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Acculturation experience of Africa immigrants in the United States of American

Judi Minage Ukiru

ACCULTURATION EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS

IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

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by

Judi Minage Ukiru

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ABSTRACT

African immigrants have been largely excluded from
research on issues confronting immigrants. They are often
grouped with the American born "African Americans." The
problem with this grouping is that it fails to capture the
unique issues presented by the African immigrant living in
an American society. They are, however, similarities
within these two groupings, which should not be ignored,
namely, (1) sharing of the same ancestry (2) having the
same skin color, and (3) dealing with racism related
issues.

Acculturation has been described as a psychological
process that can be very stressful. This experience can at
times overwhelm even the most psychologically strong and
resourceful immigrant. The process of acculturation may be
associated with tension, stress and sometimes despair.
Stress arising from acculturation can be linked to
physical, mental health and psychological well-being. The
process of acculturation involves adjusting to a new
culture, learning a new language, leaving family and
friends behind in the country of origin, loneliness, a
lack of support in the new country, underemployment or
unemployment, as well as personal and institutional
discrimination.

This research sought to examine the extent to which stressors impact the "African immigrant". The results revealed that males had significantly higher stress scores than females in the "Environmental factor" with a (p-value = .036). There was an overall difference among groups of the number of languages spoken by the immigrant on the "Attitudinal stress" with (F = 6.643, p = .002) and "Total Stress" (F = 4.651, p = .013). There was a significant negative correlation (r = -.492, p = -.001) between "Total years in the U.S" and "Total Stress." There was also a significant correlation among "Age" and "Familial Stress." The older immigrants experienced less stress than the younger immigrants. A majority of the respondents reported racism and adjusting to American culture as some of the biggest stressors. Most Africans reported coping with stress through association with friends, family and religion/spirituality.

This study will allow social workers or practitioners to gain knowledge about acculturation experience of African immigrants and be able to better advocate for their needs. As Africans immigrate to the United States, their success in assimilating to the new culture becomes a societal concern. As such, the Social Welfare of African immigrant children and the elderly must be protected

through social work practice. African immigrants present

unique needs and intervention modalities, which must be

addressed by social work practitioners.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother, Serah Eganza Ukiru. Mama, thank you for giving me the encouragement to pursue higher education. Mama, all your children have a college education. You have done well and you must be commended for a job well done. How did you do it!!! Thank you again and may God continue to bless you so that you can continue to enjoy your children's successes. I dedicate this degree to you. "*Asante Sana Mama, Nyasaye akugasitsywe*"

To all African immigrants in the United States

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

During the past two decades, the United States has
experienced an influx of new immigrants. The majority of
the new immigrants come from Mexico, South America,
Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. The percentages of
immigrants do not take into account undocumented
individuals (Bean, Edmonston, & Passel, 1940). The United
States, March 2000 census reported the following
percentages of people born outside the United States:
Central America 34.5%, Europe 15.3%, Caribbean 9.9%, South
America 9.9%, Asian 25.5%, other 8.1% including immigrants
from Africa. (This numbers represent only immigrants to
America and do not represent children of American citizens
born outside the United States).

The immigration status of these newcomers varies.
Kamya (1997) made an important distinction among these new
arrivals in the United States by categorizing immigrants
as refugees, immigrants, migrants, and illegal aliens. The
following identifiable immigrant populations as defined by
Kamya (1987) are:

(1) *Refugees* are persons who cross-national
     boundaries in search of safety because they fear
     prosecution.

(2) *Immigrants* are persons who have been granted
     legal permanent residence by their host
     countries.

(3) *Migrants* are individuals who have been granted
     temporary residence but intent to return to
     their countries of origin.

(4) *Illegal aliens* are people who entered another
     country illegally. A preferred term for illegal
     aliens is "undocumented people."

The 1992 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and
Naturalization Services (U.S. Department of Justice, 1993)
reported that there were 19 million migrants to the United
States in 1991. The same year, more than 1.8 million were
granted permanent residence. Between 1965 and 1992, over
2.25 million people legally emigrated from Africa to the
United States. That is about 3% of the total number of
immigrants to the United States (Kamya, 1997).

Culturally, Africans are perhaps the most diverse of
any continent's inhabitants, with thousands of ethnic
groups and more than 1,000 different languages. With
ethnicities that often cross national boundaries and

2

continual political upheavals, African national identity

is not as strong as racial ties or local kin group

affiliations. Black Africans make up the majority of the

continent's population, but there are also large

populations of Arabs, Asians, and Europeans.

Figure 1, below shows the country of birth of

respondents. This researcher got a heterogeneous group of

African immigrants but not all countries of Africa were

represented. The figure shows, by country of birth, how

many responded to the questionnaire. (Figure 1)
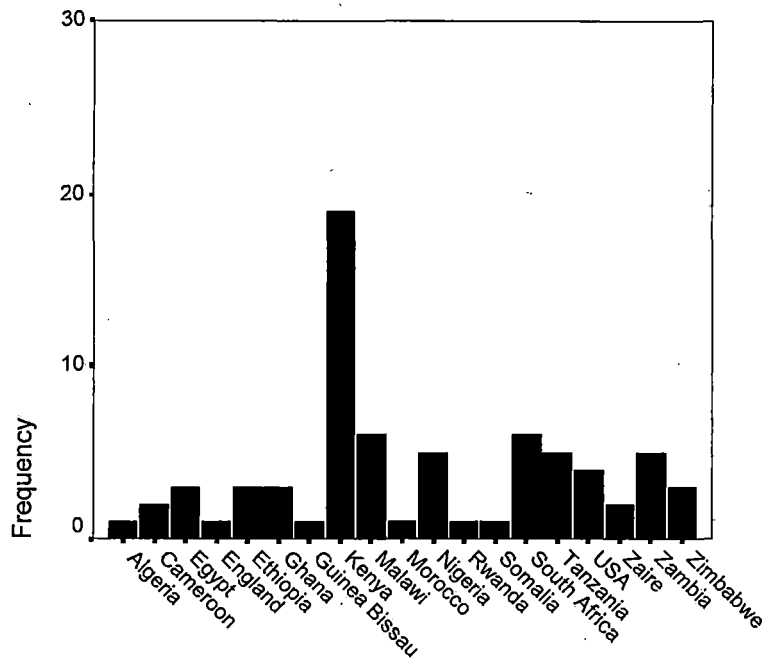
Figure 1. Country of Birth

African communities range from rural cultures in
which the food, religion, dress, tribal roles, and daily
life has remained unchanged for hundreds of years, to
modern city environments, which feature skyscrapers,
western styles of dress and commerce and a diverse mix of
cultural influences. Music, art, and literature are
culturally important. These elements are distinct
throughout Africa and have had considerable impact on
other societies around the world. For example, African
rhythms have influenced Western popular music styles such
as jazz, blues and rock.

In the late 1950's and 1960's, most African nations
gained independence from their colonial powers.
Independence brought many changes including political
instability and need for better education and better
paying jobs. With a growing population and other political
complications, African countries could not meet many of
the needs of their citizens, and hence the need to migrate
to the United States of America and other western
countries.

Problem Statement

Although considerable resources have been devoted to
the study of immigrants, historically, there has been a

lack of attention to the study of African immigrant groups in the United States.

Immigrant research examined the adjustment of immigrants in terms of education, language, economic, social, and psychological well being (Haines, 1989). Immigrants face a number of problems, including stress related to acculturation, change, loss, and trauma. Immigrants may not be welcomed by some states in the United States. The tenor of this sentiment was echoed by recent legislative initiatives in California that proposed to deny some immigrants access to social services (Kamya, 1997).

African immigrants have been largely excluded from research issues confronting immigrants. As a result, there is lack of information about the needs of this population. To document this need, the author conducted focus groups of African immigrants to discuss their experiences in America. The focus groups included church leaders, students, tribal group leaders, professionals and non-professional' members of the African immigrant community in the United States. Africans represented the focus groups with different backgrounds and professions including doctors, social workers, nurse, teachers, housewives and para professionals. Two focus groups

consisted of 15 participants each for a total of 30 participants from 19 different African countries.

The participants of the focus group stated that African immigrants are a population grouping that is ignored and forgotten in the United States, yet they face similar and/or different challenges as other immigrant groups, such as the Asians, Mexicans, Latinos, European, Jewish and Middle Eastern populations.

In summary, the findings of the focus groups highlighted the following issues facing the African immigrant.

1. Stress related to acculturation,

2. Having a good education but unable to get a good paying jobs,

3. Educational, emotional, linguistic and cultural issues facing African immigrant children in schools from K-12 and college/university,

4. Assimilation differences,

5. Excluded from research,

6. They are a cultural and not a homogeneous population,

7. Racism,

8. Hostility by the host country such as proposition 187 and hostile feeling that the

6

newer immigrants are taking over the jobs of the African Americans and Americans as a whole,

9. Immigrant dreams of America and realities of America so not mesh,

10. Immigrant adaptation resources,

11. Lack of support for immigration issues,

12. Lack of refugee/asylum status support and services,

13. Lack of infrastructure to maintain their culture,

14. Concerns about learning the English language without the "accent,"

15. Lack of family support,

16. Financial problems – poverty, and

17. Lack of coping mechanisms and supports.

The focus group also acknowledged the strengths of America. They identified advantages America offers that keeps African immigrants hopeful of wanting to stay in America despite the stressors. Advantages of migrating to America included: 1) a stable government; 2) stable economic and political freedoms; 3) freedom of speech; 4) freedom of worship; 5) excellent educational opportunities; and 6) better economic opportunities for themselves and their children.

Policy Issues for African Immigrants

Kinship has played a major role in the history of any migration. In 1965, the Immigration and Naturalization Act (P.C. 89-236) made kinship ties the primary rationing device for admitting new immigrants to the United States. The link to kinship resulted in an increased number of women, children and older people becoming new immigrants. Also, the 1990 Immigration and Naturalization Act, which made the "green card lottery" another means of entry into the United States, accounts for a considerable increase in the number of new immigrants to the United States of America. Most Africans have benefited from this act because they are among the least represented immigrants in the United States. The act allowed people from countries that were least represented to immigrate to the United States as permanent residents or green card holders, an opportunity to participate in a lottery.

