturation: the individual and group level (Berry, 1997, 2005). The group-level examines change from a structural and institutional perspective and cultural values, whereas the individual level takes on a behavioral approach (Berry 2005).

The acculturation process can be challenging and often develops into conflicts or stress between cultures. The individual adaptation strategies of acculturation identify two dimensions. The first dimension is the acceptance or dismissal of a person's native culture, and the second dimension focuses on the retention or release of the host culture. The two dimensions present four acculturation strategies, assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization (Berry, 1997; Ma, 2021). The theory helped to examine the changes immigrants experience upon entry into their host society or country over some time, as African immigrants experience acculturation (Ma, 2021; Berry, 1997, 2005). African immigrants migrate to a new location voluntarily or involuntarily with some becoming permanent settlers or sojourners (international students or asylum seekers). This theory is elaborated on and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The study followed a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design to study the lived experience of acculturation and coping in African immigrant men. The descriptive phenomenological approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the subjects through documenting descriptions, events, and subjects' lived experiences (Giorgi, 2009). The descriptions and events representing how participants experience acculturation and coping were collected through semistructured interviews with adult African immigrant men living in the United States. Participants for the study came from foreign-born African populations in the United States, including Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Kenya (see Anderson & Tamir, 2022; Covington-Ward et al., 2018). The study adopted a purposive sampling method. Recruitment was implemented through public notice boards, Facebook, and the Walden University participant pool.

Definition of Terms

The following key terms are identified as fundamental and used in this study.

Acculturation: Acculturation is the process where an individual or a cultural group experience both cultural and psychological changes (Berry, 1997, 2005; Ma, 2021).

Acculturative stress: Psychological adjustment, stress, and anxiety experienced by culturally distinct groups and individuals through the process of acculturation (Berry, 1997, 2005).

African immigrants: Immigrants from Africa who have moved permanently to the United States without the support of sponsored refugee resettlement programs

(Covington-Ward et al., 2018).

Collectivistic culture: In this study, the term refers to cultures that value the development and maintenance of social relationships and connections that extend beyond the immediate family system (Brossoie et al., 2022).

Coping skills: Learned behavioral responses by an individual or cultural group aimed at reducing psychophysiological disturbances in an environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Immigrants: Individuals moving from their country of birth with the goal of settling in a new country (Anderson & Tamir, 2022; Covington-Ward et al., 2018).

Individualist culture: The term refers to cultures that lay emphasis on being independent, engaged, outspoken, egocentric, and receptive to change and challenges (Brossoie et al., 2022).

Stress: A stimuli or response that causes a disturbance between the person and the environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Assumptions

It was assumed that the study participants were receptive to being part of the research and share their experiences truthfully and honestly without hesitation. Another assumption for this study was that saturation was achieved, and the results and discussion will be meaningful and transferable to the academic and professional community. I was aware of personal biases and perceived concepts that could impact the study and developed necessary steps as detailed in Chapter 3 to uphold credibility, dependability, and transferability.

Scope and Delimitations

The emphasis of this study included understanding the lived experiences of African immigrant men, the types of acculturative stress experienced, and the coping skills used to manage acculturative stress. The scope of the study was limited to adult African immigrant men living in the United States. Participants for the study came from foreign-born African populations, including Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Kenya who currently live in the United States. The recruitment strategies defined the scope of the study to include African male immigrants living in urban/metropolitan cities compared to rural areas, and these groups have internet access.

In addition to bounding the study in terms of participant recruitment, the framework was specifically guided by Berry's (1997) acculturation theory. This theory accommodates exploration of circumstances and methods of coping with acculturation. Other theories of acculturation (e.g., developmental models), stress and coping like Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory informed the study but were not investigated.

Limitations

The study focused on African immigrant men over the age of 18 years currently living in the United States. The possibility of having some of the immigrant men unwilling to participate in the research due to their immigration status was a limitation. Another limitation was that purposive sampling strategy was proposed for this study because I wanted to access a small group of people who share similar experiences and self-select to participate in the research (Shenton, 2004). Transparency is important when conducting qualitative research and recording procedures accurately is the first step in the

process, and transferring the outcome and conclusion to other events is equally important

(Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Another limitation was researcher bias, which can occur when a

researcher influences questions to evoke a response by priming questions (Milne et al.,

2021). I addressed research priming by asking open-ended questions. Participants were

encouraged to describe lived experiences and refrain from sharing personal insights. I

kept a journal of the data analysis process and analyzed the data from recorded,

transcribed interviews to maintain the focus on the participants' responses rather than my

own beliefs.

Significance

The results of this study contribute to filling the gap in the literature by

identifying coping skills African immigrant men utilize in managing acculturative stress.

I expanded on existing studies on African immigrant mental health to include first-

generation African immigrant men who are not on refugee status (Barbieri et al., 2021;

Covington-Ward et al., 2018). The study results can be shared with professionals who

advocate for culturally sensitive care and gender-specific programs for African immigrant

men living in the United States. Mental health professionals, service providers,

businesses, schools, cities, and policymakers can learn about the lived experiences of

African immigrant men and the coping skills used for managing acculturative stress

(Covington-Ward et al., 2018; Nkimbeng et al., 2021). The knowledge gained from this

research study can ultimately help them provide better services to the population

(Covington-Ward et al., 2018). The results of this study were shared with agencies,

organizations, and community centers to assist in implementing culturally sensitive and

gender-based integrated programs.

Summary

This chapter introduced the topic, background, problem statement, purpose of the study, the research questions, the theoretical framework, nature of the study, definition of terms, assumptions, the scope of the study, limitations, and the significance of the study. The background of the study focused on acculturation challenges, including social isolation, racism, and financial hardships African immigrant men face upon migrating to the United States. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experiences of African immigrant men, the types of acculturative stress experienced, and the coping skills used while living in the United States. The chapter also introduced the theoretical framework for the study, Berry's acculturation theory. The social significance of the study is to fill the gap in comprehending and identifying coping skills African immigrant men utilize in managing acculturative stress. It expands on existing studies on African immigrant mental health to include first-generation African immigrant men not only on refugee status. Chapter 2 provides an expanded review of the literature to focus on the concepts and definitions of acculturation and acculturative stress.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experiences of African immigrant men and the coping skills used in managing acculturative stress while living in the United States. African immigrants encounter a host of stressors, including loneliness, separation from families back home, and financial hardships. But it is unknown how African immigrant men cope with acculturative stress (Boise, 2013; Saasa et al., 2021). The chapter provides background on the literature search strategy including key input terms utilized in the study. The theoretical framework is explained in the chapter and subsequently key terms on acculturation, acculturative stress experienced by African immigrants, and coping skills are defined.

Literature Search Strategy

Scholarly literature on African immigrants and acculturative stress and coping was compiled from an extensive literature search. The databases used include PsycINFO, EBSCO, Walden Library, Academic Search Complete, SocINDEX, ProQuest Central, and PsycTHERAPY. The following keywords were identified: *African immigrants, refugees, African mental health, stress, acculturation, acculturative stress, discrimination, mental health treatment, culturally sensitive programs, mental health interventions, refugee resettlement, acculturation, assimilation, migration, physical and mental health, African immigrant men, coping strategies, gender-based programs, Immigrants, Asylum, racism, support system, collectivistic cultures, African culture, African customs,* and *beliefs*. Articles selected for the study were peer-reviewed and published within the last 15 years. Articles excluded from the literature and not included

in the study lacked scholarly quality, were over 15 years old, and were not peer-reviewed. However, there are few sources like books and articles that were older than 15 years old and provided critical information on the theoretical foundation for this study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study included Berry's acculturation theory. Berry's acculturation theory describes the acculturative experience of immigrants and their coping skills; it explains that the group level acculturation examines change from a structural and institutional perspective, and cultural values, whereas the individual level of acculturation takes on a behavioral approach (Berry, 1997, 2005). Berry's acculturation theory guided the study.

Berry's Acculturation Theory

Acculturation theory is used to examine the changes immigrants experience upon entry into their host society or country. Acculturation is the process where an individual or a cultural group experiences cultural and psychological changes (Berry, 1997, 2005; Ma, 2021). The change occurs when cultural groups or individuals become exposed to each other. Berry's acculturation theory categorizes acculturation at the individual and group level (Berry, 1997, 2005). The group-level explains change from a structural and institutional perspective and cultural values, whereas the individual level uses a behavioral approach to explain acculturation (Berry, 1997, 2005). The individual adaptation strategies of acculturation include two dimensions: the acceptance or dismissal of a person's native culture, and the retention or release of the host culture. The two dimensions encompass four acculturation strategies: assimilation, separation, integration,

and marginalization (Berry, 1997; Ma, 2021). Berry's (1997) four acculturation strategies were useful in explaining acculturative stress experienced by immigrants and the approach they learned to adapt to their new environment.

Acculturation was first suggested by John Powell, an American ethnologist, in 1880 as similar cultural interactions developed among people from different ethnic background (Sokolskaya & Valentonis, 2020). However, it later shifted to how immigrants transformed following their settlement in their host country (Berry, 2005). The early approaches to acculturation adopted the unidimensional model, which emphasized assimilation. Gordon (1964) postulated that immigrants only assimilate to the dominant culture or host country while neglecting or negating their own ethnic culture, and Berry found that acculturation can be reactive in the sense that individuals or groups of settlers can denounce the culture of the dominant group and revert to their conventional and indigenous way of life. These studies confirm that acculturation does not always have a linear implication when it comes to cultural changes. Over the years, there has been a paradigm shift from assimilation to acculturation theory used in acculturation studies because assimilation has been identified to be a dimension in the acculturation process and not independent or multidimensional (Berry, 1997, 2005; Gordon, 1964).

Berry (1997) is credited with driving the unidimensional theories of acculturation to a multidimensional approach that takes on four acculturative dimensions. However, Graves (1967) established the concept of acculturation through a psychological lens and group-level phenomenon. In the former, individuals can be impacted directly by the

dominant culture; in the latter acculturation occurs within the collective group. Although acculturation might be profound in a cultural group, individual changes vary depending on community participation from its members (Berry, 1997, 2005).

Acculturation Process

A cultural group exists in a plural society for a variety of reasons including voluntariness, mobility, and permanence. African immigrants experience acculturation through all three levels (Berry, 1997, 2005; Ma, 2021). African immigrants migrate to a new location voluntarily or involuntarily with some becoming permanent settlers or sojourners (international students or asylum seekers). Berry proposed four acculturation strategies—assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration—for immigrants in both dominant and non-dominant environments.

