ROLE OF ACCULTURATION AND STRESS FACTORS AMONG BLACK AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS

Lelina Beru
B.S., University of California, Davis, 2006

PROJECT

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

SPRING
2010
ROLE OF ACCULTURATION AND STRESS FACTORS AMONG BLACK AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS

A Project

by

Lelina Beru

Approved by:

__________________________________, Committee Chair
Maria Dinis, Ph.D., MSW

______________________________________
Date
Student: Lelina Beru

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this project is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the project.

____________________________, Graduate Coordinator __________________

Teiahsha Bankhead, Ph.D., MSW Date

Division of Social Work
Abstract

of

ROLE OF ACCULTURATION AND STRESS FACTORS AMONG AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS

by

Lelina Beru

As the United States continues to experience an enormous influx of refugees and immigrants, it generates a number of challenges for the social work profession. From the perspective of social work, each group must be understood in terms of its own cultural framework of meaning. African immigrants who re-settle to the U.S. must make profound adjustments to learn how to live in the American society and culture. The shift that takes place in relocating can be psycho-culturally overwhelming. This study utilizes a qualitative content analysis approach to examine the acculturation experiences of black African immigrants living in the United States. The major findings reported by the ten participants interviewed were: (1) cultural adjustment difficulties; (2) racial adjustment difficulties; and (3) the role of low acculturation in being a protective factor against acculturative stress. Implications for social work and policy are discussed.

____________________, Committee Chair
Maria Dinis, Ph.D., MSW

____________________
Date

v
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to all the African immigrants who despite the hardships associated with relocating to a new country, find ways to beat the odds and lead meaningful lives. Words are inadequate to express my deepest admiration and appreciation for their resiliency as well as for their endeavor to stay true to their origin.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to God for giving me the guidance, the strength, and the support to get through this project. I want to thank my family and friends for their constant love, understanding, endless support, and for letting me know that “I can do it” as I embarked through this journey. I am also grateful for the guidance of my research advisor, Maria Dinis, Ph.D., MSW. Her knowledge and expertise about research studies helped me evade drawbacks, as well as for reading and re-reading my work with complete patience.

Most importantly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the African men and women who reserved time to take part in my research. Their candid answers provided a wealth of information for this study. I value their interest and willingness to help me in any way they can for the completion of my work.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Background of the Problem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of the Research Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theoretical Frameworks</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application of Aculturation Theory</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life Model Theory</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application of Life Model</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delimitations</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Black African Immigrants in the U.S. ........................................................... 20
Acculturaion, Stress and its Effect on the Well Beings of
African Immigrants ........................................................................................ 24
Low Acculturation Mediates Stress ............................................................... 28
Gaps in the Literature .................................................................................... 37
Summary ........................................................................................................ 38

3. METHODS................................................................................................. 39
   Introduction .................................................................................................... 39
   Research Question ......................................................................................... 39
   Research Design ............................................................................................ 39
   Participants..................................................................................................... 42
   Sample Population ......................................................................................... 42
   Instrumentation .............................................................................................. 43
   Data Gathering Procedures ............................................................................ 44
   Data Analysis ................................................................................................. 45
   Protection of Human Subjects ........................................................................ 45
   Summary ........................................................................................................ 46

4. DATA ANALYSIS....................................................................................... 47
   Introduction .................................................................................................... 47
   Cultural Adjustments ..................................................................................... 47
   Racial Adjustments ......................................................................................... 51
   Low Acculturation as a Protective Factor against Acculturative Stress ....... 60
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the Problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Research Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of Acculturation Theory</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Model</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of the Life Model</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Many immigrants enter the United States yearly in hopes of beginning a new and better life for themselves and their families. They bring their dreams and desires hoping to turn them to reality here in the United States. They may not be fully aware of the extent, manifestation, and seriousness of the adjustment issues ahead of them. Certain factors such as discrimination, language barriers, cultural changes and customs affect their transition. This transitional process, acculturation, is a process by which ethnic and racial groups learn and begin to adapt to the cultural values and practices of the dominate culture (Berry, 1980). Immigrants undergo changes in a wide variety of areas. Some of these changes include physical changes (a new place to live, and different housing), biological changes (different sources of nutrition, and unfamiliar diseases), political changes (different types of government and political procedures), economic changes (different types of employment, requiring different types of knowledge and skills, and types of education), cultural changes (acquiring a different language, and approaches to religion), and social changes (inter group and interpersonal relations as well as different types of dominance) (Nwadiora, 2007). There is no doubt that confronting these changes can be a very stressful experience for immigrant individuals.