Other factors responsible for migration include the changes in social, economic, and the political landscape around the world. Due to high inflation rates, unstable governments, tribal wars, lack of jobs, lack of educational opportunities, increased numbers of Africans are migrating to the United States.

The results of the study and the focus group findings supported the notion that most Africans initially came to the United States to obtain higher education. Others came for political asylum or as refugees. A good number came to stay with family members and a few came on employment authorizations.

According to the results of the survey, 63.3% of the respondents stated that they migrated to the United States to further their education, 4.2% immigrated on green card lottery visa, 4.2% migrated for employment, 22.2% migrated to stay with family and 4.2% as refugees or political asylees. Figure 2, below illustrates these findings: (Figure 2)
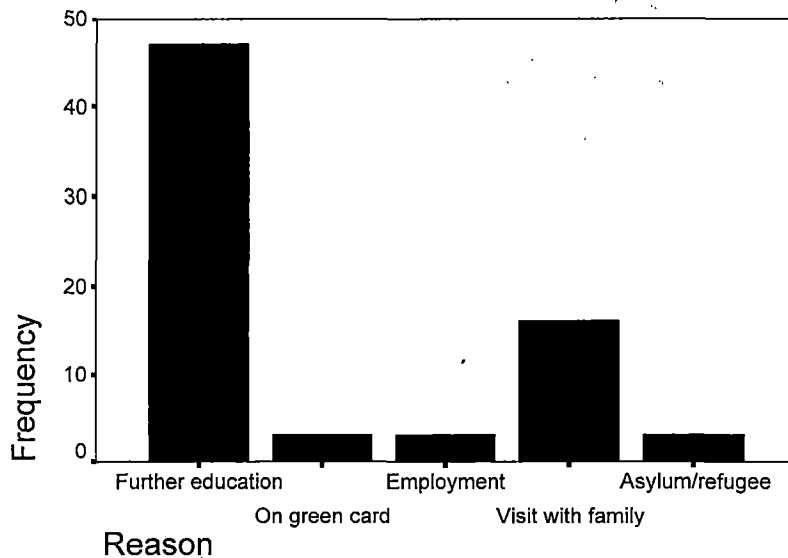
Figure 2. Reason for Immigrating to the United States

The Immigration and Naturalization Acts have not

favored migration of Africans to America as evidenced by

the percentage of African immigrants admitted to the

United States. Less than 3% of new immigrants in a year

come from Africa. There is currently no country in Africa

that has a visa waiver program with the United States, for

visiting or other purposes.

Some States have attempted to pass laws intended to

deny immigrants access to social services, i.e.,

(proposition 187 - California). Other recent legislative

mandates have proposed to deny immigrants the right to get

a driver license and a social security card. These

documents are necessary for an immigrant's successful

assimilation into the American culture. Without these

documents, some illegal immigrants resort to using fake

identification documents, including assumed names.

Many view such legislative as oppressive because it

promotes oppressive values in employer/employee

relationships. These may include overworking employees

without pay, a "slavery-like' mentality, and working

"under the table" with limited monetary compensation and

poor working conditions. When this occurs, it is a legal

violation of that immigrant's "human rights."

Social Work Practice as it Relates to African
    Immigrants

Social work practice is concerned with allocating

goods, services and opportunities in order to enhance

social functioning. Social work practice regulates the

provision of benefits to people for the purpose of meeting

basic life needs, such as employment, income, food,

housing, health care and relationship. As such, it is a

subset of social policy, which can be defined as the

formal and consistent ordering of human affairs (Karger &

Storsz, 1998).

Although America is often considered a "melting pot"

for different cultures, the African immigrant is often

grouped with the "African American" for purposes of
defining their needs and solutions. This grouping presents
unique issues because the African immigrant has different
experiences, which require different approaches to solving
their problems. In most instances, the African immigrant's
needs are not clearly identified, and therefore are not
addressed.

In a capitalistic economy, such as America, people
are expected to meet their basic needs by participating in
the market place. When groups are unable to participate
fully in the labor market, they tend to lag behind
economically. For example, as a result of historical
discrimination and other economic deficiencies within the
African American population, they struggle to participate
in the market place. Because African immigrants share same
ancestry and color of skin attributes as the "African
American," they tend to be exposed to the same level of
discrimination in the market place, as do African
Americans. The African immigrant, because they are not
fully eligible for social services, as per immigration
legislation, will tend to accept low paying jobs, even
though they may be qualified for higher paying jobs.

In summary, it is imperative that African immigrants'
needs be identified in order for social services to be

targeted to this population. In order to provide adequate services and resources to this population group, it is important that a comprehensive needs assessment be conducted to identify and link resources with the African immigrant.

African immigrants are so diverse that a person from Nigeria, and a person from Kenya, for instance, have different cultures and speak different languages. Social practice should recognize that not all "black" skinned African immigrants come from "Nigeria." Africa is a continent, with 54 countries, each of which has a different governmental structure and culture. Social practitioners must recognize that not all Africans speak the same language, even though they came from the same country. And lastly, but not least, social practitioners should recognize that not all Africans in America know each other, and they did not "live on trees back in Africa," as is typically the stereotype.

Social service practitioners need to be open and acknowledge the different ethnicities among the African people. Practitioners also need to learn the importance of each African ethnicity by identifying the variations amongst individuals within a specific culture within the African immigrants. Practitioners should take a history

13

when assessing an African immigrant and remember that, "healing takes place in the context of a relationship."

Practitioners need to be empathetic to the African immigrant, but more so, empower and educate them on availability of resources. Practitioners must always remember that being an immigrant is hard enough and therefore they should be handled with care.

Purpose of the Study

Immigrants to any new country must go through a process of acculturation. At a cultural level, acculturation involves adjusting to a new language, food and environment. At an interpersonal level, immigrants must reorganize interpersonal relationships. At an intrapsychic level, immigrants must learn to cope cognitively, attitudinally and behaviorally in a new cultural system (Kim, 1978; Padilla, 1980).

Acculturation has been described as a psychological process that can be very stressful (Born, 1970; Cervantes & Padilla, 1991; Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987; Padilla 1980). The process of acculturation often involves adjustment to a new culture, learning a new language, leaving family and friends behind in the country of origin, loneliness or lack of support in the new culture,

14

underemployment or unemployment, as well as personal and
institutional discrimination. These experiences, can at
times, overwhelm even the most psychologically strong and
resourceful immigrant, imbuing the process of
acculturation with tension, stress, and sometimes despair
(Fuertes, Westbrook, 1987).

Stress arising from acculturation has been linked
with the overall mental health of, for example, Mexican
Americans (Griffith & Villavicencio, 1985; Padilla,
Olmedo, & Loya, 1982). Since African immigrants appear to
go through the same stress like other immigrants, we can
imply that stress causes similar health problems to
African immigrants as that found in the Mexican Americans.

The problem with acculturation and the stress
associated with it can exacerbate the challenges
immigrants' face as discussed above. Fuertes and Westbrook
(1987) have grouped acculturation in four areas, namely:
1) the quality of immigrants social life in the new
culture, 2) immigrants' attitudes towards their former
culture and country of origin, 3) immigrants' relation
with family in the new culture, particularly with parents,
and 4) the quality of the environment in the new culture.

Men et al. (1987) developed a 24-item Likert, Social
Attitudinal, Familial & Environmental (SAFE) Acculturation

Stress Scale based on the Padilla et al. (1985) Scale.
Although the 21-item S.A.F.E. scale has been shown to be
reliable (alpha = .89) for use with Asian Americans and
international students (Mens et al. 1987), its reliability
and validity have not been examined with a heterogeneous
group of African immigrants.

The purpose of this study was to, 1) examine the
stress level of African immigrants using the 21-item
S.A.F.E Acculturation stress scale to assess the
adjustment needs of a heterogeneous group of African
immigrants and 2) to examine the gender, age, language and
years in the United States on the level of acculturation
stress experienced by the same sample. On the open-ended
question, the purpose is to find what the immigrants
consider most stressful about living in the United States
and their coping mechanisms.

<div align="center">

Significance of the Study to
Social Work Practice

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This study is significant for social work practice
because the growing population of African immigrants in
the United States require increased social work support.
African immigrants present unique social needs and
intervention modalities, which must be addressed by social
work practitioners. As Africans immigrate to the United

<div align="center">16</div>

States, their success in assimilating to the new culture becomes a societal concern. As such, the social welfare of African immigrant children and the elderly must be protected through social work practice.

This study will allow the social workers or practitioners to gain knowledge about acculturation experiences of African immigrants and be able to better advocate for their needs as each segment of the African immigrant posses a slightly different experience, which requires a slightly different intervention.

African immigrants are a forgotten population segment of the immigrants to the United States. They experience acculturation-related struggles, as do many of the other immigrating groups.

The findings of this study may help social practitioners understand some of the stressors the African immigrant faces during the process of acculturation. The social practitioner may incorporate the findings of this study in their practice so that they are able to facilitate support for the African immigrant, in integrating into the social environment of their new host country. The social practitioner intervention may occur in the light of several interactive processes involving

stress, self-esteem, spiritual well being and accessing resources.

Currently, Child Welfare Departments for instance have included Mexican and Asian immigrants in their service plan. For example, Child Welfare offices offer new immigrants who speak Spanish only, Social workers or practitioners who speak their language to help them access needed resources. Additionally, county and state governments offer higher pay to recruit Spanish-English speaking workers to help Spanish-speaking immigrants adjust and access the social welfare resources and services. No such services are currently being offered to African immigrants.

As previously stated, African immigrants are often grouped with "African Americans" and are easily overlooked; yet they have different experiences. The findings of this study would equip the social worker/practitioner with an in depth understanding of this population. The social worker or practitioner can in turn be able to design a case plan or treatment plan that can effectively address the African immigrant's specific needs.

Cultural sensitivity is a big theme in most practices. Social workers, doctors, and other

practitioners are being forced to learn about the different cultures in an effort to better the services they provide to their clients/patients. As stated earlier, not much research has been done on this population, which is the more reason why this researcher strongly feels that the findings of this study will help social workers/practitioners to have a better understanding about Africans needs for effective practice.