Separation

Individuals in this stage prefer to hold on to their culture while avoiding any form of interaction with the dominant culture (Berry, 1997, 2005). Immigrants will retain their cultural background by only eating, dressing, and participating in a cultural celebration of their ethnic heritage (Neto et al., 2022). People at this stage will only interact with folks who share the same or similar cultural orientation and avoid immersing themselves in the host country. Non-immigrant groups like the Chinese during the 1880s became isolated in the dominant culture of New Zealand due to rising xenophobic fears and policies that were discriminatory (Lewis, 2021). A study on immigrant fathers from sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America also showed that the fathers who were in the integration stage were more involved in their children compared to those in the separation stage (Bationo

et al., 2022). In the current studty, it was important to comprehend how African

immigrants interact with other family members during separation stage. The U.S.

perception of immigrant men who are in the separation stage and are undocumented

indicates that they have a negative perception of undocumented immigrants and were in

the assimilation stage and needed to be fully integrated (Flores et al., 2022). These factors

can contribute to African immigrant men's acculturative stress.

Assimilation

Immigrants who adopt the cultural values of the dominant culture experience

assimilation. Individuals or groups denounce their cultural identity and actively seek

interaction with the dominant culture (Lewis, 2021; Ma, 2021). Assimilated immigrants

do not desire to maintain or celebrate their cultural heritage and identity. For example,

Angelini et al. (2015) found that immigrants who had good exceptional proficiency in the

German language experienced positive immigrant well-being or better life satisfaction

regardless of their socioeconomic status than those who were not fluent in German.

Deslandes et al. (2022) researched African-born immigrants and their educational

experiences and found out that immigrant students that were able to adapt to the host

country's cultures excelled academically and strengthened their peer relationships and

guardian-based support.

Integration

The acceptance of one's cultural identity, heritage, and maintaining daily

interactions with the dominant culture is integration. It is an orientation where individuals

or groups retain and celebrate their cultural heritage in a private domain and become

receptive to the dominant cultural practices in the public realm (Berry, 2005; Lewis, 2021). Immigrants in the integration dimension are considered bicultural because of their ability to interact and navigate harmoniously between the non-dominant and dominant cultures (Berry, 2005; Lewis, 2021). The integration dimension is less stressful and most desirable for immigrants living in a dominant culture (Berry, 1997, 2005; Graves, 1967; Lewis, 2021). Integration is successful when the non-dominant groups are not forced into accepting the cultural values of the dominant culture, but it is pursued freely with the dominant culture being inclusive and welcoming in its orientation grounded in cultural diversity (Angelini et al., 2015, Berry, 2005). For instance, Overå Johannesen and Appoh (2021) identified increased engagement between African immigrants in Norway and the dominant culture enhanced their integration experience. Patel et al. (2023) also posited that school plays a significant role in the integration process. The school environment made them readily available to access services such as counseling, mentoring and coaching thereby eliminating systemic barriers and trauma experienced through migration.

Marginalization

Immigrants' inability to identify with their cultural heritage or the culture of the host country is in the marginalization dimension. Marginalized cultural groups often reject the customs, traditions, and values of their country of origin and refused to participate in any traditions of the host country (Lewis, 2021; Neto et al., 2022). There is no interest in maintaining cultures or establishing relationships with others (Berry, 1997). When immigrants feel threatened through discrimination exhibited by the dominant

culture, they default to separation and marginalization (Neto, 2019). The population will

neither be involved with other cultural groups nor the dominant culture. They instead

indulge in negative attitudes which were directed at members of the host country. It was

critical to comprehend the behaviors of African immigrant men who may be in this stage.

Acculturative Stress

Berry (2005) described acculturation stress as the psychological adjustment,

stress, and anxiety experienced by culturally distinct groups and individuals through the

process of acculturation. Immigrants coming to the United States undergo a process of

transition and resettlement that leads to stress (Lewis, 2021). The challenges of adjusting

to a new society cause undue stress, known as acculturative stress (Lewis, 2021; Ma,

2021). In acculturating to their new society, immigrants must become accustomed to their

host country's culture and environment (Vaughn & Holloway, 2010). The task of

immigrants forming and recreating interpersonal relationships becomes a challenge. At

the intrapsychic level, immigrants are tasked with learning to cope in a new environment

(Kamaya, 1997). Stress-related problems manifest in many forms, including loss of

control, interpersonal and intrafamilial relationship conflict, and low self-esteem (Berry,

2005; Kamaya, 1997).

How Theory Applies to Study

Because I was seeking to understand the lived experiences of African immigrant

men, this theory was appropriate because it elucidates the various stages of acculturation.

Although every immigrant's experience varies, I hypothesized that the participants in my

study would likely be in the separation and integration stages. The integration dimension

is less stressful and most desirable for immigrants living in a dominant culture (Berry, 1997, 2005; Lewis, 2021). Berry's four acculturation strategies helped connect the situational factors that influence African immigrant men's level of acculturative stress to their stages in the acculturation process. It was useful in explaining the skills immigrant men use to cope and manage their lives in the United States. Berry's acculturation model provided insights on immigrant's relationships to the cultural norms, values and beliefs in the United States based on the acculturation strategy they employ.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

African Immigrant Migration History

The United States is a multicultural society and is identified as a country with infinite opportunities; however, between 1600 and 1900, the trans-atlantic slave trade forced Africans to abandon their homes and families, sold, and compelled to work on the plantations (McCabe, 2011). The Naturalization Act of 1790 offered any free White person a pathway to citizenship, a law among many that discriminated against and restricted newcomers including Africans to the United States. In 1798, the Alien and Sedition Acts passed by Congress increased the requirement for newcomers to become citizens from 5 to 14 years and offered full authorization to the president to deport any foreign alien identified to be a threat to the safety of the country (Anderson & Tamir, 2022; McCabe, 2011).

During the late 1980s through 2009, voluntary migration gained prominence in the United States, and the immigrant population increased exponentially from 200,000 to 1.9 million in 2016 (Anderson & Tamir, 2022; McCabe, 2011). Voluntary migration and

the Refuge Act of 1980, which supports the migration of Africans from conflict and war-torn countries, contributed to the rapid increase of migrants from Africa. Further, African immigrants are likely to migrate to the United States through the diversity visa program instituted by legislation in 1990 to invite immigrants from underrepresentation countries (Anderson & Tamir, 2022). Many African countries benefited from the diversity visa program. However, one must be professional, educated, and skilled to qualify for the program. The Immigration and the Nationality Act of 1952, amended in 1965, allowed for family reunification. The policy provided an opportunity for immigrants to apply for visas and connect with families living in the United States (Hanson 2012; McCabe, 2011). African immigrants benefited from the reunification program based on strict eligibility requirements. Immigrants needed to have families already living in the United States who could support them financially.

In 2018, Minnesota recorded 484,192 foreign-born individuals living in the United States, and 18% of children residing in Minnesota were either born in another country or identified as a child of an immigrant (American Immigrant Council, 2020; Minnesota Compass, 2018). Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, and Kenya represent the most significant foreign-born-African population in the United States. In 2015, 1.7 million Africans migrated to the United States and two-thirds of that number came from the Eastern and Western parts of Africa, however, 36.7% were comprised of people from West Africa (Anderson & Tamir, 2022; McCabe, 2011).

Currently, many universities recruit exceptional students globally including African immigrants to their competitive educational programs and grant them

opportunities to apply for student visas to study in the United States (Hanson, 2012).

Also, the United States seeks out highly skilled immigrants and offers a pathway to live

and work in the country legally through the H-1B visa program, employers can apply on

behalf of their employees to allow them to work and live in the United States (Hanson,

2012; Saasa & Allen, 2021). The Immigration Act of 1990 signed by President George H.

W. Bush established the H-1B visa program with the sole purpose of addressing the labor

shortage in specialized skills (Hanson, 2012). The program allowed companies to sponsor

and legally employ a highly trained foreign professional with an advanced degree.

Discrimination

African immigrants encounter discrimination when they move to the United

States. The types of discrimination include gender, age, race, religion, education, and

housing (Nkimbeng et al., 2021). Nkimbeng et al. found that perceived discrimination

correlated with deplorable health conditions. In other words, immigrants that encountered

perceived discrimination were found to have a higher chance of developing hypertension,

cardiovascular diseases, respiratory issues and diabetes concerns, and mental health

illness such as anxiety, anger outburst, and low self-esteem (Ma, 2020; Nkimbeng et al.,

2021). Discrimination on all levels affects both the physical and psychological well-being

of immigrants.

Monolithic perceptions by the majority culture, negative acumen and behavior

directed at immigrants, and the varying differences in customs, values, and traditions

contribute to discrimination toward African immigrants (Nkimbeng et al., 2021). For

example, Joyce and Liamputtong, (2017) observed that acculturative stress in young

Congolese immigrants living in Australia revolved around the language barrier, unemployment, and challenges affecting their access to education. All these factors inhibited their ability to integrate into their new environment.

African immigrants face unique types of discrimination such as accent-based and unjustified treatment during daily routines and in the labor market (Zaami & Madibbo, 2021). African immigrants often must repeat themselves multiple times in a conversation, and when seeking services causes undue stress and anxiety (Joyce & Liamputtong, 2017; Ma, 2020; Nkimbeng et al., 2021). In addition, people disrespect and perceive African immigrants to be uneducated because of their accents (Nkimbeng et al., 2021). At work, they were seen as incompetent or unqualified and treated unfairly with the assumption that they carried some transmissible and contagious diseases because they were from Africa causing psychological distress (Nkimbeng et al., 2021; Rhee, 2019). According to Kamalu (2016) who conducted a case study using Nebraska traffic data from Nebraska's law enforcement from 2002 to 2007, racial profiling which included incidents of the arrest of minorities particularly among the black or African American population was higher compared to the white population in Nebraska. Blacks had a higher chance of being stopped, searched, and detained while driving by law enforcement. Nkimbeng et al. studied 15 older African immigrants' experiences of discrimination in a qualitative study in the United States. They found common themes of discrimination that were accent-based, systemic racism, and negative treatment experienced during regular activities at work, school or during a medical visit. Some immigrants were assumed to have Tuberculosis because they immigrated from Africa. The ramifications of the

discrimination experienced by the older African immigrants led to anger, anxiety, and nervousness. Jones-Obeng (2021) interviewed 27 Nigerians and 20 Jamaicans living in Houston, Texas. Both Nigerian and Jamaican respondents experienced ethnic discrimination. Nigerian respondents were often ridiculed for their accents and targeted for internet scamming. African Muslim immigrants experienced increased religious discrimination following the 9/11 terrorist attacks by members of the majority culture. The event has been heavily aligned with Islam and led to Islamophobia perpetrated toward Muslim immigrants living in the United States (Nihan, 2013). African immigrants who experience discrimination become reclusive, isolated, and marginalized in their new society (Berry, 2005; Kamalu, 2016; Nihan, 2013).