The immigration of Africans to the United States has increased during the past fifty years (Nwadiora, 2007). Adjustment difficulties along with the negative racial and discriminatory experiences of these immigrants upon their arrival necessitate some
comprehension regarding their acculturation. As compared to Hispanic and Asian immigrants, African immigrants in the United States have been considerably less researched. However, the first half of the decade has witnessed an upsurge in studies of the socioeconomic conditions of black immigrants in the United States (Butcher, 1994; Dobdoo, 1991; Kelmijn, 1996; Model, 1991, 1995). Much of this work has involved a comparison of American and immigrant blacks and has either defined the latter as one homogenous immigrant entity (Chiswikd, 1979) or focused mainly on Caribbean immigrants (Butcher; Kalmijn; Model). Missing from this discussion are Africans who, second only to Caribbean immigrants, comprise the largest influx of blacks to America (Reid, 1986).

As these population become part of the U.S. society, there is a great need to understand how these individuals/families adapt to the U.S, the problems they encounter during the process, and the assets they utilize to cope with those problems. Therein lays the significance of this study. The specific aim of this study is to develop a conceptual and theoretical framework concerning the acculturation processes of black African immigrants and the impact it has on their well being. This chapter briefly introduces the background of the study, statement of research problem, rationale for the study, the research question, theoretical frameworks, the definition of terms, the assumptions, the justification, delimitation, and the organization of the remainder chapters of the study.

Background of the Problem

According to Nwadiora (1996), in the process of leaving, many immigrants left a country they loved, a way of life they enjoyed, and loved ones who gave support and
meaning to their lives. Therefore, as people living outside their homeland, the loss they feel is profound. Many have lost their self-confidence, the opportunity to use their abilities, and many of the activities with which they felt comfortable. Upon their arrival, they have had to redefine their personal identity based on the color of their skin and on a philosophy that is not part of their upbringing. The African philosophical tradition and outlook is similar to that of Mexicans, and it is significantly different from that of the European or Western world. While Western tradition focuses on individuality, uniqueness, and difference, the African tradition emphasizes communality, group membership, and similarity. In a study of African American and Latino American College students, Kenny and Perez (1996) found that secure attachments to members of immediate or extended family were positively correlated with mental health.

Kenny and Perez (1996) recommended that such finding might well be expected in students whose cultural values stress the importance of collectivism, family and interdependence. In addition to the aforementioned physical, biological, political, economical, cultural, and social changes immigrants undergo, immigrants of African descent, in particular often encounter more problems and difficulties than are typical for any new immigrant group as they are triple minorities (Bryce-La-Porte, 1993). Not only are they foreigners who speak a different language, but they are also black (Bryce-La-Porte; Pierce & Elisme, 2000). Having to resolve and deal with all the subsequent changes resulting from relocation can overwhelm black African immigrants and lead to psychological, spiritual, affective, and cognitive consequences.
There are no reliable adequate statistics available to show the prevalence of depression in the various African communities around the country. However, few studies do show that cultural conflicts and discrimination (a major component of acculturation stress) do heighten psychological stress levels, and cause depression among black African immigrants (Constantine et al., 2005; Faur, 2007; Gee, Ryan, Laflamme, & Holt, 2006; Kamya, 1997). Giorgis (1996) noted that various professionals who work closely with Ethiopian communities have observed an increase in depression and suicide. Alcohol and drug use have also become a way of self-medication (Giorgis).