Furthermore, empirical research is more accepted than hearsay and that is the more reason why this research is important to child welfare practice.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The focus groups ware not related to any specific agency, as there were no agencies in the Inland Empire that address problems of African immigrants. There is a local church called "All Nations African Seventh Day Adventist Church" in the San Bernardino, where 10 of the people from the focus group are members of the church. Identifying the people was not a religious bias but was based on availability and interest in addressing issues related to African immigrants. The group was interested in helping to formulate their experiences and also to initiate empirical research on those experiences so that new arrivals have some resources to help them with acculturation stress.

Although considerable resources have been devoted to the study of immigrants, historically there has been a lack of attention of research on African immigrant groups in the United States. This research is therefore very important in helping us to better understand the challenges this group faces in terms of acculturation.

Reasons for Migration

Most African immigrants come to the United States as refugees or asylum seekers due to the political problems in their home countries. Christian Science Monitor (2000) discussed the difficulties involved among the refugees adapting into the new culture. African immigrants also come to the United States to go to school and look for better economic standing or 'Chase the American dream!' Whatever that may mean to each immigrant.

Edwards (1992) would say that transitions are opportunities for consolidation and advance. Many Africans come to America to advance in their education and to get "freedom" from oppressive governments in the country of origin. When Africans arrive in the United States, they are faced with many challenges. Some immigrants are able to overcome their challenges and advance in their education, assimilate, and get good paying jobs while others continue to remain in poverty.

Fair Market Opportunities

There has been an increase of African immigrants in the United States in the last years. The majorities of African immigrants' have good education, and are concentrated in some parts of the country, they are more

likely to be married and are employable. Although highly educated, they often have low paying jobs (Djamba, 1999).

There is a resentment of immigrants as some people feel that they are taking African American jobs (Barrett, 1997). "Immigrant dreams and American reality" (Waters, 1999) reviews several books about the labor market experiences of the ethnic minorities and immigrants in the United States. The findings suggested that African Americans suffer the most and this may be due to racism. African immigrants (especially those from black Africa) face the same kind of racism African Americans face and therefore suffer too in the labor market.

A study done by Hassan (2000) examined the educational, emotional, linguistic and cultural issues facing African immigrants. African immigrants are often placed in English as Second Language (ESL) classes that have been specifically designed for Spanish speaking population. This often hinders their achievement of educational goals as they end up learning Spanish instead of mainstreaming. The findings suggested a great need to include an international and global multicultural education component into teacher training programs for both prospective and current teacher to be able to deal better with the African immigrants in providing adequate

educational needs for people of different cultures. This affects mostly children of African immigrants who are under 18 years of age.

A study done by Dodoo (1997) examined the earning attainments of male African immigrants, their Caribbean born counterparts and American born African Americans. A few of the African immigrants earn more than Caribbean immigrants and African Americans. Although African immigrants were more employable and educated, they were disadvantaged because most Africans who earn their degrees outside the United States receive little, if any, reward for their degrees.

Others feel that immigrants are taking their jobs. "The affirmative action was not meant for immigrants" Dannernmaier (1995). This is a good example of resentment of immigration by people whose grandparents or forefathers were immigrants too. The findings revealed that affirmative action appeared to serve immigrants and a few wealthy African Americans men more than blacks in general who have struggled against poverty and prejudice.

Some of the human behavior in the social environment theories that apply to this group of population is the work of Vaillant. Vaillant says that healthy adaptation to the environment can be good or bad. This means that if you

have not the strength to accept the term life offers you,
you must in self-defense, force your own term upon it. The
African immigrant uses coping or adaptation defenses for
survival in the United States such as taking on low paying
jobs even though they may be over qualified.

Vaillant also says that healthy adaptations are given
to us through biological makeup, internalization of people
we love and other factors such as environmental factors.
Some African immigrants leave their families in Africa and
therefore their adaptation in the host country is
difficult and can be very traumatizing unless the host
country accepts and makes them feel welcomed. Most African
immigrants said that they experience hostility because of
the color of their skin and their "accents." The majority
reported that their perceived racism was the biggest
stressor in America.

<div align="center">Assimilation Stressors and
Dilemmas</div>

A study done by Burstyn (1995) examined female
circumcision in African immigrants. The findings
recommended that social services educate and inform
African immigrant communities about female genital
mutilation and protect the uncircumcised girls.

Practitioners are normally charged with an ethical dilemma, trying to show respect for another culture while guiding people away from a harmful practice that is very much part of that culture. Saran (1998) addressed health consequences of female genital mutilation, effects of infibulation on childbirth, preventative measures used to alleviate the problem, counseling programs for Somali immigrant infibulated women.

Kagan's (1994) theory of continuity and discontinuities in life can be applied to the African immigrant population. Once the immigrant arrives in the United States, there are discontinuities of some of their cultural beliefs and practices. American culture does not encourage female circumcision and spanking for instance. Before assimilating, they may get in trouble with Child Protective Service for instance but once they are fully assimilated, they are able to function better in the new culture.

Acculturation Stressors

Previous research has examined the adjustment of refugees, or immigrants in terms of education, language, economics, social, and psychological well being (Haines, 1989). Immigrants' face a number of problems including

stress related to acculturation, change, loss and trauma. Immigrants may not be welcomed by the host society. The tenor of this sentiment was echoed by recent legislative initiatives in some states (proposition 187 - California), which proposed to deny some immigrants access to social services (Kamya, 1997).

Also the African immigrants faces a lot of prejudice from the African American and resentment of "You sold us into slavery" even though this is not totally true especially for those immigrants from East Africa as the Arabs took black people into slavery. Also some tribes from the mainland did not have anybody leave Africa as slaves.

"New Country, Old customs" Gardner (2000) examined the efforts of immigrants in the United States to retain their culture, previous desires to acculturate as quickly as possible and be able to have two separate cultures and languages. There is a split, which causes acculturation and assimilation stress.

African immigrants like African Americans continue to face racism. The Christian Science monitor, (Scherer, 1999) reports the shooting of an African immigrant - Diallo Amadou by the members of the New York Special Crime

Unit. Diallo Amadou was unarmed and the critics argue that the actions were racially motivated.

"Where I live now" Jordon (1995) discussed several examples of racism and anti immigrant feelings in the United States, for example, the writings on the wall at Fairfield University in Connecticut and its comments on blacks, Chinks, Spics and the KKK, the re-election of Governor Pete Wilson who was behind proposition 187, the number of Asian Americans, African Americans and Latinos who voted for proposition 187 and yet they are minorities and immigrants too. Immigrants have to face these resentments from the host country as they struggle to acculturate.

African immigrants have not been able to explore the role of immigrant groups or Diasporas in providing support for democratization and self-determination in their ancestral countries, or impacts of Diaspora on foreign policy of the United States. Other immigrants group such as the Jewish community appears to have a big impact on United States foreign policy. More money and support is given to Israel than it is to African countries. African immigrants are still dealing with poverty and basic survival problems and are not near to addressing such

problems yet people of African descend build America with little or no pay under "forced labor" and "slavery."

African immigrants like other immigrants go through psychological acculturation. Ram (1986) discussed issues regarding rethinking acculturation in relation to diasponic cultures and postcolonial identities. As stated earlier, different European groups such as English, French and Portuguese colonized Africans. Understanding the impact of colonization will better help a practitioner in helping with acculturation needs.

There are different scales used in studying acculturation among African Americans such as the one developed by Klonoff (2000). Lackland (2000) discussed the psychological adaptation of adolescents with immigrant background.

Acculturation has been described as a psychological process that can be very stressful (Born, 1970; Cervantes & Padilla, 1991; Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987; Padilla 1980). The process of acculturation often involves adjustment to a new culture. These experiences can at times overwhelm even the most psychologically strong and resourceful immigrants, imbuing the process of acculturation with tension, stress, and sometimes despair (Fuertes & Westbrook, 1987).

Stress arising from acculturation has been linked
with the overall mental health of Mexican Americans
(Griffith & Villavicencio, 1985; Padilla, Olmedo, & Loya,
1982). No research has been done on African immigrants but
this researcher believes that stress would cause similar
health problems as that found in the Mexican Americans.
The problem with acculturation and the stress associated
with it can exacerbate the challenges immigrants' face as
discussed above. Fuertes and Westbrook (1987) have grouped
acculturation in four areas as follows: 1) The quality of
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Men et al. (1987) developed a 24-item Social
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Scale. Although the 24-item S.A.F.E. scale as been shown
to be reliable (alpha = .89) for use with Asian Americans
and international Student (Mens et al. 1987), its
reliability and validity have not been examined with a
heterogeneous group of African immigrants.

The ecological perspective, Germain and Bloom (1999) was necessary to assess the relating benefits and costs of coping styles of the African immigrants. Ecological perspective theories would help us better understand how the African immigrant interacts with the new country, the stressors and coping mechanisms, the African immigrant is able to use as he goes through life transactions in the host country. These may include, stress, and low self-esteem and hardiness while trying to mainstream into the majority culture.

Overall, the strength perspective is the best theory to use when helping African immigrants. African immigrants have a lot of losses in their life while trying to emigrate. Practitioners must focus on their strengths such as being educated, are able speak more than one language, and are willing and ready to learn the new culture in order to effectively help them overcome acculturation stresses.

Role of Religion/Spirituality

The role of religion in the African immigrants' life is an important component in understanding this population. How do African immigrants view religion especially taking into consideration that religion played

a big part in colonization of Africa? "How the European God took disaster to Africa." Howe (2000) discussed how evangelism has influenced the African way of life, culture and its consequences of the simplistic versions of religion thoughts. Yet overall, African immigrants continue to use the religion/spirituality in American as their single most source of support while in the process of acculturation. On the survey, most people indicated that religion/spirituality involvement was valuable support in helping them cope with acculturation stresses in America.

Summary

The literature review, discussed in Chapter Two, discussed reasons why Africans migrate to America. This included economic and political freedom. Although African immigrants' face stressors in the labor market, the research shows that most Africans immigrants are well educated, cope with financial issues by getting low paying jobs to sustain. Research shows that African Americans get low paying jobs because of discrimination. Since African immigrants share the same ancestry and color of skin with African Americans, they too are discriminated upon in the job market. African immigrants face a lot of assimilation

stressors and dilemmas as they are forced to discontinue old beliefs and cultures and take on new beliefs and culture in their host country.