Saasa (2019) conducted research among 409 African immigrants living in the United States and found out a positive correlation between perceived discrimination and social exclusion. Also, the study revealed that African immigrants that had a strong support network resisted the negative impact of discrimination on their livelihood better than those will limited support. The results of loneliness and discrimination are the development of anxiety and depressive symptoms among African immigrants which negatively impacts their physical and psychological health and their ability to integrate into their new society (Escamilla & Saasa, 2020).

Individualistic Versus Collectivistic Cultures

Hofstede's (2001) cross-cultural research revealed four dimensions of cultural values including power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. The individualism-collectivism dimension was identified as a central dimension that

defines how members in a group relate and the variations that exist in groups (Fatehi et al., 2020; Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022).

Individualistic cultures are associated with Western cultures and include North America and European countries, and collectivistic cultures are synonymous with Eastern and African cultures. In collectivistic cultures, members of the cultures view themselves as connected to a community, and relationships are defined within the context of others. However, individualistic cultures are more independent, and not connected to others, and their personality is shaped by individuals and is relatively fixed. The relationships formed or established in collectivistic cultures are considered permanent whereas in individualistic cultures, the relationships are observed as temporary (Koons, 2019). Genkova (2021) conducted a study between Germans, identified as a collectivistic culture, and Russian immigrants, a collectivistic culture living in Germany, and posited that a positive interrelation exists between those with intercultural competence and integration. In other words, Russian immigrants who could communicate across cultures integrated effectively in Germany despite the different cultures compared to those who lacked intercultural understanding.

Self-esteem or self-concept defined within the context of self-worth or respect is translated or applied differently in different cultures. Brand (2004) observed that Chinese music students had low self-esteem compared to American and Australian students. The study revealed that Chinese students suppressed their self-esteem with the goal of highlighting group-oriented consideration, whereas American students were more interested in self-achievement, self-goals, and personal qualities (Brand, 2004).

Individualistic cultures like the United States tend to be more emotionally supportive, have better ingroup interactions and engage in acts of gratitude compared to collectivistic cultures like China (Liu et al., 2021).

The African immigrant culture, a collectivistic culture emphasizes group harmony and not individual accolades whereas the American culture, an independent one emphasizes personal achievement and goals. African immigrant culture within the context of time is a past-oriented time culture, time is observed to be flexible, and there is a relaxed attitude to time. Relationships are valued more than time. It is not uncommon for events and programs to start late, and people are comfortable with that (Walls, 2011). However, American culture is considered a future-oriented time culture. African immigrants miss important appointments such as hospitals, mental health, and social services which causes an additional layer of stress and anxiety due to past-oriented time culture.

There are universal norms and stereotypes observed in Western cultures, African, and East Asian cultures on gender roles. In Africa, women engage in relation-oriented roles including caring for members of the family and men embark on task-oriented roles such as earning a salary, having an occupation, and assembling and fixing all sorts of appliances (Gong et al., 2018). Although there are commonalities across cultures on gender roles, there are unique differences. Parents become one of the integral influences on gender roles in Ghana and Nigeria. Tighter cultures including African cultures such as Ghana and Nigeria have relatively strong social norms and tougher punishment for deviant behaviors making members of the family adhere to strict social norms.

Parenting is based on two family types, the nuclear family and the extended family. The nuclear family comprises the primary parents and children, and the extended family includes the nucleus, aunties, cousins, grandparents, and surviving great-grandparents. The traditional model of parenting in African culture is the extended family. Children stay at home till marriage and even after marriage, the extended family influences the dynamics of the marriage by offering advice and stressing the importance of adhering to customs (Amos, 2013; Salami et al., 2020). Due to the patrilineal nature of parenting in African cultures, women are tasked with cooking and cleaning the home, and the men are responsible for being the sole breadwinner of the family and are encouraged to attend school. German and American parenting is loosely defined and is focused on autonomy and independence and demonstrated high levels of parental warmth towards their children (Gniewosz et al., 2023; Tamm et al., 2018). Children are given the freedom to express themselves; parents can significantly influence their children's self-esteem and self-concept as they begin to develop through adulthood (Tamm et al., 2018).

Gender Roles

Educational and work institutions influence gender roles. For example, in Ghanaian culture, most of the educational books used in the academic setting revolve around the expression of masculinity. Folktales are stories generated through oral traditions and transferred from older generation to one another. In these folks' stories which have impacted educational reforms and curriculum, animal characters like spiders are depicted as male figures. These male characters are described as intelligent, loving, greedy, prideful, and full of wisdom (Amos, 2013). Women are less portrayed as main

characters or heroes within these stories. In German cultures, managerial sex-role stereotyping attributes associated with men were perceived to be more appropriate than for women (Busse et al., 2020). German females shared that they must exemplify masculine traits or attributes to be successful in managerial positions. Work institutions characterize masculine traits necessary to achieving success.

In some African cultures, males are perceived to be the sole breadwinner of the family, there was a great responsibility for males to excel at school in all subject-related areas. Boys received more severe punishment for failing class than women (Alaazi, 2018). Women were responsible for being the "housewife" and taking care of the children in low-income families, investment in education is channeled to the male child than the female. African, South American, and Asian immigrant cultures tend to be communal and family oriented. It is grounded in a collectivist society where members of the community and the extended family play an essential role in family upbringing (Brossoie et al., 2022; Nkimbeng et al., 2021). According to Muchomba and Kaushal (2022), there is a gender disparity among first-generation immigrants in assimilation activities. Immigrant men engage in more assimilation activities away from their primary household than women, thus assimilating faster than women. The stress on African immigrant men to excel, become accomplished, and the family responsibility leads to a higher rate of depression than African immigrant women (Joyce & Liamputtong, 2017; Ma, 2020).

Mental Health

African immigrants and refugees living in the United States battle with

adjustment challenges such as language barriers, mental health, frigid temperatures, and lack of understanding of mental health services (Nkimbeng et al., 2020; 2021). Habtamu et al. (2017) conducted a study among Ethiopian migrants moving into the Middle East and South Africa and found that they experience a range of common mental health disorders (CMB). Some of the symptoms including suicidal ideation, irritability, headache, feelings of sadness and psychiatric morbidity were at a significantly higher rate when compared with the domestic population.

Ahmed et al. (2020) posit that immigrants experience a swift change in their social status because of the negative effect of migration on their mental health outcome. Some immigrants experience anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder because of migration and change in social status in their host country. Social determinant of health, a critical factor that fuels migration tend to impact negatively on the mental and physical health results of immigrants. Kiehne et al. (2020) identified immigration policies as a social determinant of health while Nkimbeng et al. (2023) found that depressive symptoms were not uncommon among African immigrants living in the United States. Immigrants with high levels of depressive symptoms were unemployed, reported low income or had attained advanced education. These studies confirmed that the migration experience immigrants encounter impacts significantly on their post migration mental health and ability to function in their host country. Also, attitudinal barriers among African immigrants such as mistrust of health care systems including mental health which originates from the negative and painful history of colonization inhibits their interest in seeking services (Galvan et al., 2022).

Voluntary and forced immigration can predict the level of manifestation of mental health symptoms among immigrants (Wong et al., 2014). For example, immigrants that experienced civil war or political unrest in their country of origin were more susceptible to having depression compared to immigrants that migrated voluntarily. Furthermore, premigration variables can impact the degree of depressive symptoms. Immigrants that experienced trauma in the form of rape, abuse and violent attacks had increased level of depressive symptoms (Habtamu; 2017; Nkimbeng et al., 2023).

Coping Skills

Immigrants learn to cope and manage acculturative stressors experienced in their host country. Coping skills are learned behavioral responses by an individual or cultural group aimed at reducing psychophysiological disturbances in an environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Humans are constantly coping and identifying skills and strategies to manage stress. Lazarus and Folkman identified two forms of coping, emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping. Emotion-focused coping occurs when individuals appraised a problem and recognize that nothing can be done to avert or remedy the problem (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotion-focused coping involves the cognitive processes that can increase or decrease emotional distress. For example, individuals can engage in positive comparison, avoidance, and minimization as a means to cope with an appraised problem or occupy themselves with self-blame thereby increasing their emotional distress (Covington-Ward et al., 2018; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). With problem-focused coping, individuals are able to make necessary changes to address the problem by using their support system or engaging in problem-solving techniques

(Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Immigrants resort to different coping skills in managing acculturative stress. Joyce and Liamputtong (2017) identified family and social support, and peer and community support used by young immigrants to deal with acculturative stress. However, it must be pointed out that young immigrants acculturate at a faster pace compared to old immigrants due to more exposure by the young generation to the dominant culture. A welcoming, diverse, and receptive community helps immigrants cope positively with acculturative stress (Joyce & Liamputtong, 2017). Automated adaptive behavior should not be confused with coping. The former relies on skills acquisition through learning to the point where those skills become effortless and automatic like driving while the latter can be non-routine or an event that can be threatened in a manner that requires an individual to avoid the stimuli as a means of coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Nkimbeng et. al., 2021).

People resort to internal and external resources to manage and cope with stressful events. Covington-Ward et al. (2018) posited that immigrants implement two forms of coping strategies including interpersonal and individual strategies. Individual coping skills were extensive yet specific to male immigrants like alcohol intake, music, television, and walking. The interpersonal approach involved the indulgence of family and friends (Covington-Ward et al., 2018; Joyce & Liamputtong, 2017). Cao et al. (2021) posited that Chinese immigrant students' ability to develop coping skills while encountering acculturative stress and academic stressors heavily relied on their heritage culture. Also, since environmental factors influence how people cope (Lazarus &

Folkman, 1984), It will be beneficial to comprehend the different cultural experiences of immigrants and how that has affected their ability to cope with acculturative stress.