Too many Africans, nevertheless, also suffer from a cultural taboo associated with seeking help for psychological problems. Most African cultures tend to hold a negative view of mental illness, in contrast to attitudes toward physical illness. Thus, most immigrants seek help only when bad feelings manifest themselves into physical pain and their desperation reaches crisis proportions (Constantine et al., 2005; Giorgis, 1996). Most of the time, the individuals that seek help present a special challenge to health care providers. Aside from language barriers and the inherent difficulties of interpretation, there are problems that arise from cultural differences as well. All of these factors complicate treatment of the few that seek service even more. Therefore, the need to identify culturally embedded and culturally sanctioned interventions based on the immigrants’ worldviews, values, and beliefs, to assist them in mitigating both potential and actual cultural adjustment difficulties is essential and profound.

The problem to date is, the social science and social work literature have not kept pace with documenting and analyzing the experiences of the African immigrants in the
United States despite the known challenges immigrants face during the process of settling into and adjusting to their newly adopted homelands (Darboe, 2003; De Voe, 2002).

Kamya (1997) indicates that there is no research that examines stress and coping among African immigrants or takes into account the care and well being of these immigrants. In order for counseling professionals and resources centers to provide appropriate interventions for this population, it should be a prerequisite they understand their culture, their experience, and how these experiences affect their daily lives. This study address this problem in the research literature by examining the acculturation experiences of black African immigrants including stress factors and coping strategies by using the voices of the immigrants themselves.

Statement of Research Problem

African immigrants are becoming a part of the U.S. society in great numbers. Although several authors have written about the need for cross cultural understanding, acceptance, and support among helping professionals who work with clients from different cultures, little literature is available on the psycho-cultural well-being of black African immigrants (Augsburger, 1986; Mcgoldrick, Pearce, & Giordano, 1985; Padilla, Wagatsuma, & Lindholm, 1985; Pedersen, 1985; Sue, 1990). This knowledge gap is problematic because many African immigrants are experiencing mental, emotional, and physical health problems due to acculturative stress. Moreover, human services agencies face the challenge of developing treatment models and services that are more sensitive and responsive to an ethnically, racially or even religiously different population. Because service providers lack the understanding and the research background, they are
inadequate and less competent to fully address problems and to serve the targeted population.

**Purpose of the Study**

Rosso and Lewis (1999) stated that details are needed to explain acculturation differences between ethnically diverse individuals of migration and minority individuals of descent. Moreover, they argue that recognition of particular types of acculturation-specific challenges, which are important to specific groups at particular stages of immigration, will be an important source of information in furthering our understanding of the acculturation process. In order to create a resolution for the identified research problem, this research will conduct an exploratory investigation of the unique experiences of black African Immigrants residing in the United States. By specifically providing a forum for the voices of black African immigrants, the primary purpose of this research is to reveal and give insight to the struggles black African immigrants face during the acculturation process.

It will further illuminate light on how these stress factors impact the well being of black African immigrants. It also intends to identify protective factors or effective coping strategies that this population posses to buffer adjustment difficulties. The second purpose of this research is that the findings can be utilized by service providers to increase their understanding about black African immigrants, amplify their awareness about immigrants’ experiences and how those experiences affect their daily lives, inform agencies and health professionals of the kind of services needed by this population, and hopefully design resources that are culturally competent.
Research Question

What is the role of acculturation and stress factors among black African immigrants?

Theoretical Framework

Acculturation theory is the conceptual framework used in this study to understand the experiences of black African immigrants. This framework helps to clarify the individual and social changes that occur when two distinct cultures come in contact and interact with one another. This theory aims to understand this interaction, possible changes that take place as a result of the interaction, as well as the changes that occur in human behavior (Sam & Berry, 2006). Though the definition of acculturation theory has evolved over the years, the theoretical model of acculturation used in this study regards acculturation to be a long, non-linear, and multidimensional process.