The stressors decrease once they have been in America for a while. Acculturation accounts for the majority of stress experienced by African immigrants. These include change, loss, trauma and a perception the host country does not welcome them. Politically, their needs are not fully met, as no governmental agency recognizes that they exist because they have not been categorized.

Acculturation was found to be the cause of mental and physical problems among Hispanic populations. It can be implied that it would also affects the health of African immigrants. Acculturation stress also affects self-esteem, general well-being and hardiness of the African immigrant.

The longer the immigrant lives in the United States, the better the coping mechanism. Most Africans said that they were able to cope with acculturation stress by getting services offered through the churches, friends, and other immigrants who have been in America longer. Above all, African immigrants "hang on" to the opportunities America offers to them and their children, such as good education, freedom of speech and worship.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter discusses in detail the study design,
sampling, data collection, procedures, protection of human
rights and data Analysis.

Study Design

The 21-item scale (Mena, Padilla, and Maldonado,
1987) was found to be a reliable and valid measure of
Hispanic's acculturation stress. The S.A.F.E Scale was
constructed specifically for immigrant and acculturating
populations. This 21-item Likert type instrument, had
response options ranging from 1 = Not stressful,
2 = somewhat stressful, 3 = Stressed, and 4 = Extremely
stressful, asked subjects to indicate the extent to which
various statements apply to them. A high overall score
indicates a high stress level. The S.A.F.E scale on this
questionnaire after calculation had a Cronbach's alpha of
0.93 on the Environmental factor, 0.79 for the Attitudinal
factor, 0.86 for the Social factor and 0.76 for the
Familial factor and a total of 0.93 on all four factors.

The study evaluated the effects of independent
variables such as gender, language, years in the United

States and age on the level of acculturation stress experienced by the same sample.

The effects of these variables have been studied mainly with Asian Americans and Mexican Americans. Results from studies on acculturation stress conducted with Asian Americans and Mexican American respondent's revealed generational effects on acculturation stress (Mena et al., 1987: Padilla et al., 1985).

In regards to gender, there are theoretical grounds for expecting differences, because studies have found gender differences in the level of acculturation attained by Mexican Americans and Cuban Americans (Burnam, Hough, Telles, Karno, & Escobar, 1987; Szapocznik et al., 1978).

Categories of responses were created for the four open-ended questions and the frequencies and percentage of responses for the various categories were reported. The research questions were:

1. What is the stress level of African immigrants using the 21-item S.A.F.E Acculturation stress scale to assess the adjustment needs of a heterogeneous group of African immigrants?

2. What is the effect of gender, language, years in the United States and age on the level of

acculturation stress experienced by the same

sample?

3. What do Africans consider the most stressful

thing about being an African immigrant in the

United States?

4. How do they overcome acculturation stress?

Sampling

This researcher collected data from 100 respondents.

However, some of the surveys were not fully completed and

therefore only 72 completed surveys were used. 72

respondents were a reasonable sample taking into

consideration time and resources available for this study.

The most effective way to collect data for this

population was through the snowball method, as the

researcher did not have access to an organization in the

Inland Empire that services this population. Immigrants

always know each other and therefore it was an effective

way to sample the population. This researcher also

attended African festivals, private parties, and church

gatherings within the community of immigrants and passed

out the questionnaires, debriefing statement and consent

letter and introduced the study to them.

Data Collection Instruments

The instrument used was the Social Attitudinal, Familial and Environmental (S.A.F.E) Scale. It is a preexisting Acculturation Scale that examined the social, attitudinal, familial and environmental acculturation stress that had been used to assess the adjustment of Asian and Mexican immigrants. The 21-item Likert type scale (S.A.F.E.) acculturation stress scale has been found to be a reliable and valid measure of Hispanic's acculturation stress levels. This scale had a Cronbach alpha of .89 on Asian and Mexican immigrants. When tested on African immigrants, it had a Cronbach alpha of 0.93.

This test was published in a journal and therefore this researcher did not need any permission to use the scale. The limitation was that it was not 100% culturally sensitive to African immigrants. Some of the questions were vague. Overall, it is a good instrument to measure immigrants' and acculturation stress levels.

The general questions the S.A.F.E. acculturation scale asks are as follows:

- *Environmental questions* reflect subtle and overt acts of racism, ranging from jokes to pressure to assimilate in the United States. They also reflect sentiments of opposition to the basic

ended, the researcher read through each answer and identified similar answers on each question and group them into similar themes. The researcher then entered how many people had similar answers. The common themes identified were as follows:

1. What do you consider stressful about living in the United States.

    - Adjusting to American culture and environment

    - Being away from friends and family

    - Learning English and American's telling me all the time that I have an "accent."

    - Not being able to get promotion easily at place of employment.

    - Doing multiple things at the same time. I.e. attending school and working full-time.

    - Immigration status

    - Racism

    - American's stereotyping me because of what they have seen on TV or heard from others about Africa

    - No response.

2. Do you find anything particularly stressful as a consequence of being an "African Immigrant" in the United States?

- Trying to cope with a stressful life and American culture.

- Racism

- High cost of living

- Learning English and American's telling me all the time I have an "accent."

- Immigration status

- Not being able to get promotion easily at place of employment.

- Being away from friends and family

- None specific

- American's stereotyping me because of what they have seen on TV or heard from others about Africa

- No response

3. Do you think you feel more stress than other people?

- Yes

- No

4. How do you cope with acculturation stress?

- Fellowship in church/temple/mosque/prayer and spirituality.

- Getting support from family and friends.

- Work long hours, hobbies, school and exercise

- Assimilating into the American culture

- Goal setting and prioritizing what is most important

- No response

This researcher measured the frequencies and percentage of the number of responses to each question. She then ran crosstabs comparing question one and three, one and two, two and one and also number of languages spoken by respondents and how they are affected by questions one and two (Appendix D). This study also tested the effects of gender, language, years in the United States and age on the level of acculturation stress experienced by the same sample.

Procedures

This researcher gave respondents the debriefing statement (Appendix C) and the consent letters (Appendix B) and then introduced the study to the potential

respondents by explaining to them the purpose of the study and what the results may mean to the African immigrant population. Willing respondent initialed and (x) to consent to participation in this study. There were no penalties for unwilling respondents.

The subjects identified themselves as African immigrants who were born in Africa or are 1st generation children of African parents. They had to be 18 years old and above and must have lived in the United States for at least three months. They also had to intend to stay in the United States for a minimum of one year.

Protection of Human Subjects

The confidentiality and anonymity of the study participants was a primary concern of this researcher and all efforts were made on her part to accomplish this. For sake of protecting the participants' anonymity and inputting the data, a numbering system was utilized. No participant names were used. Study participants were asked to sign informed consents before they participated in the study and they were told that they could stop at any time during the study (see Appendix B). The participants were given debriefing statements with the names of the researcher and the advisor along with a phone number to

contact the researchers if they had any questions

concerning the study (see Appendix C).

Data Analysis

This researcher ran demographics on total number of

female and males respondents of the survey, country of

birth, ethnicity, State in which they reside in, average

age of respondents, number of languages they speak, their

immigration status, reason why they came to the US,

educational level, whether they are employed and income

levels.

The S.A.F.E scale on this questionnaire was made of

21 items and grouped in four factors, Environmental,

Attitudinal, Familial and Social. Scores for each section

were calculated by adding the scores for each item in that

section. The Cronbach alpha was calculated. Demographic

variables were analyzed to see if there were differences

in stress level among various groups. Analysis of variance

(ANOVA) was performed to see if there was differences in

stress scores based on "number of languages the

respondents spoke" and "gender." Analysis was also done to

see if "years in the U.S." and the "age" of the respondent

correlated with stress levels. This researcher was not

able to test for differences based on ethnic groups

42

because a majority of the participants were "Black African." Categories of responses were created for the four open-ended questions and the frequencies and percentage of responses for the various categories reported. This researcher ran crosstabs on the open-ended questions comparing what the respondents thought to be most stressful living in the United States and whether the respondents felt they were more stressed than other people. Another crosstab was run on what the respondents considered most stressful about living in the United States, Whether they felt more stressed than other people and, number of languages spoken (see Appendix D).

Summary

Overall, there were significant results on the above tests. However, the crosstabs were not very effective as the number of respondents was very limited. The only significant response was the perceived feeling of Racism by the African immigrants as contributing to their stress level. In addition, this research was not able to test on the ethnic group because the majority of the respondents were "black Africans."

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

The following chapter talks about the results deduced from demographics such as total number of participate, country of birth, income, ethnicity, number of languages spoken and marital status. This chapter also addressed the statistical analyses of the four factors on the S.A.F.E acculturation scale. The frequencies on the four open-ended questions are also reported.

Demographics

The results of the demographic were as follows:

- There were a total of 72 participants in this study. There were 28 males (38.9%) and 43 females (59.7%).

- About one fourth of participants reported their country of birth as "Kenya" (n = 19, 26.4%). The next two most frequent responses were "Malawi" (n = 6, 8.3%) and "South Africa" (n = 6, 8.3%). The most frequent country of parent's birth was also "Kenya" (n = 19, 26.4%). (See figure 1 above).

- A majority of participants reported their ethnicity as "Black African" (n = 59, 81.9%).

- A majority of participants reported their state of residence as California (n = 64, 88.9%).

- The average age of participants was 38.3 years, with a range of 19 to 65.

- A majority of participants reported being either "married" (n = 38, 52.8%) or "single" (n = 30, 41.7%).