Lee and Vaydich (2020) found the acceptance of cultural differences to be an effective coping skill used by Chinese immigrants while Ikafa (2022) posits that African immigrants developed used their faith in God and community network as coping strategies. These studies together confirmed that immigrants develop different coping skills in addressing acculturative stress in the dominant culture. It is however unknown how African immigrant men cope with acculturative stress in the United States.

Summary

In Chapter 2, the theoretical foundation of acculturation was explained, concepts of acculturation were defined and the level of acculturative stress, coping skills were examined, and a review of the literature was summarized. African immigrants encounter discrimination when they move to the United States. The types of discrimination include but are not limited to gender, age, race, religion, education, and housing. The African immigrant culture, a collectivistic culture emphasizes group harmony, whereas the American culture, an independent one, highlights personal achievement. Also, research indicated that depressive symptoms were common among African immigrants living in the United States. The review of the literature reveals a gap in research on acculturation, stress, and coping skills among African immigrant men. This study furthered the understanding of the lived experiences of African immigrant men, the acculturative stress experienced, and the coping skills used while living in the United States. Chapter 3 focused on the methodology, design, and evaluation plan.

Chapter 3: Research Method

I conducted a descriptive phenomenological study of the lived experience of

acculturative stress and the coping in African immigrants living in the United States.

Research questions addresses the experience of acculturative stress for African immigrant

men in the United States and the meaning of coping for these men who experience

acculturative stress. In Chapter 3, I discuss the research design, research questions, and

an explanation of the population, recruitment strategy, sampling, and the data collection

process. I also describe the analysis plan and ethical considerations for working with this

target group.

Research Design and Rationale

The study followed qualitative descriptive phenomenological design to study the

research questions:

- RQ 1: What is the experience of acculturative stress in African immigrant men

  living in the United States?

- RQ 2: What is the meaning of coping for African immigrant men who

  experience acculturative stress?

The two concepts explored in this study are acculturative stress and coping. Acculturative

stress, as defined by Berry (2005), is the psychological adjustment, stress, and anxiety

experienced by culturally distinct groups and individuals through the process of

acculturation. Coping is defined in terms of learned behavioral responses by an individual

or cultural group aimed at reducing psychophysiological disturbances in an environment

(Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The phenomenological approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the subjects through documenting descriptions, events, and subjects' lived experiences (Creswell, 2014; Giorgi, 2009). Giorgi's phenomenological approach was specifically selected for this study because of its emphasis on perceived human experiences, and its scientific phenomenological method adopts a concrete description of lived experiences of participants that is transformed into a psychological structure (Giorgi, 2014). Descriptive phenomenology was an ideal approach for the study because it emphasizes describing events and individuals' daily experiences and utilizes concepts and terms in interpreting data gathered. The phenomenological study is relevant for studies or events that are relatively unknown, and there is limited research on African immigrant men (Boise et al., 2013). Although narrative analysis could have been used for the study, the emphasis was not on participants' ability to make meaning from their personal stories but utilizing a scientific phenomenological reduction from the lived experiences of participants to create transformed meaning units that will be used to describe a psychological structure (Chong et al., 2021).

Role of the Researcher

I was the primary researcher for this study, implementing and conducting individual interviews of participants. A researcher's background and experience can influence the outcome of a study. I identify as an African immigrant man, which could result in researcher bias. In addressing this potential bias, I sought to understand participants' experiences by comprehending their perspective, thoughts, and experiences during the interview process using a person-centered approach (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

For this reason, it was imperative to examine my worldview, positionality, and identity of throughout the research study (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). It demanded continuous self-reflection during the conduction of the study, relationships with subjects, the selection of the sample, the research location, and personal experiences. I achieved this through self-reflection by journaling my thoughts and experiences. I also ensured that participants were treated with respect, comprehended the purpose of the research, and provided a space to share comfortably.

Methodology

Participant Selection, Sampling Strategy, and Criteria for Inclusion

Ten participants who were African immigrant men over 18 years who have lived in the United States for at least 2 consecutive years were selected for the study. Purposive sampling was used for this study because I wanted to access a small group of people who potentially shared similar experiences, hoping to attain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of African immigrant men (see Patton, 2015). Participants for the study came from foreign-born African populations in the United States, including Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Kenya. Convenience sampling was selected because it is an efficient and cost-effective means to recruit the desired participants for the study. Verification that interested individuals meet the criteria for inclusion was accomplished by self-report.

I included 10 participants who were African immigrant men and concluded data collection when saturation was achieved. Data saturation occurs when there are no discoveries of new themes from the research topic being examined during the data

collection process (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Researchers have recommended three to 10

participants for a phenomenological study that gathers data through interviews (Mthuli et

al., 2022). I achieved data saturation when I saw repeated patterns, themes, and concepts

in my data and had adequate data to answer my research questions, and there was no new

information manifesting based on the theoretical foundation.

Instrumentation

Although content validity can be a challenge to achieve formally, the interview

questions were developed based on the literature review and the key content areas for

answering the research questions (see Table 1). The questions created were grounded in

the literature review and theoretical foundation. African immigrant men were the experts

in sharing their lived experiences with acculturative stress and coping skills used to

manage them. Because of this, open-ended questions guided the interview questions. The

research questions were developed based on the key dimensions or strategies of Berry's

acculturation theory, including assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration

(Berry, 1997). I used these key dimensions as a guiding principle to ask questions about

their lived experience and explore what strategies they primarily identify within the four

key dimensions of Berry's theory of acculturation.

Table 1

Sources for Developing Interview Questions for Content Validity

Key content area	Article source
Acculturative experience	(Gordon, 1964; Graves, 1967; Ma, 2021; Neto et al., 2022; Sokolskaya & Valentonis, (2020).
Experience of discrimination	(Ma, 2020; Nkimbeng et al. (2021); Escamilla & Saasa, (2020).
Immigration experience	(Anderson, 2017; Deslandes et al. (2022) Hagan et

	al. (2001); McCabe, 2011).
Meaning of coping skill experience	(Covington-Ward et al., 2018; Cao et al. (2021) Lee and Vaydich (2020)
The occurrence of acculturative stress	(Kamaya, 1997; Kuo (1976), Lewis, 2021; Nkimbeng et al. (2021)
The occurrence of mental health	(Ahmend et al. (2020); Kiehne et al. (2015); Nkimbeng et al. (2023)

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The recruitment strategy was through the public notices board, Facebook, and the Walden University participant pool. A flyer was created for this purpose. During the initial call from participants to expressing willingness to take part in the study, their emails were collected, and eligibility requirements were confirmed. Participants selected for the study received informed consent detailing the voluntary nature of the research via email. Participants had the option to withdraw from the research at any point in time. The informed consent form included the purpose of the study, a plan of action on how results will be shared with the public, and the procedure and significance of the study. Participants replied to the email with "I consent" to confirm their willingness to volunteer in the study.

A 45–60-minute face-to-face video conference interview was scheduled after a confirmation email was received. During the video conference interview, participants were informed that the entire interview would be recorded and transcribed by me. A basic demographic questionnaire was completed as part of the interview process. Video conference software, Zoom was utilized for the interview and recording. In addition, participants were provided with information on a follow-up interview if there was a need for clarity or additional information. They received a summary of the transcribed interview to review for accuracy. Participants received an electronic $5.00 gift card as a

token of appreciation for participating in the study and were informed about how the
results will be shared with the public during the interview process. I encouraged
participants to ask any questions during the interviewing process. I also had a follow-up
plan if the recruitment strategy resulted in few participants by posting flyers at
community centers and encouraging community leaders to spread the word or invite me
to speak to community members at events or meetings about my study.

Data Analysis Plan

Interviews were conducted to gather data on the lived experiences of African
immigrant men. Interview questions comprised of open-ended questions I developed to
allow for detailed elaboration and description of perceived experiences. According to
Giorgi (2014), during the first step the researcher is responsible for reading the
transcribed data with the goal of comprehending the fundamental sense of described
events. In Step 2, I created a psychological meaning unit by placing slashes within
participants' lived experiences descriptions. By reading the transcribed data a few times,
unique meanings were marked appropriately. Internal validity was achieved when there
were identical meaning units from the analyzed data (Giorgi, 2014). Once meaning units
were identified, they were transformed into expressions that were psychologically
sensitive in nature. I needed to avoid exaggerating the interest of participants that were
personal but rather for psychological meaning. I described the psychological structure of
the lived experiences of African immigrant men through imaginative variation.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To enhance credibility, after the process of transcribing, I sent out a summary of the transcript to participants to confirm the accuracy and invited changes and adjustments. If the transcribed data were not accurate, a second interview was scheduled for clarity. My research committee was part of the review process in ensuring the study was credible and transparent.

Transferability

Transferability is the ability of a research finding to be employed in real life or applied in other studies (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I ensured transferability by providing adequate information about the phenomenon being studied. Transferability can be enhanced by providing detailed description of the sample size and selection method used in the study, the number of participants involved, the data collection methods employed, the length of the data collection session and the time period data was collected (Shenton, 2004). Purposive sampling was adopted for the study to enhance transferability since it allows me to choose participants who fit a specific criterion. The information concerning the study was detailed in the participation selection logic and the procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection section in this chapter. The results of the study were understood within the context of African immigrant men's experiences with acculturative stress and the coping skills they use to manage acculturative stress.

Dependability

The operational details of my study, including the data process, were

comprehensive to ensure dependability. The research design and its implementation

strategy were covered to include the theoretical orientation adopted for the study, the

sample size and selection steps, and concepts defined to ensure that the research when

repeated in the future will amount to similar results (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

Confirmability ensures that the findings of a research study will have one

universal conclusion if other researchers besides the primary research analyze the same

data used in the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). In other words, it eliminates any potential

biases and influences from the primary researcher. I achieved confirmability through

member checking. Participants reviewed summaries of the data and confirmed if they

encapsulate their experiences (Chung et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Ethical Procedures

Research involving human subjects mandates the approval of an Institutional

Review Board (IRB) that upholds the ethical regulation of social science research

(Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The board established by universities monitors and reviews

research proposals, which demands the safety and welfare of participants involved in the

research known as beneficence. IRB and institutional ethics review committees serve as a

gatekeeper in ensuring that all participants of research are not harmed during the entire

implementation of the research (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I applied, completed, and

obtained appropriate approval from Walden University's IRB (approval no. 06-13-23-

0601444). Informed consent was presented to the IRB board and all training required by

the board was completed. It was critical to share any potential ethical dilemma with the

IRB, research committee, peers, and supervisor throughout the process of research to eliminate any form of arising doubts (Lee, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I shared any potential ethical dilemma that may arise during my study. Confidentiality is critical to any form of research and must be preserved. All information collected throughout the study was saved in a password-protected memory card and locked in a safe when necessary (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Summary

Giorgi's phenomenological approach design was used for this study. The methodology focused on the lived experiences of African immigrant men from their perspective, emphasizing coping strategies. Data were compiled from a smaller group size utilizing an individual interview approach. Themes were identified and utilized to organize and group data; meaning units were developed and used in analyzing data based on the theoretical framework. The results of this study can help mental health professionals advocate for culturally sensitive care and gender-specific programs for African immigrant men living in the United States. This chapter covered the research method, the role of the researcher, data collection, and the analysis plan. The sampling strategy was also defined, and ethical considerations were covered. Chapter 4 will present the study's findings and offer an extensive discussion of the results.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to examine the lived experience of African immigrant men, the types of acculturative stress experienced, and the coping silks used in managing acculturative stress while living in the United States. The research questions that guided the study focused on the experience of acculturative stress in African immigrant men living in the United States, and their meaning of coping.