Berry (1986) identified three stages in the acculturation process. In the first stage, immigrants first encounter the new culture and identify differences and similarities as well as encounter the challenges. In the second stage, the dissonance between the two cultures becomes evident instigating a process of giving up or reshaping some original values and patterns. Immigrants attempt to adapt some values and patterns of the host country, but this process varies between people depending on age, social environment, and personality. For example, young people are quicker to adapt to new norms as opposed to their parents. In the third stage, adaptation takes place which is when immigrants develop various ways to reduce conflict (dissonance of the two cultures). For instance, immigrants learn the language of their new culture, including its norms (Berry).
Acculturation consists of two distinct dimensions: adherence to the dominant culture and as well as maintenance of the culture of origin (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2005). However acculturation should not be coined with the term assimilation which constitutes a disconnect from native culture and a complete immersion into the dominant host culture. Rather, Yu (1984) defines acculturation simply as the process of adaptation to a new culture. Lum (1996) professes acculturation to be a complex and long term process entailing learning, reevaluating, and coping with both the original and the host culture. Berry et al. (1991) defines acculturation as the change that occurs at an individual and group level when they come in contact with another culture. More importantly, Gibson (2001) writes that different groups adapt to cultural changes in various ways, and that the acculturation process is strongly influenced by structural and contextual factors in the receiving country. It is then becomes imperative to have a theoretical model that considers not only the psychological and behavioral changes of the individual but also the environmental forces impacting the person.

The individual aspect consists of the individuals’ history, psychological process of the immigrants’ experience, and the types of meanings individuals attribute to those experiences (Vega, 2004). Individuals can also choose to acculturate to some domains and not others. For instance, they can acculturate to learning the language of the host country, new work habits but fail to adapt to religious practices or some cultural values of the host country (Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2006). The environment dimension of acculturation includes the political, social, and economical characteristics of the host country such as discrimination, language barriers. The host country sets the parameters,
for instance, the availability of and access to housing, education and employment, and social attitudes and policies toward minorities (Berry, 2002). These policies and resources influence and at times limit the decision making process of immigrants. Failure to consider the political, social, and economical environment affecting immigrants can result in a misinterpretation of immigrants’ behaviors and attitudes, leading to the attribution of deviance to immigrants’ cultural characteristics and coping behaviors (Rudmin, 2004).

Application of Acculturation Theory

When African immigrants emigrate to the United States, the hardships they encounter is attempting to reconcile with the cultural differences as well as attempting to learn new ways of life in a foreign place, which entails a number of obstacles such as language barriers, social barriers, financial constraints, prejudice, discrimination and etc. The greater the differences and impediments are, the stronger the stress becomes. However, immigrants try to cope by modifying old patterns and taking on new norms. The experience of adjusting and coping with a new environment (acculturation) is an ongoing process in which immigrants strive to adopt. They stay connected to their native culture while participating and adapting values of the host culture. They try to strike a balance in order to reduce conflict and be nurtured by the two cultures. They hold on to (from native origin) and adapt to (from host country) whatever they think is beneficial to their well being. As much as this acculturative process is driven by individual changes, the social contexts in which immigrants live in also dictates how well they are able to adopt. For example, black African immigrants live in an environment where the color of
their skin can impact access to education, employment, housing, and other opportunities, as well as endanger their emotional and mental health, making the acculturation process extremely difficult. Therefore documenting the experiences of black African immigrants sheds light on how both the individual and environmental dimension interact to influence the acculturative experience of immigrants.

Life Model

The life mode is a part of the ecological theory, which takes on an adaptive view of human beings in their continuous interaction with their environment. The life model plays a vital part in trying to understand immigrants’ acculturation experiences. This model focuses on the interrelation interaction between people and their environment (Payne, 2005). The relationship between the two is reciprocal, one influencing the other. The premise of the life model is people experience life stressors, transitions, events and issues that disturb their balance with the environment. This causes an unexpected disturbance in their capacity to adapt to their environment (Payne).

As a result of the aforementioned challenging changes, the life model states that immigrants undergo through two stages of appraisal of the stressor and the stress. First, they judge how serious the disturbance is, and whether it will cause harm or loss or be an obstacle. Second, they will seek at measures they might take to cope and resources they have to help themselves. They will try to cope by changing some aspects of themselves, the environment, or the exchange between the two. Among the resources immigrants have in order to cope include, the capacity to form attachments, their confidence in their ability to cope, and their sense that they have relevant skills and can get help from others.
(Payne, 2005). The life model also states that the goal of social work is to restore balance between people and their environment by improving people-environment relations, nurture human growth and development, and improve environments so that they can support human potentials (Payne, 2005).