- There was a fairly even distribution of those who reported speaking one, two, or three languages (see Figure 3). There were six participants (8.3%) who reported speaking four or more languages. Figure 3 below illustrates the findings:
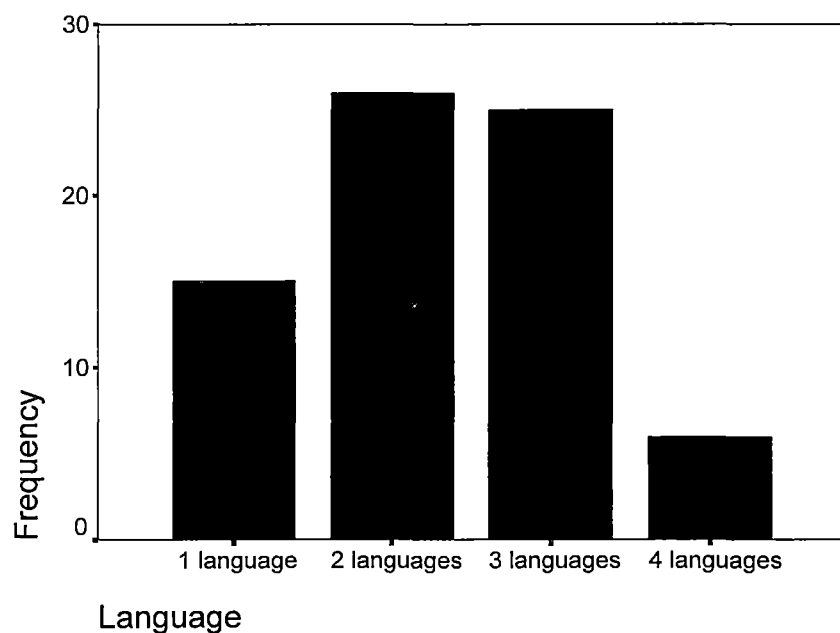
Figure 3. Number of Languages Spoken

- Most participants reported their immigration status as "US Citizen" (n = 18, 25.0%), "US Permanent Resident" (n = 21, 29.2%), or "Student Visa" (n = 15, 20.8%).

- Participants were asked, "When did you first arrive in the United States?" Using May 2002 as the end date, the number of years in the U.S. was calculated. The average number of years participants have been in the U.S. is 10.5 years. The range was from 5 months to 28 years.

46

- Almost all of the participants were not born in the U.S. (n = 66, 91.7%). Only one participant reported their parents as being born in the U.S.

- The responses to "Education Level" were spread out. The largest group was those who reported their education level as "BA/BS" (n = 22, 30.6%).

- A majority of respondents (n = 56, 77.8%) stated that they are employed.

- There was a fairly even distribution of income levels. Figure 4 below illustrates the results.
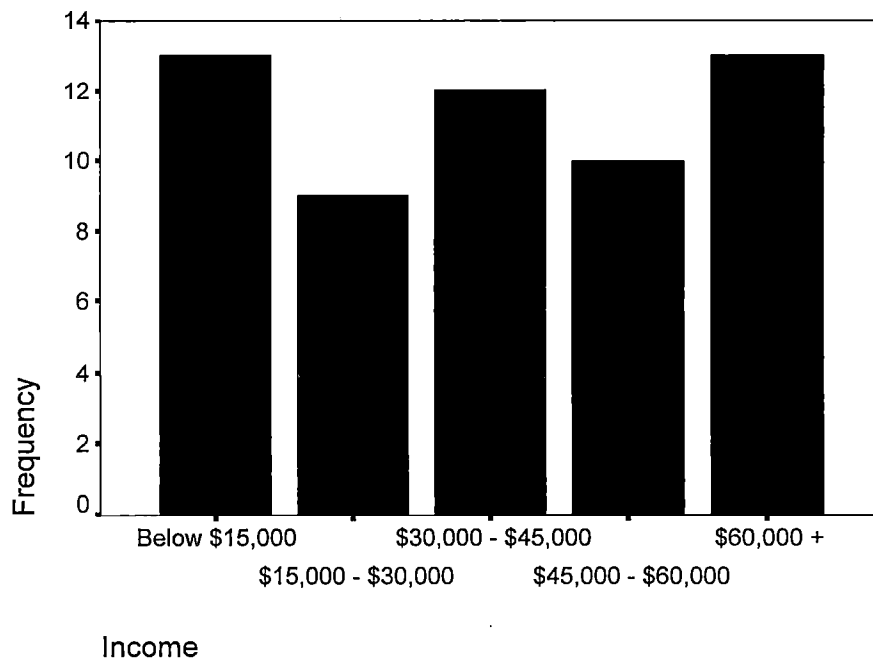
Figure 4. Income

Presentation of Findings

Social, Attitudinal, Familial and Environmental
  Acculturation Stress Scale

The S.A.F.E scale on this questionnaire was made of

21 items that evaluate social, attitudinal, familial, and

environmental acculturation stress factors. Each item was

scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not stressful"

and 5 being "extremely stressful." Scores for each section

were calculated by adding the scores for each item in that

section. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Evaluation of the Stress Scale

Factor	Number of Items	n*	Possible Range	SD	Min	Max	Mean	Cronbach Alpha
Environmental	10	64	10-50	7.1	10	39	19.8	0.92
Attitudinal	4	70	4-20	3.7	4	18	9.8	0.79
Social	4	69	4-20	2.8	4	14	6.2	0.86
Familial	3	72	3-15	1.7	3	10	4.1	0.76
Total	21	63	21-105	13.4	21	78	40.5	0.93

* Indicates total number of participants who responded to every item
in the scale

Statistical Analysis

Demographic variables were analyzed to see if there

were differences in stress level among various groups. The

t-test was used to look for the differences among the two

groups of gender (Male and female). The t-test looked at

the mean to show if there was a significant difference.
Table 2 shows the effect of t-test on gender.

Table 2. Results of t-Test on Stress Level Subscales on
Gender

Subscale	Gender	n	Mean	t	p-value
Environmental	Male	24	22.3	2.145*	.036
	Female	39	18.5		
Attitudinal	Male	28	10.5	1.100	.275
	Female	41	9.5		
Social	Male	27	7.1	1.895	.065
	Female	41	5.7		
Familial	Male	28	4.6	1.633	.110
	Female	43	3.8		
Total	Male	24	44.8	1.768	.086
	Female	38	38.2		

* $p < 0.05$

Results of analysis showed the following:

- Independent sample t-tests results showed that males had significantly higher stress scores than females on the "Environmental Stress" scale ($t = 2.145$, p-value = .036). The mean score for males was 23.9 and the mean score for females was 19.1. There were no significant differences between males and females for any other subscales or for total stress.

Table 3 illustrates results of ANOVA on stress level subscales on the number of languages spoken by respondents. ANOVA was used because there were three or more groups.

49

Table 3. Results of ANOVA for Stress Level Subscales with

Language

Subscale	Language	n	Mean	F	p-value
Environmental	One	15	16.2	2.730	.073
	Two	24	20.8		
	Three or more	25	21.1		
Attitudinal	One	15	7.3	6.643	.002*
	Two	29	11.3		
	Three or more	26	9.6		
Social	One	15	4.8	2.571	.084
	Two	26	6.7		
	Three or more	28	6.5		
Familial	One	15	3.5	1.339	.269
	Two	26	4.2		
	Three or more	31	4.4		
Total	One	15	31.8	4.651	.013*
	Two	24	42.3		
	Three or more	24	44.0		

* $p < 0.05$

- Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to see if there was differences in stress scores based on number of languages. Participants were categorized into the following groups: 1 language, 2 languages, 3 or more languages. Results showed overall differences among groups for "Attitudinal Stress" (F = 6.643, p = .002) and "Total Stress" (F = 4.651, p = .013). The Scheffe post-hoc test was used to determine where the differences were. See (table 4) for details.

Table 4. Effect of Language on the Stress Scale

	Mean
Attitudinal	
1 language[1]	7.33
2 languages[1]	11.35
3 or more languages	9.69
Total Stress	
1 language[2,3]	31.87
2 languages[2]	42.38
3 or more languages[3]	44.00

[1] Significant differences between 1 language and 2 languages (p = .002)
[2] Significant differences between 1 language and 2 languages (p = .049)
[3] Significant differences between 1 language and 3 languages (p = .019)

- Analysis was done to see if "Years in the U.S." correlated with stress levels. There was a significant negative correlation (r = -.492, p = .001) between "Total Years in U.S." and "Total Stress." There were also significant correlations between "Total Years in the U.S." and each subscale. Figure 5 below shows that those in the U.S. for a longer period of time experienced less stress (total S.A.F.E score). The correlation table 5 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient.

51
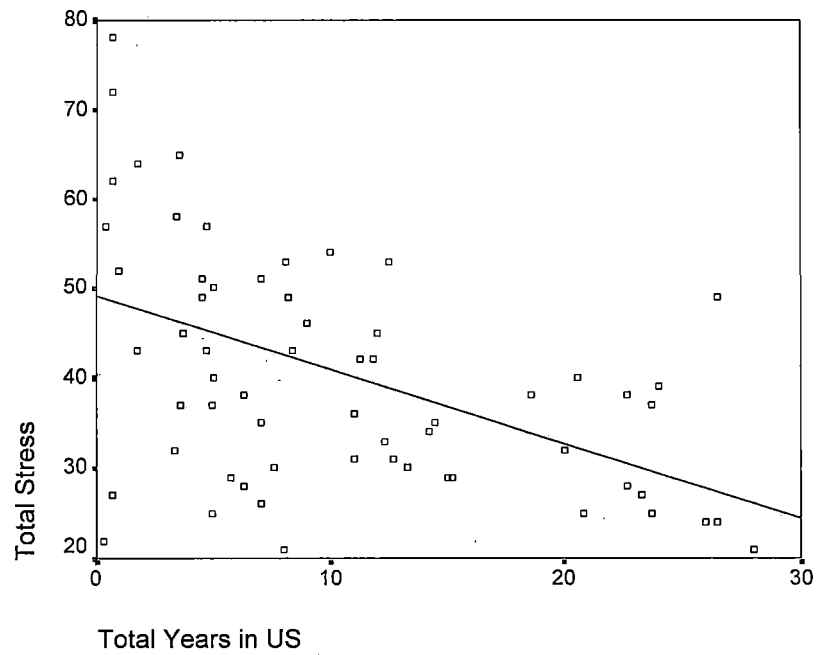
Figure 5. Years in the United States on the Stress Scale

Table 5 tells the correlation on years in the United States on the stress scale.