This chapter presents the results from the data collection, which were gathered through semistructured interviews and the analysis of participant responses. Through Giorgi's data analysis method, I created a psychological meaning unit by placing slashes within participants' lived experiences descriptions and documenting them in an Excel spreadsheet. Meaning units were identified and transformed into expressions that were psychologically sensitive in nature (Giorgi, 2014).

Setting

African immigrant men over 18 years old who have lived in the United States for at least 2 consecutive years were invited to participate in the study. Ten interviews were conducted through a face-to-face video conference interview in Zoom. During the video conference interview, participants were informed that the interview would be recorded and transcribed by me. Interviews were conducted beginning in June of 2023 and concluding in July of 2023.

Demographics

Each participant completed a basic demographic questionnaire during the interview process. All participants were African immigrant men over the age of 18 years

and had lived in the United States for at least 2 consecutive years. All participants met

inclusion criteria and willingly signed an informed consent form by replying to the email

invitation with "I consent." Participants were informed of their willingness to opt out of

the interview at any point. Participants provided a pseudonym, which helped maintain the

anonymity and integrity of the study. Table 2 provides a demographic breakdown of the

ten African immigrant men over 18 who participated in the study. The age ranged from

34 to 77 (*M = 48, SD = 15.04*).

Table 2

Participant Demographic Variable

Participants	Age	Country of origin	Years lived in the United States
P1	34	Ghana	5
P2	71	Sierra Leone	6
P3	41	Nigeria	6
P4	77	Kenya	21
P5	35	Ivory Coast	5
P6	35	Sierra Leone	6
P7	41	Sierra Leone	19
P8	44	Guinea	13
P9	51	Sierra Leone	21
P10	51	Ethiopia	26

Data Collection

The data collection for the study included interviews with 10 participants who

were African immigrant men over 18 years and have lived in the United States for at least

2 consecutive years. Purposive sampling was used for this study because I wanted to

access a small group of people who share similar experiences (Patton, 2015). Participants

for the study came from foreign-born African populations in the United States, including

Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Kenya. A basic demographic questionnaire was completed

as part of the interview process.

I conducted a 45–60-minute face-to-face video conference with participants after a confirmation email was received. During the video conference interview in Zoom, participants were informed that the entire interview would be recorded and transcribed by me. The audio file was retrieved and transcribed using the Microsoft Word transcribe tool. I reviewed and cleaned up the initial transcription. In addition, participants were also provided with information on a follow-up interview if there was a need for clarity or additional information. Participants received a summary of the transcribed interview to review for accuracy.

Data Analysis

Interviews were conducted to gather data on the lived experiences of African immigrant men. Interview questions comprised of open-ended questions were developed by me to allow for detailed elaboration and description of perceived experiences. According to Giorgi (2014), during the first step, the researcher is responsible for reading the transcribed data with the goal of comprehending the fundamental sense of described events. The data were stored, organized, and meaning unites organized manually by me using Microsoft Word and Excel (see Table 3). I read the transcription multiple times and listened to the audio to understand the described events.

Table 3

First Meaning Units from Transcripts

Meaning units	Participant files	Total references
Unmatched Expectations	9	36
Cultural shock	10	40
Different social norms	10	39
Loneliness	7	40
Disappointment upon arrival	4	14
Absence of family and friends back home	6	32
Communication barriers	6	30
Transportation challenges	4	17
Financial constraints	7	22
Lack of freedom to interact	5	15
Cold weather	6	20
No legal documentation to work	3	7
Traumatic and stressful experience	1	4
Qualified professional back home	4	12
The frustration of getting a decent job	6	23
No social service resources	2	7
Discrimination at work and school	4	16
Imposition of sexual orientation	4	9
Family support not enlightened/integrated	2	8
Time management Skills	2	8
Learning to use technology to adjust and connect	7	21
Self-determination and Courage	8	31
Positive mindset	7	24
Advancement in education	7	26
Being cautious and patient	4	20
Relearning English	4	13
Forgiving and adapting	2	5
Development of new friendships	5	15
Family and community support	8	27
School support	3	9
Being assertive	4	12
Learning to go on vacation	1	2
Religion and Prayer	6	21
Filled unemployment	1	1
Utilize social services. e.g., food stamps	1	3

In Step 2, I created a psychological meaning unit by placing slashes within participants' lived experiences descriptions and saved them in an Excel spreadsheet. Direct quotes that captured participants' lived experiences were transformed into meaning unites and saved. By reading the transcribed data a few times, unique meanings were marked appropriately, and additional meaning unites were developed and captured manually. The total references and files were developed manually and matched to all relevant meaning unites. Meaning units were grouped based on their similar nature into broader theme patterns. Subthemes were connected to themes as presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Final Meaning Units Structure

Themes	Subthemes
Cultural Shock	Communication barrier
	Transportation challenges
	Ethnic and environmental differences
	Financial constraints
Social isolation	Loneliness and absence of family and friends
	Lack of collectivism
Unmatched expectations	The frustration of getting a job
	Qualified professional back home
	Discrimination
Self-efficacy	Self-determination and courage
	Positive mindset
	Will to advance education and adapt
Connectedness and belonging	Family, peer, and community support
	Religion and prayer
	Learning and connecting using technology

Internal validity was achieved when there were identical meaning units from the analyzed data (Giorgi, 2014). Once meaning units were identified, they were transformed into expressions that were psychologically sensitive in nature. I needed to avoid exaggerating the interest of participants that were personal but rather for psychological meaning. I described the psychological structure of the lived experiences of African

immigrant men through imaginative variation. The themes were matched to the research

questions based on their connections and psychological meaning through the analytical

procedures by Giorgi's descriptive phenomenology presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Alignment of Research Questions to Major Themes

Research questions	Themes
What is the experience of acculturative stress in African immigrant men living in the United States?	Cultural shock Social isolation Unmatched expectations
What is the meaning of coping for the African immigrant men who experience acculturative stress?	Self-efficacy Connectedness and belonging

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To enhance credibility, after the process of transcribing, I sent out a summary of

the transcript to participants to confirm the accuracy and invited changes and

adjustments. If the transcribed data were not accurate, a third interview was scheduled for

clarity. My research committee was also part of the review process in ensuring the study

was credible and transparent.

Transferability

Transferability is the ability of a research finding to be employed in real life or

applied in other studies (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Purposive sampling was adopted for the

study to enhance transferability since it allows me to choose participants that fit in a

specific criterion. I also ensured transferability by providing adequate information about

the phenomenon being studied including the sample size and selection method used in the

study, the number of participants involved, the data collection methods employed, the length of the data collection session and the time period data were collected (Shenton, 2004). The results of the study were understood within the context of African immigrant men's experiences with acculturative stress and the coping skills they use to manage acculturative stress.

Dependability

The operational details of my study, including the data process, were comprehensive to ensure dependability. The research design and its implementation strategy were covered to include the theoretical orientation adopted for the study, the sample size and selection steps, and concepts defined, among others to ensure that the research when repeated in the future will amount to similar results (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

Confirmability ensures that the findings of a research study will have one universal conclusion if other researchers besides the primary research analyze the same data used in the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). In other words, it eliminates any potential biases and influences from the primary researcher. I achieved confirmability through member checking. Participants reviewed summaries of the data and confirmed if they encapsulated their experiences (Chung et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I used follow-up questions to seek clarity and in making sure that participants' lived experiences were being captured and not based my assumptions or interpretations.

Results

The study showed that five themes and 16 subthemes emerged from 35 meaning

units using Giorgi's phenomenology analysis in examining the lived experience of African immigrant men, the types of acculturative stress experienced, and the coping silks used in managing acculturative stress while living in the United States. The themes identified using participants' quotes encapsulate their lived experiences and coping skills.

Theme 1: Cultural Shock

Cultural shock involves participants' ability to have a sense of awareness of the differences in customs, traditions, values, and conflicts between their host and home culture. These feelings can create feelings of stress, confusion, and worry, which can impact the acculturative process.

Communication Barriers

Some participants expressed the impact of communication barriers in their acculturative process and how it contributed to their acculturative stress. They shared that although English was their formal language back home, they felt misunderstood and had to constantly repeat themselves because of their accent. P6 shared,

> I can speak English but, the accents you know, for me to understand them, you
> know, and for them to understand me too…. You have to listen keenly because
> their accents differ. That was the challenge. I have to repeat, "what did you say?
> What did you say?" You know? And then so. They also have to ask sometimes
> "what are you talking about?" They don't get you, so I have to repeat myself.

Another participant shared coming from a French-speaking country, he was unable to work because of the language. P5 expressed,

> Yeah, my challenge during the first three months was the language. You don't

know how to express your opinion. When people are talking, you cannot hear

them because of the accent, when you talk, they cannot hear you. You can do

more effort to talk but we cannot hear you because of your accent. It was my big

challenge. And if you go to do an interview, you don't understand English. I did

stay a long time, I didn't work because of language…. Sometimes you say yes,

but you don't understand what they said. But you say yes, you appear like a stupid

person. You don't understand but you say yes.

P8 mentioned that American phrases and grammar interpretation was different from what

he learned back home making it difficult to communicate. P8 shared,

the way you address people, some kind of phrases used, how do you use them….

It's not like the way you learn English, the way you're gonna use the English.