**Application of the Life Model**

In migrating to the United States, African immigrants must reestablish their homes, social networks, and educational and work circumstances in an unfamiliar environment. It is reasonable to predict that this type of transition would instigate great adversity and put immigrants in a vulnerable position. However, even in the face of great adversities, immigrants demonstrate resilience. The fact that immigrants show better health outcomes in contrast to their U.S. born counterparts acts as a testimony to the way they manage to pull their assets and resources together in order to deal with the presentable challenges. As the racial and ethnic composition across the United States diversifies, social workers have to increasingly work with clients from various backgrounds. To efficiently fulfill this duty, social workers have to understand the historical, cultural and social backgrounds of the immigrants in which they work. In this case, they have to be aware of the unique experiences black African immigrants face as they attempt to make a new life in the U.S. as well as be mindful of the service needs that consider their world views, values, beliefs, lifestyles, and languages. The life model offers social workers a promising framework to use in assisting immigrant families. They can better understand the environment stressors that increase the vulnerabilities of
immigrants to the potentially harsh experiences of adapting to a new country. They will also be in a better position to provide safety nets, and help clients empower themselves.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used throughout this research:

**Acculturation:** According to Yu (1984), acculturation generally refers to the process by which immigrants adapt to a new culture. Lum (1996), on the other hand, defines acculturation as a complex, long-term process involving learning, reevaluating, and coping with both the original and the host cultures. Berry and her colleagues (1991) define acculturation as the change that groups and individuals undergo when they come in contact with another culture. Based on these definitions, this study approaches acculturation as a process that entails adaptation, learning, reevaluating, coping with both original and host cultures, and managing change. However, it is important to note that acculturation is not synonymous with assimilation.

**Low Acculturation:** Adherence to one’s home cultural values and practices (Breslau et al., 2007; Burnam et al., 1987).

**High acculturation:** Assimilation to the host country and less retention of cultural values and practices (Breslau et al., 2007; Burnam et al., 1987).

**Acculturative Stress:** According to Nwadoria and McAdoo (1996), acculturative stress is defined as “psychocultural” stress due to cultural differences found between host culture and an incoming culture signified by a decline in the physical and mental health status of individuals or groups undergoing acculturation. Berry defines this simply as the stress that is directly linked to the acculturative process: one way to think about this is that
acculturative stress is the result of stressors that the individual(s) would not have experienced if not undergoing the acculturation process (Berry, 1997).

**Discrimination**: The Merriam-Webster online Dictionary defines discrimination as “treatment or classification based on class or category, rather than individual merit: prejudice outlook, action or treatment (Faur, 2007). Though most of the time discrimination is associated with the behavior of a prejudice, for the purpose of this study, discrimination is not only related to discriminatory acts but also negative attitudes and prejudice.

**Assumptions**

The assumptions of this study include:

1. There is a sparse of research documenting the acculturation experiences of black African immigrants (stress and moderating factors).
2. Black African immigrants fall prey to various stress factors due to their ethnical and racial background, which can be detrimental to their emotional, mental, and physical health.
3. When black African immigrants maintain their cultural values and practices as well as a connection to their origin, it functions as a protective factor in mitigating acculturative stresses. It provides comfort, a sense of belonging, and social support. Thus, these immigrants have a much better overall health outcome in comparison to those who have assimilated or those who lack a connection to their cultural origin.
Justification

In his study of the acculturation experiences of international graduate students, Buddington (2002) states that the social work profession has contributed little knowledge to an in-depth understanding, conceptualization, and testing of hypotheses on acculturation. The major significance of this study is that it attempts to make a theoretical contribution to the social work literature as well as to the broader literature. The mission of the social work profession is to protect and enhance the welfare of all individuals especially those who are a vulnerable minority. This mission is embedded in values that promote cultural competency, social justice, dignity, worth of individuals, integrity, and service (NASW, 2009).