Table 5. Years in the United States on the Stress Scale

Correlations

		Total Years in US	Environmental Stress	Attitudinal Stress	Social Stress	Familial Stress	Total Stress
Total Years in US	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.314*	-.472**	-.506**	-.236*	-.492**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.011	.000	.000	.046	.000
	N	72	64	70	69	72	63
Environmental Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.314*	1.000	.647**	.671**	.636**	.956**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	64	64	62	63	64	61
Attitudinal Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.472**	.647**	1.000	.600**	.357**	.761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.002	.000
	N	70	62	70	67	70	63
Social Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.506**	.671**	.600**	1.000	.473**	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	69	63	67	69	69	63
Familial Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.236*	.636**	.357**	.473**	1.000	.616**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	.000	.002	.000	.	.000
	N	72	64	70	69	72	63
Total Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.492**	.956**	.761**	.762**	.616**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	63	61	63	63	63	63

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

- We were not able to test for differences based on ethnic groups because a majority of the participants were "Black Africans."

- Analysis was done to see if age was a factor in assessing stress level. Table 6 shows correlations among age and the subscales of stress. The only significant correlation is between age and "Familial Stress." Figure 6 below shows that older individuals experience less familial stress than younger individuals.

Table 6. Effect of Age on the Stress Scale

Correlations

		Age	Environme ntal Stress	Attitudinal Stress	Social Stress	Familial Stress	Total Stress
Age	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.052	.037	-.045	-.251*	-.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.689	.766	.716	.036	.769
	N	70	62	68	67	70	61
Environmental Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.052	1.000	.647**	.671**	.636**	.956**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.689	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	62	64	62	63	64	61
Attitudinal Stress	Pearson Correlation	.037	.647**	1.000	.600**	.357**	.761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.766	.000	.	.000	.002	.000
	N	68	62	70	67	70	63
Social Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.045	.671**	.600**	1.000	.473**	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.716	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	67	63	67	69	69	63
Familial Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.251*	.636**	.357**	.473**	1.000	.616**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.000	.002	.000	.	.000
	N	70	64	70	69	72	63
Total Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.038	.956**	.761**	.762**	.616**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.769	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	61	61	63	63	63	63

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
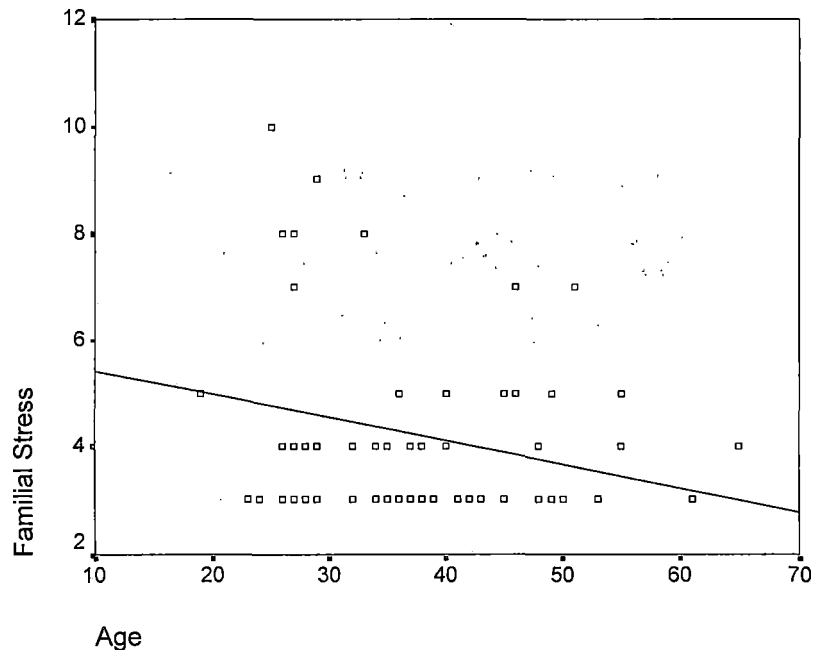
Figure 6. Correlation of Age on the Stress Scale

Open-ended Questions

Categories of responses were created for the four open-ended questions. Table 7 and figure 7 show the frequencies and percentages of responses for the various categories. They illustrate the responses to question one. Question one asked what the respondent considered stressful about living in the United States.

Table 7. Stressors of Living in the United States

Question 1. What do you consider stressful about living in the U.S.?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adjusting to American culture/environment	25	34.7	35.7	35.7
	Being away friends/family	9	12.5	12.9	48.6
	Learning English/speak with accent	5	6.9	7.1	55.7
	Economic/high cost of living	7	9.7	10.0	65.7
	No promotion at employment	6	8.3	8.6	74.3
	Doing multiple things at same time	1	1.4	1.4	75.7
	Immigration status	6	8.3	8.6	84.3
	Racism	8	11.1	11.4	95.7
	Americans' stereotyping	3	4.2	4.3	100.0
	Total	70	97.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.8		
Total		72	100.0		
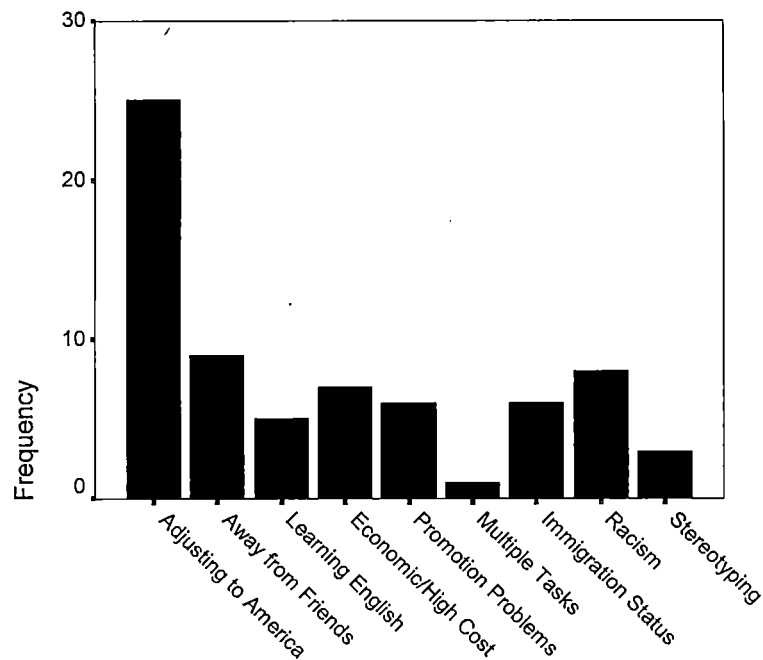
Figure 7. Stressors of Living in the United States

- 35.7% reported that adjusting to American

  culture and environment was most stressful,

  followed by 12.9% who reported being away from

  friends and family. Racism followed third with

  11.1%.

  Table 8 and figure 8 illustrate frequencies and

percentages of what the respondents reported on question

two, which asked, "What do you consider stressful about

being an African immigrant in the United States?

Table 8. Stressors Being An African Immigrant

Question 2. Anything stressful because of being an African immigrant in the U.S.?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Coping with stressful life/culture	11	15.3	18.0	18.0
	Racism	22	30.6	36.1	54.1
	High cost of living	2	2.8	3.3	57.4
	Learning English/accent	4	5.6	6.6	63.9
	Immigration status	7	9.7	11.5	75.4
	Difficutly getting promotion at work	8	11.1	13.1	88.5
	Being away from friends and family	3	4.2	4.9	93.4
	None specific	2	2.8	3.3	96.7
	Americans' stereotyping	2	2.8	3.3	100.0
	Total	61	84.7	100.0	
Missing	System	11	15.3		
Total		72	100.0		
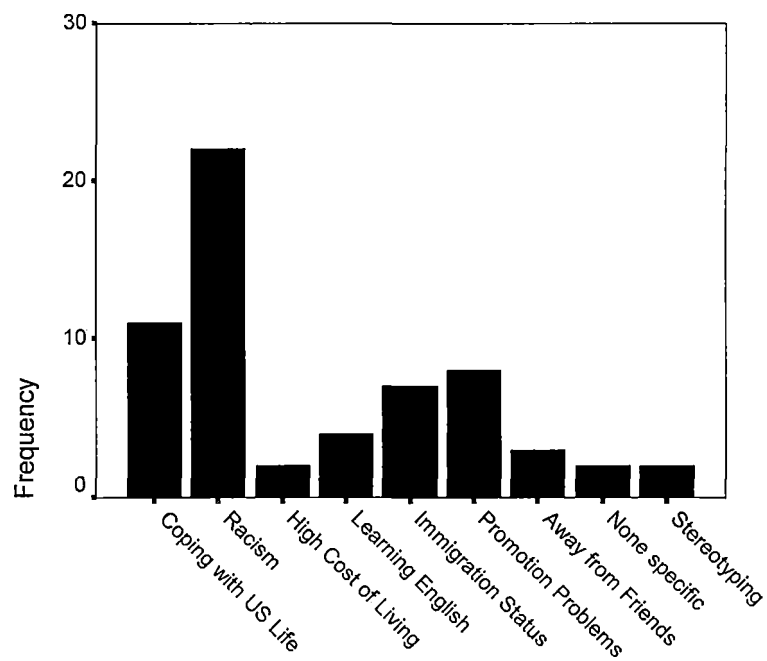
Figure 8. Stressors of Being an African Immigrant

- 30.6% reported Racism, 15.3% reported adjusting to American culture and environment and 9.7% reported immigration status/issues as being stressful as an African Immigrant in the United States.

Table 9 and figure 9 illustrate the results of Question 3. The question asked whether the respondents felt more stressed than other people in general (i.e. other immigrants or Americans).