Everything here is different, for instance, like you know for me like when

somebody says whatever. OK, I'm expecting you to finish your phrases, you

know. But at the end of the day, when somebody says here whatever it's like,

completely different or somebody says it's OK. And that's OK, is completely

different from the OK that I know.

Transportation Challenges

The stress of navigating and learning a complex and different transit system by

African immigrant men living in the United States impacted their daily functioning. P6

shared, "New York is big so you are taking trains here and there, occasionally going

missing in the subway, going, getting, you know, getting lost on the road and, you know.

It was very stressful at that time." P8 also shared,

the bus system is not like, you know, it's not like back home back home. You

know, from one point to the other, you know which bus you're gonna take. You

know which route you're gonna take. And here it's like different like. The bus

driver doesn't talk to you ….You know, going to the grocery stores, you don't

have a car, you have to use the buses….Sometimes you find yourself again on the

other side of town because you miss your bus and you don't even know how to

catch the next one.

Ethnic and Environmental Differences

Participants shared the overt differences they observed upon migrating to the

United States which was a challenge. Some of these challenges included changes in

weather conditions as they underestimated the severity of the cold since they migrated

from the African continent, which was mostly tropical, the disparity in food between the

host county and country of origin, and the change in currency and learning about the

prices of goods and services and the value of the dollar rate compared to their originating

country's currency. P2 expressed,

The place was very, very, very cold….The weather was different, quite different,

you know, I'm from Sierra Leonne and we have tropical weather, the rainy and

dry season. We don't have winter….I arrived when it was deep winter in

December in Minnesota, so you see, the difference was great.

Another participant mentioned not having the appropriate clothes for the winter weather.

P4 stated,

it was a kind of coming to the end of summer and by the time we got into winter,

we had no clothes that would keep us warm enough. So that was a challenge

because it's the kind of cold that was not familiar at all.

Some participants described their experience with the cold weather as "white dust" and the difference in food, while others mentioned being unprepared for the frigid weather. P10 shared, "I remember snow. Why is white dust coming from the sky? Cold and food, different food. Everything was different. The cold. You have to put a layer of clothes on during the cold weather." P6 stated,

When I go to a restaurant, I'm not familiar with your food. Like I make a lot of

choices of like, "what is this?" You know, some places I'll go, they don't even

have rice, so like I'm not familiar with this kind of food, you know, so that was

one challenge for me, you know, and also the prices, you know, for me to get

familiar with because dealing with dollar now in my own country, we don't use

dollar, so like it was a big challenge buying something.

P9 also mentioned,

So my first cold was beyond anything anybody could have prepared me for. So

the cold was a challenge. What made the cold more challenging was the fact that

you start off having to go get a bus … I had to take the bus and Minnesota's cold

is not funny. You know, so that was a challenge.

P4 expressed his lack of understanding of a mental health diagnose for his son and how that created a challenge for him as his family had no support and help. P4 stated,

when our son was 15 months old, he was diagnosed with autism. The name

autism was something we have never heard. And we didn't know what had hit us

because he was a normal baby as far as we could see. But he did not. He started

like he was going to talk. Then it stopped. And then from then, it was just

downhill from there on. And the challenge after challenge you don't know who to

see or where to seek help.

Financial Constraints

There was worry and anxiety over the lack of money as it was essential for

maintaining and paying for monthly bills and necessities such as food and rent. African

immigrants had to choose between paying for their school fees or paying for rent and

buying food. P4 stated,

For one, we had no money. My wife was going to school and she was paying for

herself. I had just lost my job in Kenya and then I tried business there, which did

not take off. And then I followed my wife. So it was difficult because we had no

money and money was needed for everything that going, you know, we needed

food, rent and whatever.

Another participant shared upon moving to the United States, they had money saved and

had to exhaust them within a period of time and resorted to begging which was

demeaning and an humiliating experience they never imagined experiencing in the

United States. P3 mentioned,

The other challenge was me running out of money. At the point there was no

more funds, I had gone through all the funds that I brought in, you know. So it

was very, very difficult and being the proud person that I am, "would I resort to

begging for, you know, funds now?" So it was a trying time.

The financial credit system in the United States was relatively new compared to the cash and carry financial system in their country of origin which posed a challenge. P7 stated,

> I'm talking about things as simple as credit, you know the worthiness of credit. Coming from Africa, the only thing that we know transactionally is you have the money and you make a purchase. And you're given that, right. So that whole idea of credit system and how the credit system works and with it, you know that was a biggest challenge because once you. If you don't get hold of it right, it's going to set you back like couple of years

Theme 2: Social Isolation

The loss of critical relationships from their originating country with no form of social support in the host country was a challenge participants shared. Participants expressed a common feeling of loneliness, absence of family and friends, and difficulty in developing new relationships because of the different social norms. Some stated the fast-paced American and individualistic culture was a new phenomenon that was grueling to navigate compared to the collectivistic culture and relaxed environment they were acclimatized to.

Loneliness and Absence of Family

The feeling of being lonely was overwhelming and participants will often share "missing home" and the busy life and schedule in American society impacted on their ability to develop new friendships. P1 shared,

> everyone is boom, boom, boom from class or going to work. But sometimes I just felt lonely. You look outside your window, and you don't see human beings, all

you see are cars passing by but in Ghana, you open your door, you go outside and

you see people walking around, so sometimes you're like "is this place really for

me?"

P8 stated,

I don't have any family members here. I came here alone…because I don't have

any family and friends here, you know, I have to, you know just stay like that…

These are some areas that you know it's like it's like an earthquake and then you

get aftershock until when you come, you have to like realize that as I was saying

you, you know, culturally you miss your food, you miss your family, you miss

your language, you miss a lot of things that you used to do.

P4 shared,

We did not have a TV. We did not have a computer and I had to stay home all

day. So it was very boring just sitting and. You know and looking after the baby. I

needed at least some diversion when I'm relaxing and it wasn't, I didn't have the

facilities.

Lack of Collectivism

The challenge of interacting with new people and forming relationships, a social

norm built on communal support that was strongly established, encouraged and upheld in

their originating country but almost impossible to develop in host country was expressed

by participants. P1 stated,

I would say the freedom, the instructiveness, how easy it is to, you know, just

meet people around in Ghana and just have a conversation, you know. It wasn't

the same, especially because it was winter too, and so you hardly see people

outside. The only time you see people outside is when they are walking too. That

human interaction was a bit of a challenge. It made it a bit difficult. Like you had

no one to talk to about how you are feeling and all that because everyone is busy.

Everyone has their issues and so you can't, you know, really woken up to anyone.

P6 mentioned how people are confined to their personal space and the lack of interactions

among people.

The other challenge, I think about is like the US here, the way we live in our

homes, we don't interact much with our neighbors, you know, like in Africa, we

interact much with our neighbors. But like here, you just stay at home with your

family. You know you mind, your business, Africa, we don't mind our business.

We have to interact. I have to go to my uncle, my friends, and neighbors' place.

You know, how we do things from there, but here is different. Sometimes I'll be

at home like the first three months, you know, by myself, just playing with my

phone TV, you know, no job by then. And while I was looking for jobs so that

loneliness, you know, caught me up. I was like, this is not a life am used to.

P5 expressed,

People cannot support you 100%. No, it's not possible. Everybody's busy.

Everybody's busy. They have the kid, they have to pick up the kid in daycare. We

have to go to work, we have to go to school. Everybody is busy. Maybe 25% they

can help you 25%. But 100 percent 75% you have to put in the effort yourself.

People will help you 25%. We can show you some stuff. OK. What we have to do

what we have to say, but to communicate you want to practice.

Another participant expressed the different social norms and the importance of reading

body language before engaging in conversations or asking for help. P8 mentioned,

back home after class, you hang around, you know, create new friends. But that's

a little bit different from here. After classes, everybody disappears and you don't

see no one….It takes time before you see you can meet somebody before you

know how to start a conversation before you know how to read body language to

know whether somebody is willing to talk to you, whether somebody is ready to

accommodate to you, whether somebody is even willing to sit with you and have

lunch or even in class somebody is even willing to sit near you, you know, or

even when they ask a question that you don't understand, whether if somebody is

even ready to answer you, or to give you a time, you know, something like that.

Theme 3: Unmatched Expectations

There was an expectation that past educational and work experiences from

originating countries would enable African immigrant men to get an equivalent or

matching job in the host country. The process of identifying suitable jobs, applying, and

getting a job offer was a painstaking process. Highly qualified professionals from their

originating countries had to substitute for laborious and strenuous menial low-paying jobs

that required minimum to no education to pay for rent and utility bills. Also, the

frustration of changing immigration status that will enable participants to find a suitable

job was a challenge.

The Frustration of Getting a Job

The challenge of getting a qualified job that matched one's educational background and experience was tough and securing the legal documentation to be able to apply for a job was significant. P3 expressed how traumatic the experience was,

as you are immigrating to another country you don't know whether you'll be able to get a job because you don't have the required. You know your document to start working. It was a bit, you know, traumatic coming from where I was coming from, where I was a manager, you know, I was like the life of the business you.

P10 stated, "so it's knowing exactly where to find a job. And knowing what kind of job you're gonna do because what you have done is not relevant anymore. You have to find a new job." P5 mentioned of the stressful process of applying and acquiring a job,

It was stressful because when you come, you cannot do anything. You cannot work because of the language. It was stressful, you say, OK, different language. I had to work. It's not easy to say. When you want to do an interview, they say you have to do a test. OK, you don't understand. Nobody can be with you to translate the test.

Qualified Professionals Back Home

Participants who were highly qualified from their originating countries could not get jobs in their field and had to settle for low-paying and physically challenging jobs to pay for their basic necessities. P4 shared, "so it was not easy because we had good jobs back in Kenya. And now here we are, we have become kind of beggars and it wasn't easy. It was humiliating and it demoralized us." P9 also mentioned,

My biggest challenge was going into the direct care and you know doing the

cleaning of somebody who was filled with feces and you know the place stunk,

getting them ready. Because I was a teacher back home. I was a high school

teacher. You know, I was well respected everywhere.

Discrimination

Some participants expressed their experience of discrimination based on their

African accent and skin color which inhibited their ability to excel at their work

environment. P7 stated,

And then you're an African. You know, of course you know they tend to look less

on us, right, especially with the accent, right. "Is it over, you know, institutional

racism? You know, you start seeing those things, you know, and sometimes

they're not even secretly done right?" They're just like in your face kind of thing.