Table 9. Comparison of Stress to Others

Question 3. Do you think you feel more stress than other people?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	29	40.3	45.3	45.3
	No	35	48.6	54.7	100.0
	Total	64	88.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	11.1		
Total		72	100.0		
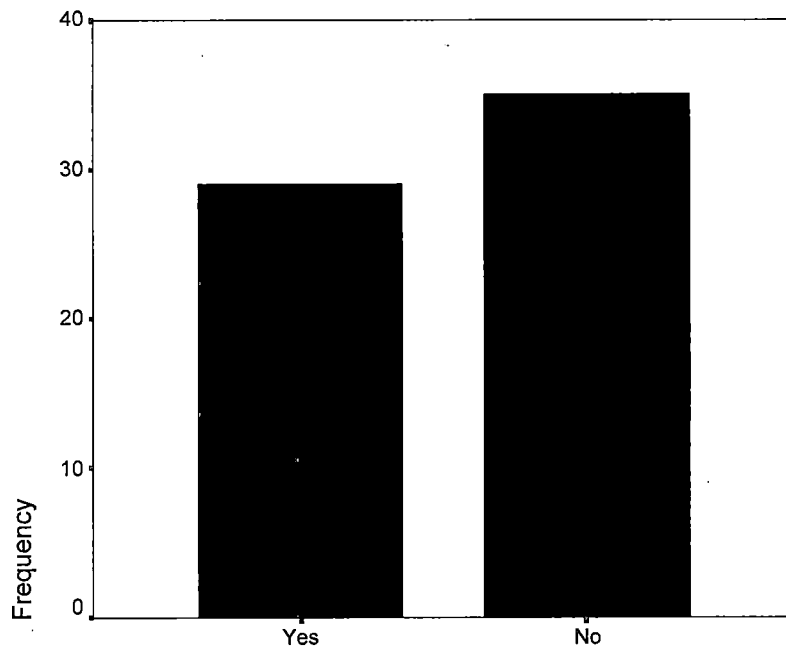
Figure 9. Comparison of Stress with Others

- The results revealed that 40.3% felt that they
  felt more stress in general than other people
  and 48.6% felt that they did not feel more
  stress than others.

Table 10 and Figure 10 illustrate the results of
Question 4. Question four asked how the respondents coped
with acculturation stress.

Table 10. Coping Mechanism of Acculturation Stress

Category	Frequency	Percent
Support from family and friends	44	61.1
Fellowship in church/temple/mosque, prayer	34	47.2
Work long hours, hobbies, school, exercise	12	16.7
Ignore it	2	2.8
Assimilating into American culture	4	5.6
Goal setting and prioritizing my life	5	6.9
No response/Missing	2	2.8
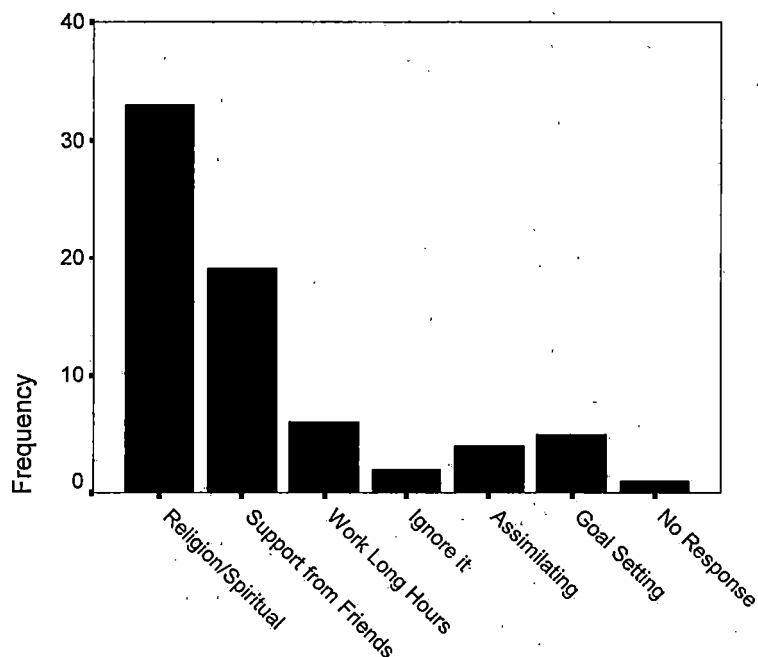
Figure 10. Coping Mechanism of Acculturation Stress

- Some respondents gave more than one response to this question. 70 participants (97.2%) gave at least one response to this question. Table 10 above shows the frequency of responses and percent of how many participants answered to this question.

- The crosstabs (see appendix D) illustrated that most people felt that racism was the most stressful thing on the open-ended questions.

Summary

The results revealed that males had significantly higher stress scores than female in the "Environmental factor" with a (p-value = .036). There was an overall difference among groups of the number of languages spoken by the immigrant on the "Attitudinal stress" with (F = 6.643, p = .002) and "Total Stress" (F = 4.651, p = .013). There was a significant negative correlation (r = -.492, p = -.001) between "Total years in the U.S." and "Total Stress." There was also a significant correlation among "Age" and the "Familial Stress." The older immigrants experienced less stress than the younger immigrants. Most Africans reported coping with stress

61

through association of friends, family and
religion/spirituality.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Included in Chapter Five was a presentation of the
conclusions gleamed as a result of completing the project.
Further, the recommendations extracted from the project
are presented. Lastly, the Chapter concludes with a
summary that African immigrants appear to go through
similar stress level of acculturation as Asian and Mexican
immigrants. The immigrants also have a variety of coping
mechanism to see them through the acculturation stress.

Discussion

The conclusions extracted from the project are as
follows:

The males reported significantly higher stress levels
in the "Environmental factor" than females. This could be
implied that males feel more pressure to assimilate and
may experience more racism than the females do. Generally,
Black males among the African Americans proclaim to suffer
from more racism as evidenced by the number of African
American males in jails as opposed to females. It could be
implied that African immigrant males experience the same

63

stressors as those of "African American males" in terms of racism.

Secondly, African females appeared more flexible in learning the new culture than African males. African males reported levels of resistance in changing their culture, which tends to impede their assimilation of the new culture and values. This might explain why they reported experiencing more acculturation stress in the "Environmental factor" than females.

Those who spoke two languages had a higher score of stress in the "Attitudinal factor" than those who spoke one language. The attitudinal questions arise from separation of family, friends, and culture in the country of origin. It can be implied that those who spoke one language were either born in the United States or they came to the United States when they were younger and have assimilated into the American culture. They are able to speak English without an "accent" and easily communicate with the American people.

There was no significance in the stress score of those who spoke more than three languages. This could be because the sample was not large enough or the respondents have mastered the English language and it is no longer stressful to adjust to the American culture. This result

should be researched more in order to be able to distinguish clearly why only those who reported speaking two languages felt more stressed in the "Attitudinal factor" than the rest of the respondents.

There was a significant negative correlation among "Total Stress" and "Total years" lived in the United States." The longer the immigrant stayed in the United States, the lesser the acculturation stress. Newer immigrants have to work harder to assimilate and therefore are likely to experience more stress than those who have been in America longer. They have to learn new culture, new language, and live without their friends and family from their country of origin. They also experience underemployment, unemployment as well as personal and institutional discrimination. Generally, they reported a lack of support from the new country. This might explain why new comers report experiencing more stress than those who have been in the United States for a longer time.

In regards to age, those who were older reported less stress in "Familial factor" than those who were younger. It could be implied that those who are older are well adjusted in their personal values, expectations, and aspirations. Many reported to have graduated from college and have better coping skills and better support systems.

The older the respondent, the more they tended to report that a more stable circumstance because they likely to be married and lived with their immediate family. The younger respondent, the more single they were likely to be which translated into limited support systems and resources due to unemployment or underemployment, and limited educational attainment. It is therefore likely that the younger African immigrants will experience more stress than the older Africans.

On the Open-ended questions, racism was reported as a significant reason for most African immigrants' feeling stressed. This could be implied that African immigrants face similar stress associated with racism as that of "African Americans" as they share same ancestry and color of skin.

The findings reported that African immigrants are able to cope with acculturation stresses by: 1) engaging in church or spiritual activities, 2) getting support from family members living in America, 3) making friends, 4) living close to other African immigrants, 5) learning English or adjusting their accents so that they are easily understood by Americans, 6) going to school and taking on low paying jobs to get by so that they can survive even though they may be overqualified for those jobs, 7)

finding ways to adjust to permanent immigrant status, 8) staying in areas with high population of other African immigrants, 9) working long hours and keeping busy all the time, and 10) generally trying to assimilate into American culture.

Limitations

This research project presented limitations, which need to be addressed. Some of the limitations of this study included finding an equal sample of immigrants from different countries of Africa and also from different ethnic groups such as those from different countries of Black Africa, Arabic Africa, Asians, and European.

The scale used in this study was designed for Asian and Latino immigrants. There is no scale designed for African immigrants. This study challenges researchers to pursue the development of an instrument that is culturally sensitive and competent for this population.

The respondents reported racism as the number one item that contributes to acculturation stress. Although the African immigrant perceives it to be stressful, more research is needed to determine whether it is similar to the stress experienced by other immigrants or "African Americans".

Recommendations for Social
Work Practice, Policy and
Research

As Africans immigrate to the United States, their success in assimilating to the new culture becomes a societal and public welfare concern. As such, the social welfare of African immigrant children and the elderly must be protected through social work practice. This study recommends the following social work practice, policy and research intervention opportunities:

1. An increased social work practice in identifying and supporting the needs of African immigrants. This population presents unique social needs and therefore, require unique social work intervention modalities;

2. Social service practitioners must design a culturally sensitive needs assessment tool specific to African immigrants. This tool will be used to assess the level of acculturation adjustments into the American culture, and formulate specific intervention strategies.

3. Support public policy for social welfare resources equivalent to those identified and provided to the Asian and Latino immigrants;

4. Practitioners need to be empathetic to
    acculturation stress, but more so, they need to
    empower and educate African immigrants on the
    new culture by providing them with adequate
    informational and other relevant resources.

5. More research needs to be done on this
    population to better understand their needs and
    develop services based on identified needs.

Conclusions

The conclusions extracted from this research project
shows that little research has been done on social issues
presented by the African immigrant to America. While the
African immigrant population to the United States is
increasing, this population is clearly a forgotten
population in the research community, across the research
spectrum. Those charged with public welfare research and
intervention must develop tools and strategies necessary
to assess the needs of African immigrants, to facilitate
their improved adjustment to their new environment.
Minimizing stress related health, social and mental issues
will increase their capacity, to become healthy and
productive citizens. African immigrants in the United

States can benefit from similar research designs and resources accorded to the Latino and Asian populations.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for your participation. Please read and check or circle categories that apply.

Section 1: Demographics

I am Male   Female

Country of Birth: _____

Parents' Country of Birth: _____

What is your ethnicity: Black African   European
                             Asian   Berbers
                             Other specify _____

What is the name of your tribe? _____

State of Residence in the United States: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Marital Status: Married   Divorced   Common law married
                     Single   Other (specify _____)

Language(s) you speak and write fluently: (1) _____
(2) _____   (3) _____   (4) _____

What is your current immigration status: US Citizen
  US Permanent Resident   Student Visa   Visiting Visa
  Out of Status   Illegal Immigrant   working visa
  Other (specify _____)

When did you first arrive in the United States (Month, Day, Year)? _____

Were you born in the United States: Yes   No

If you were born in the United States, were your parents born in the United States: Yes   No

Why did you come to the United States? _____

For how long have you lived at your current residence? _____

If you are on a visiting visa, how long do you intend you be in the United States? _____

What is your education level?
High school graduate   AA/Foreign diploma   BA/BS
Masters   Ph.D. +   Other (specify   _____)

Are you employed?   Yes   No

If yes, what is your profession? _____

How much do you make a year?   Below $15,000

$16,000 - $30,000 $31,000 – 45,000

$46,000 – 60,000 $61,000+

Section 2: S.A.F.E SCALE

The second part of this section is the 24-item of the Social, Attitudinal, Familial and Environmental (S.A.F.E.) Acculturation stress scale. Please check only (one box) that accurately applied to your stress level.

		Not stressful	Somewhat stressful	Stressful	Very stressful	Extremely stressful
Factor 1: Environmental						
1.	Because I am different, I do not get enough credit for the work I do.					
2.	I often feel ignored by people who are supposed to assist me.					
3.	I often feel that people actively try to stop me from advancing.					
4.	Many people have stereotypes about my culture or ethnic group and treat me as if they are true.					
5.	In looking for a job, I sometimes feel that my ethnicity is a limitation.					
6.	I feel uncomfortable when others make jokes about or put down people of my ethnic background.					
7.	I have more barriers to overcome than most people.					
8.	Because of my ethnicity background, I feel that others often exclude me from participating in their activities.					
9.	It bothers me when people pressure me to assimilate.					
10	People look down upon me if I practice customs of my culture.					
Factor 2: Attitudinal						
1.	Loosing the ties with my country is difficult.					
2.	It bothers me that I cannot be with my family.					
3.	I often think about my cultural background					
4.	It is hard to express to my friends how I really feel.					

		Not stressful	Somewhat stressful	Stressful	Very stressful	Extremely stressful
Factor 3: Social						
1.	I have trouble understanding others when they speak.					
2.	I don't have any close friends.					
3.	People think I am unsociable when in fact I have trouble communicating in English.					
4.	I don't feel at home.					
Factor 4: Familial						
1.	It bothers me that family members I am close to do not understand my new values.					
2.	Close family members and I have conflicting expectations about my future.					
3.	My family does not want me to move away but I would like to.					

SECTION 3: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The first three questions are part of the S.A.F.E Acculturation scale and the last question asks about your coping resources when you feel stressed.

1.   What do you consider stressful about living in the United States?

      _____

      _____

      _____

2.   Do you find anything particularly stressful as a consequence of being an African immigrant in the United States?

      _____

      _____

      _____

3.   Do you think you feel more stress than other people? Please elaborate on your answer.

      _____

      _____

      _____

4.   How do you cope with acculturation stress?

      _____

      _____

      _____

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

This study in which you are about to participate is designed to assess the acculturation adjustment needs of African immigrants in the United States. Judi M. Ukiru under the supervision of Dr. Matt Riggs, Professor in the Department of Psychology at Loma Linda University is conducting this study and also with guidance from Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, Professor of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino, has approved this study. The University requires that you give your consent before participating in this study.

In this study, you will be asked to respond to several questions regarding your experiences as an immigrant. The task should take 10-20 minutes to complete. All your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence by the researcher. Your name will not be reported in a group form. You may find the group results of this study upon completing in the Summer Quarter of 2002 in the Pfau Library of California State University, San Bernardino.

Your participation in this study is totally voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time during this study without penalty. When you complete this task, you will receive a debriefing statement describing the study in more detail. In order to ensure the validity of the study, we ask not to discuss the study with other African immigrants.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at (909) 880-5507.

By placing a check mark in the box below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and that I understand the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate. I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years old and intend to reside in the United States for at least one year.

Place a check mark here   Today's Date: _____

APPENDIX C

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The study you have just completed was designed to assess the adjustment needs of African immigrants in the United States using the Social, Attitudinal, Familial, and environmental (S.A.F.E.) Acculturation stress scale. Little research has been done on African immigrants in general and therefore this study is important to help us assess Africans' acculturation experiences in the United States. The S.A.F.E. Scale was found to be valid and reliable with other groups of immigrants such as the Mexicans and Asians. This researcher is interested in finding out if the S.A.F.E acculturation stress scale is valid and reliable using a heterogeneous group of African immigrants. There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this study. Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contents of this study with other African immigrants. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at (909) 880-5507. The group results will be available in the Pfau library of California State University, San Bernardino after the summer quarter of 2002.

APPENDIX D

CROSSTABS

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Stressful Living in US * More Stress Than Others	63	87.5%	9	12.5%	72	100.0%

Stressful Living in US * More Stress Than Others Crosstabulation

Count

		More Stress Than Others		
		Yes	No	Total
Stressful Living in US	Adjusting to American culture/environment	10	13	23
	Being away friends/family	4	4	8
	Learning English/speak with accent		3	3
	Economic/high cost of living	2	4	6
	No promotion at employment	1	4	5
	Doing multiple things at same time		1	1
	Immigration status	6		6
	Racism	5	3	8
	Americans' stereotyping	1	2	3
Total		29	34	63

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Stressful Living in US * Stress of Being an African	61	84.7%	11	15.3%	72	100.0%

82

Stressful Living in US * Stress of Being an African Crosstabulation

Count

		Stress of Being an African									
		Coping with stressful life/culture	Racism	High cost of living	Learning English/accent	Immigration status	Difficutly getting promotion at work	Being away from friends and family	None specific	Americans' stereotyping	Total
Stressful Living in US	Adjusting to American culture/environment	7	9		1			2			19
	Being away friends/family	2	2			1	2	1			8
	Learning English/speak with accent	1	1		2						4
	Economic/high cost of living	1		1		1	2		1	1	7
	No promotion at employment		2	1		2	1				6
	Doing multiple things at same time		1								1
	Immigration status		3			3					6
	Racism		2		1		3		1		7
	Americans' stereotyping		2							1	3
Total		11	22	2	4	7	8	3	2	2	61

Frequencies

Statistics

Language

N	Valid	72
	Missing	0

Language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 language	15	20.8	20.8	20.8
	2 languages	26	36.1	36.1	56.9
	3 languages	25	34.7	34.7	91.7
	4 languages	6	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Stressful Living in US * Stress of Being an African * Language	61	84.7%	11	15.3%	72	100.0%

Stressful Living in US * Stress of Being an African * Language Crosstabulation

Count

Language			Stress of Being an African Immigrant in the U.S.									Total
			Coping with stressful life/culture	Racism	High cost of living	Learning English/accent	Immigration status	Difficultly getting promotion at work	Being away from friends and family	None specific	Americans' stereotyping	
1 language	Stressful Living in US	Adjusting to American culture/environment	2	4								6
		Being away friends/family						1				1
		Doing multiple things at same time		1								1
		Immigration status		1			1					2
		Racism		1								1
		Americans' stereotyping		1								1
	Total		2	8			1	1				12
2 languages	Stressful Living in US	Adjusting to American culture/environment	3	2					2			7
		Being away friends/family	1						1			2
		Learning English/speak with accent		1		1						2
		Economic/high cost of living	1		1							2
		No promotion at employment					1	1				2
		Immigration status		1			2					3
		Racism		1				2		1		4
		Americans' stereotyping		1								1
	Total		5	6	1	1	3	3	3	1		23
3 languages	Stressful Living in US	Adjusting to American culture/environment	2	3		1						6
		Being away friends/family	1				1	1				3
		Learning English/speak with accent	1			1						2
		Economic/high cost of living					1	1		1	1	4
		No promotion at employment		2	1		1					4
		Racism				1		1				2
	Total		4	5	1	3	3	3		1	1	21
4 languages	Stressful Living in US	Being away friends/family		2								2
		Economic/high cost of living						1				1
		Immigration status		1								1
		Americans' stereotyping									1	1
	Total			3				1			1	5

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Stressful Living in US * Stress of Being an African * Language	61	84.7%	11	15.3%	72	100.0%

Stressful Living in US * Stress of Being an African * Language Crosstabulation

Language			Coping with stressful life/culture	Racism	High cost of living	Learning English/accent	Immigration status	Difficulty getting promotion at work	Being away from friends and family	None specific	Americans' stereotyping	Total
1 language	Stressful Living in US	Adjusting to American culture/environment	2	4								6
		Being away friends/family						1				1
		Doing multiple things at same time		1								1
		Immigration status		1			1					2
		Racism		1								1
		Americans' stereotyping		1								1
	Total		2	8			1	1				12
2 languages	Stressful Living in US	Adjusting to American culture/environment	3	2					2			7
		Being away friends/family	1						1			2
		Learning English/speak with accent		1		1						2
		Economic/high cost of living	1		1							2
		No promotion at employment					1	1				2
		Immigration status		1			2					3
		Racism		1				2		1		4
		Americans' stereotyping		1								1
	Total		5	6	1	1	3	3	3	1		23
3 languages	Stressful Living in US	Adjusting to American culture/environment	2	3		1						6
		Being away friends/family	1				1	1				3
		Learning English/speak with accent	1			1						2
		Economic/high cost of living					1	1		1	1	4
		No promotion at employment		2	1		1					4
		Racism				1		1				2
	Total		4	5	1	3	3	3		1	1	21
4 languages	Stressful Living in US	Being away friends/family		2								2
		Economic/high cost of living						1				1
		Immigration status		1								1
		Americans' stereotyping									1	1
	Total			3				1			1	5

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