So now. It's a question of how are you going to overcome that obstacle. How are

you going to show these people that, hey, listen, what I mean, I know I can. I'm

highly capable of doing this thing that you think because of my accent or my skin

color or my place of origin, you think I'm less.

Theme 4: Self-Efficacy

Participants unanimously demonstrated self-efficacy as an integral coping skill

developed in managing acculturative stress in the United States. They had a strong belief

in their ability to overcome obstacles and challenges through self-determination and

courage, having a positive mindset, and a desire to learn and advance in their education

and ultimately be successful in their newfound home.

Self-Determination and Courage

Participants shared overcoming challenges through self-determination and courage and accepting the fact that their expectations of coming into the United States might be different realistically and identifying alternative means of addressing any potential obstacles while exercising patience. P8 shared,

It's just like every journey, first of all, you have to be determined. You have to understand that you know where you coming from is completely different from where you're going so and when arriving you arrive with a different expectations and sometimes your expectations will coincide with the reality on the ground and sometime, what you are expecting is not the same….You have to be really courageous, and you have to be prudent. You have to be. And also you have to be patient because everything is not going to just happen at once or immediately how you want it. So you need some element of patience in order for you to really cope.

Another participant expressed being strong mentally allowed him to cope. He shared that despite the challenge of not being able to develop relationships within a short period of time, he was able to establish new relationships after three to four years. P5 stated,

people were not open, like white people were not open. You know, it was hard for me to make American friends. I said "maybe my language, or is my skin because of my skin color?" I don't know, but I wanted to approach to make friends with them and it will help me to speak English well. But it was after three to four years, I got American friends….I'm a man, I'm strong, I say OK. I have to overcome these obstacles, I have to overcome them.

P3 expressed,

> That if you were to buckle up and, you know, get right to it, you would achieve
>
> your dreams. And I felt, and I still feel up these days up till today that I'm. If you
>
> do right by yourself, you know you buckle down. You know get through it. Your
>
> dreams will be achieved, you know. That's I've always had that mentality. The
>
> states, the United States always gives you that mentality. And that was actually
>
> the biggest factor. More like, yeah, I could achieve my dreams here, like,
>
> whatever you want to be. I can be that. Right here.

Positive Mindset

Some participants were optimistic about achieving their goals and dreams through

the opportunities the United States offers while others wanted to demonstrate that despite

their accents or skin color, they were capable and competent of fulfilling their dreams or

job duties. P6 stated,

> I got this opportunity of I mean, for the United States, you know. So I was so
>
> excited, you know. All my hopes, dreams, you know, getting better to develop my
>
> life, you know became reality because this country has a lot of opportunity, it all
>
> depends on you the individual. I was like OK in Sierra Leone we don't have
>
> enough opportunity. The United States was destined for me. I can be anything I
>
> want to be, you know..I was looking at opportunities, you know, coming from
>
> Africa, I'm so hungry to get some money. All those kind of things, you know.

P7 shared,

> I'm highly capable of doing this thing that you think because of my accent or my

skin color or my place of origin, you think I'm less, you know, than let's just say

example, a white person. No, let me prove to you that I am 10 times capable. I

think it's just believing in yourself, believing in your capability, believing that

you can definitely you know get to your goal and no matter what the obstacle, no

matter what the barrier, you know you just gonna keep going because you believe

in yourself. I think just having that kind of mindset helps a whole lot. And it helps

you break those glass ceilings, but it's a tough thing, but I think it's a mindset that

everyone should have regardless, so that helps me a lot.

A participant mentioned resorting to "digging deeper" and using African proverbs to cope

and not giving up on his dreams. P9 expressed,

Well, dip down deep, deep, deep, dig deeper, dig deeper. You know, back home

we have a saying, you fall into a river, you just have to swim. It's swim or drown,

you know, and we can't afford to drown. So I just dug deeper…You know, I was

prepared psychologically. I understood that the first years are not going to be easy

anywhere you go….I have the mentality of there's no use crying over spilled milk

is something has to be done you know, If you have to cry, cry for like a minute or

two minutes and then you get up clean up the milk.

Will to Advance Education and Adapt

There were participants who shared a desire to further their education either

pursuing an advanced degree by attending university or reinventing themselves by

learning to adapt through asking questions and being assertive, a social norm that was

discouraged or considered disrespectful from their originating culture especially when

dealing with elders or authority figures and a need to survive by learning. P10 mentioned,

> You just do everything you take to survive and then think of the, you know what
> else I have to do for living later on, so all those you know, going back to school
> came after you survive. Early stages, just survival.

Some participants mentioned becoming more assertive, a social norm that was not common in their originating county, and by asking questions and letting go of "shyness". P1 shared,

> Not asking questions because in Ghana we don't really ask questions, once, you
> just keep quiet and take it like that back. But here, you ask questions, you ask a lot
> of questions you want to know what is going on, "what's this? What's that? Why
> do I have to do this?" Shyness is going away and becoming more assertive.

Part 7 expressed,

> But over time with education and you know, understanding it and you know going
> through the ups and downs and you know and learning from your mistakes, all of
> those things help to get you back to how it should be

Theme 5: Connectedness and Belonging

Participants developed critical connections in their community that were significant coping skills. They established new relationships with their ethnic communities as a means of coping while others were able to connect with an American family who were willing to teach them about the American culture and provide some assistance and direction if needed.

Family, Peer, and Community Support

    Some participants relied on their existing family members like spouses, parents, and children who were already residing in the United States for support. African immigrant men who were enrolled in college were able to form strong connections with professors or advisors who were from the same collectivistic cultures despite the different countries they originated from due to the similar shared values and norms between countries of origin. P2 stated, "luckily for me, my daughter and my wife are here. So if I have any problem I consult them, we sit down, we talk you know." P8 mentioned,

> our academic advisor, she was like she was to us like our mother, you know, because she was not an American, you know, origin. She was from India, and she was like a mother to us, you know….She was like leading us to the right path, but she was also to us as a mother because of her position, you know, and sometimes we joke and do things together, you know.

P4 shared that having an American family connection made them feel welcomed and accepted by the dominant culture and that was a coping skill that was important in dealing with their acculturative stress. P4 expressed,

> A few months we were able to establish a connection through a student who would come earlier than my wife. We got connected to an American family who actually offered to be paying our rent….I would say that family I'm talking about give us a lot of joy because they made us feel that we belong…We have someone to turn to for our critical needs. So at least, but you see in our course we are not used to begging. And so it came down to that. We had to wait for them to see the

need we had rather than go out to outright asking them for that kind of help.

Religion and Prayer

African immigrant men resorted to prayer and faith-based organizations like the church and mosque in their communities as a means of coping. P3 referenced God as his "psychologist" and "therapist" and the collectivistic Nigerian ethnic community and mosque as his support. P3 shared,

> I'm from Nigeria like I stated, when it comes to coping strategy, we have none other than to pray. There's no, there's no. The only therapist we know the only psychologist we know is up there, so it's more of like you just have to do what you have to do. After praying everything goes away.. OK, I fortunately I was part of, you know, a mosque here and people actually helped. People helped….We have the Nigerian community, like we stay close to each other, I see other Nigerians participating. My kids attend schools where, you know there are lots of Nigerians are also like I told you, the mosque is an integral.

P6 expressed, "the Eid prayer I'm still connected with that one, you know, here I can still go to the Mosque and pray".

Learning and Connecting Using Technology

African immigrant men were able to leverage the use of technology to learn and develop new coping skills. Some resorted to using social media platforms such as YouTube to learn English or use that as a tool in their academic field, utilizing WhatsApp messenger to communicate and stay connected with friends and family across the globe without paying a fee since it relies on Wi-Fi. They use the WhatsApp messenger platform

to share videos, and photos of celebrations or milestone events and even have a Facetime call and see their family members and friends from back home on their phones or computers. P9 stated, "God bless WhatsApp, WhatsApp allows us to connect audio and video to people so I'm always talking to my dad. So I don't miss that connection a lot." P1 shared,

> So the first few weeks were challenging. I felt like giving up. As I said making few friends, talking to my brother who did the same program helped a little bit. He encouraged me to watch YouTube. He made me understand that YouTube is my everything. If I really want to understand what I'm doing, I should utilize YouTube and then, you know, try and get ahead of classes a little bit so that I wouldn't be confused with what I'm doing and that certainly helped.

P5 mentioned watching videos, listening to music, and using Google Translate to learn English since he came from a French-speaking country. P5 expressed, "so I had to practice English watching this video, watching this movie, listening to English music. I use Google Translate too with my cell phone to communicate with them is the way I used to overcome the barriers".

Participants' Acculturative Strategies

Participants for the study only experienced three acculturative strategies, assimilation, integration, and separation. However, 50% of participants experienced the separation stage with 40% of participants being at the integration stage and only 10% in assimilation.

According to Berry, people in the separation stage prefer to hold on to their

culture and avoid any form of interaction with the dominant culture, and it could be eating or participating in the dominant culture (Berry, 1997, 2005). Participants like P1 stated "we prefer to cook our food, we don't eat the food that people go out" while P2 shared "I decided to live a quiet life". On the other hand, P7 who was at the assimilation stage shared "being very individualistic" and not wearing any of the native clothes from his culture as he does not admire them. Berry mentioned that folks in the assimilation stage do not desire to maintain or celebrate their cultural identity (Berry, 1997). However, participants in the integration stage shared taking pride in their culture and also maintaining interaction with the dominant culture. P10 who was in the integration stage shared that accepting, "the culture of abundance and possibilities and letting go the culture of scarcity mindset. I think one thing that we continue learning and adapt and embrace is diversity and being pan-African".

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the result of the research study, and the research methodology and provided an overview of the qualitative data processes used to examine the research questions. The participants included ten African immigrant men who have lived in the United States for at least two consecutive years. I conducted a 45 to 60-minute face-to-face video conference with participants through video conference software called Zoom. The study results showed that five themes and 16 subthemes emerged from 35 meaning units using Giorgi's phenomenology analysis in examining the lived experience of African immigrant men, the types of acculturative stress experienced, and the coping silks used in managing acculturative stress while living in the United

States. The five themes included cultural shock, social isolation, unmatched expectations, self-efficacy, connectedness and belonging. Cultural shock, social isolation, and unmatched expectations were linked to the acculturative stress experienced by participants while social isolation and unmatched expectations were connected with the coping skills developed by participants.

In Chapter 5, the findings of the study will be linked with relevant literature. The implications of the study, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies will be discussed in the chapter. I will discuss how the study results can educate professionals to advocate for culturally sensitive care and gender-specific programs for African immigrant men.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to examine the lived experience of African immigrant men, the types of acculturative stress experienced, and the coping skills used in managing acculturative stress while living in the United States. In the analysis of data, five key themes were identified:

- Cultural shock

- Social isolation

- Unmatched expectations

- Self-efficacy

- Connectedness and belonging

In this chapter, the findings of the study will be connected and explained with relevant literature. The implications of the study, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies will also be discussed. Finally, the limitations of the study and a summary of the results of the study will be detailed.

Interpretation of the Findings

The study corroborates studies that indicate African immigrants experience acculturative stress on many levels and develop coping mechanisms in managing their acculturative stress in the host country (Ma, 2021; Lewis, 2021). Factors identified in the literature and captured in participants' data and comments include communication barriers, discrimination, loneliness, financial constraints, and family and community support (Joyce & Liamputtong, 2017; Ma, 2020; Saasa & Allen, 2021). Participants mentioned encountering communication barriers and discrimination in their work

environment and within their interactions with the dominant culture, which contributed to their acculturative stress. Some participants shared having to repeat themselves constantly in their daily interactions, which was frustrating, stressful, and challenging. Previous research has shown that African immigrants face unique types of discrimination such as accent-based and unjustified treatment during daily routines and in the labor market (Zaami & Madibbo, 2021). African immigrants often must repeat themselves multiple times in a conversation, and when seeking services which causes undue stress and anxiety (Joyce & Liamputtong, 2017; Ma, 2020; Nkimbeng et al., 2021). Participants also stated the frustration of getting a job because of their accents and having to settle for menial and hard labor jobs despite having degrees, skills, and experience gained from their home countries. In the literature, results showed that people disrespect and perceive African immigrants to be uneducated because of their accents; they were seen as incompetent or unqualified and treated unfairly with the assumption that they carried some transmissible and contagious diseases because they were from Africa causing psychological distress (Nkimbeng et al., 2021; Rhee, 2019).

Participants also shared that because of their accents, it was difficult to find a job, which caused financial constraints and hardships, and their inability to secure jobs or earn a wage to pay bills was traumatic and caused stress and anxiety. In a study on 27 Nigerians and 20 Jamaicans living in Houston, Texas, Nigerian respondents were often ridiculed for their accents and targeted for internet scamming (Jones-Obeng, 2021). Some participants shared about their inability to find a job due to their immigration status with a participant expressing being "traumatized" by the experience. Immigrants with high

levels of depressive symptoms are often unemployed, report low income, or have attained

advanced education (Kiehne et al., 2020).

African immigrant men encounter varying stressors while adjusting to their new

society. Participants mentioned the unmatched expectations and the cultural shock

experience such as ethnic and environmental differences, loneliness, financial constraints

and the lack of collectivism from the dominant culture. The perception of being able to

create and develop new friendships in the United States was an illusion based on the

collectivistic norm of having a strong external relationship and support that was easily

established in their host country. The population battles with frigid temperatures,

language barriers, social isolation, and financial challenges elevate acculturative stress in

addition to navigating from a normative collectivistic culture to a complex individualistic

American culture and values (Nkimbeng et al., 2020, 2021). All these factors contributed

to their acculturative stress.

Despite acculturative stress, African immigrant men developed new coping skills

such as self-efficacy and connectedness and belonging. Immigrants learn to cope with

and manage acculturative stressors experienced in their host country. Coping skills are

learned behavioral responses by an individual or cultural group aimed at reducing

psychophysiological disturbances in an environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Participants who had low self-esteem or identified as being "shy" and keeping quiet

learned to be more assertive by asking relevant questions and forming new peer and

community support while others leveraged technology to learn and connect with family

back home as a means of coping. Taking advantage of support from the dominant culture

was a coping skill shared by some participants in dealing with their acculturative stress. A welcoming, diverse, and receptive community helps immigrants cope positively with acculturative stress (Joyce & Liamputtong, 2017). African immigrants who have a strong support network resist the negative impact of discrimination on their livelihood better than those with limited support (Saasa, 2019). Some participants utilized religious communities such as the mosque and church, their faith in God, and prayer as coping skills while others reported a positive mindset, self-determination, and courage helped them battle acculturative stress (see also Ikafa, 2022).

Limitations of the Study

This study focused on African immigrant men over the age of 18 years currently living in the United States. One potential immigrant who qualified for the study was unwilling to participate in the research due to his immigration status. However, despite this limitation, most participants were willing to partake in the research regardless of their immigration status after learning about the confidentiality process detailed in the informed consent. Their experiences presented additional perspectives and insight into their lived experiences.

Another limitation was researcher bias, which can occur when a researcher influences questions to evoke a response by priming questions (Milne et al., 2021). I addressed research priming by asking open-ended questions. Participants were encouraged to describe lived experiences and refrain from sharing personal insights. I kept a journal of the data analysis process and analyzed the data from recorded, transcribed interviews to maintain the focus on the participants' responses rather than my

own beliefs.

Recommendations

This qualitative study explored the acculturative stress experienced by African immigrant men living in the United States and the coping skills developed. It highlighted the detailed lived experiences of the population, the levels of acculturative stress, and the coping mechanisms utilized by the population while going through the acculturative process. Although immigrant men engage in more assimilation activities away from their primary household than women, the stress on African immigrant men to excel, become accomplished, and the family responsibilities leads to a higher rate of depression than African immigrant women (Joyce & Liamputtong, 2017; Ma, 2020). It will be important to capture the experiences of African women immigrants, their needs, and developed coping skills.

This study brought into light the negative experiences of participants' accents and language barriers and their impact on their ability to acquire jobs. Future studies can explore the impact of accent-based discrimination of African immigrants and unemployment. Participants expressed experiencing discrimination, racism, feelings of loneliness and trauma from adjustments difficulties. Although participants shared utilizing self-efficacy and their support system including family, friends and religion as a means of coping, it will be important to explore African immigrants' ability and willingness to access readily available mental health services and community-based programs during the first 3 months of immigrating into the United States.

The findings also indicate the lack of accurate information received by

participants before immigrating to the United States and upon arrival into the host

country, which elevated their acculturative stress. Participants' immediate support system

including family members living in the United States are not fully equipped to provide

African immigrant men all the necessary resources to enable them to be successful. It is

imperative for African immigrants to receive accurate and adequate information about the

living conditions and challenges in the United States before migrating and offered critical

resources (employment, legal, immigration, financial, educational, discrimination and

anti-racism, human rights, and support group) upon arrival by a trusted, competent, and

credible support organization that is community-based.

Implications

Positive Social Change

This study shows that African immigrant men living in the United States

encounter a host of acculturative stressors. However, they can develop coping skills in

their host country that enable them to survive and thrive in their new society. The results

of this study contribute to understanding the gap in comprehending and identifying

coping skills African immigrant men utilize in managing acculturative stress and further

expanded on existing studies on African immigrant mental health and acculturative

challenges to include first-generation African immigrant men.

The study results can inform federal, state, county, and local government agencies

on the creation and development of culturally competent programs and services for

African immigrants. The study results can be shared with mental health professionals,

non-profit organizations, schools, businesses, and community-based organizations to

advocate for culturally sensitive care and gender-specific programs for African immigrant

men living in the United States. Mental health professionals, service providers,

businesses, schools, cities, and policymakers can learn about the lived experiences of

African immigrant men and the coping skills used for managing acculturative stress. The

in-depth data gathered on the lived experiences of African immigrant men and the coping

skills developed in the United States will ultimately help them provide better innovative

services to the population.

Methodological Implications

Descriptive phenomenology was an ideal approach for the study because it helped

emphasize describing African immigrant men's events and individual daily experiences

by using concepts and terms in interpreting data. There is also limited research on

African immigrant men, so this method provided an understanding of African immigrant

men's acculturative stress experiences and coping skills developed through their

worldview and lens. Giorgi's phenomenological approach was selected for this study

because of its emphasis on perceived human experiences, its scientific phenomenological

method adopts a concrete description of the lived experiences of participants which is

transformed into a psychological structure (Giorgi, 2014). Participants were receptive to

this approach because they felt comfortable and safe in sharing their own personal stories

without feeling intimidated, judged, or disrespected.

<div align="center">

Conclusions

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The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to examine the lived

experience of African immigrant men, the types of acculturative stress experienced, and

the coping skills used in managing acculturative stress while living in the United States. The scope of the study was limited to adult African immigrant men living in the United States. Participants for the study came from foreign-born African populations, including Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, and Kenya, who currently live in the United States. Berry's acculturation theory guided the study.

The study results showed that five themes and 16 subthemes manifested from 35 meaning units using Giorgi's phenomenology analysis. The five themes included cultural shock, social isolation, unmatched expectations, self-efficacy, connectedness and belonging. Cultural shock, social isolation, and unmatched expectations were linked to the acculturative stress experienced by participants, and social isolation and unmatched expectations were connected with the coping skills developed by participants. Mental health professionals, service providers, businesses, schools, cities, and policymakers can learn about the lived experiences of African immigrant men and the coping skills used for managing acculturative stress.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

1. What year were you born?

2. How long have you lived in the United States?

3. What is your African country of origin?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Date: _____

Location: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Interview Number: _____

1. Please tell me about coming to the United States.

2. How would you describe your experiences since you arrived in the United

States?

     Tell me what you remember most about when you arrived?

     What was the first 3 months of living in the US like? Please provide examples.

3. What was the biggest challenge you faced in settling down? Can you give me an

example? What was your experience of the stress of this?

     What did you do to cope with this challenge?

     What was another big challenge? Please provide examples and experiences.

     What did you do to cope with this big challenge?

4. What was your first biggest joy – or positive experience? Please provide examples.

5. What was your first coping strategy? Can you give me an example?

     What other strategies did you use?

     Who makes up your social and family support

     What access to resources did you have

     What source of connection to community did you have

6. What was the most important resource that helped you to overcome the challenges?

What did that mean to you? Were there any other resources?

7. Tell me about your life now.

- What parts of your life are connected with your country of origins' culture? (Examples and meaning)

- What parts of your culture have you let go of? (Examples and meaning)

- What parts of the US culture have you embraced? (Examples and meaning)

- What parts of the US culture have you disengaged from? (Examples and meaning)