This research then becomes instrumental in helping professionals increase their knowledge about an overlooked population. It sheds light on the living experiences of these immigrants, and will equip social workers, psychologists, and other professionals to offer better services that take into account African immigrants’ world views. Furthermore, a heightened awareness assists to offset the stereotypes and negative perceptions that instigate prejudice and racism against black African immigrants. Awareness and acknowledgment will further open doors to create resources and use asset mapping in order to improve the quality of life for this particular population. This study may also be a stepping-stone for future researchers who might develop an interest in doing further studies.
Delimitations

This study is strictly exploratory and qualitative in nature, and does not provide statistical information. One of its limitations is it presents a small sample, which makes it difficult to make generalizations. Although it attempted to spread out and gather representative participants from all parts of the continent (East, West, Central, and South), it is too small to make any generalization even for a population of one country let alone a continent. However, it still provides a window of opportunity to glance at the unique experiences of a population that has been somewhat invisible in the literature arena.

Summary

This research has five chapters. The first chapter introduced the study, the background, statement of the problem, and the purpose of the study. It also highlighted the study’s research question, relevant theoretical framework, and definition of terms. It then concluded with sections on assumptions, justifications, and delimitations. Chapter Two is a review of the relevant literature that establishes the framework for the study. Chapter Three introduces the methodology, a description of participants, the procedures used to gather the data, interpretation and analysis methods, and the plan for the presenting the results. Chapter Four presents the results of the study. Chapter Five offers a summary of and conclusion to the study as well as discussion of recommendations and implications for social workers.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This literature review will be organized into a short introduction of African immigration history, which will be followed by three sections. The first section, black African immigrants in the United States, will explore what it means to be a black African immigrant currently residing in the United States, and the challenges associated with it. The second section will focus on the relationship between acculturation and stress, shedding more light on the impact of discrimination. The third section will look at coping methods that immigrants employ to ease the burdens of acculturative stress. These specific areas are chosen to provide a foundation to more visibly present the experiences of black African immigrants and give voices to those who have been ignored. This foundation also provides a structure from which to organize the findings of this study as well as to bridge the gap on what is unknown about a specific population. Finally, the literature review will end with a section on the gap in literature, and a summary.

History

The presence of Africans on the soil of what is now the United States dates back to the 1500s with the first Africans coming from Mexico and the Caribbean to the Spanish territories of Florida, Texas, and other parts of the South, and as early as 1526, Africans rebelled and run away (AAME, 2010). Between the 1450-1750 century, Africans arrived to North America as mostly indentured servants. For many years,
Africans were similar in legal position to poor English indentures who traded several years of labor in exchange for passage to the United States. The transformation from indentured servants to slaves took place very gradually. Historically, the English only enslaved non-Christians, and not particularly Africans. A status of a slave was not also a life time sentence: a slave could become free by converting to Christianity. However, in 1705, the Virginia General Assembly declared that any non-Christian servant imported to the country is counted as slave and a real estate (PBS, 2010).

As poor English settlers and Native Americans died from hard conditions associated with cultivating land, the demand for more laborers increased, and plantation owners looked towards Africa to satisfy this need. Gradually, the plantation owners’ perspective became to resemble that of plantation owners of the Caribbean islands. Because they were not Christians, Africans could be forced to work for the rest of their lives and be punished with impunity. Moreover the color of their skin set them apart from others, making it easy to identify runaways. There was also a seemingly inexhaustible supply of Africans, and since little information flowed back across the Atlantic, mistreatments and abuse in America failed to alter the flow of enslaved Africans to America. Furthermore, once indentured servants became freed, they began to pose a threat to the property owner elites, demanding for ease on land restrictions. This disorder that the indentured servant system had created made racial slavery much more attractive (PBS, 2010).

Indenture servitude then gave away to the transatlantic slavery era. Thus the number of Africans in the colony grew. For instance in Virginia in 1625, there were only
twenty three, in 1650 the number grew to three hundred and by 1700, more than a thousand Africans were being brought into the colony every year. These numbers would increase dramatically in the following years. Of the ten to twelve million Africans who survived the middle passage and were sold into slavery, 450,000 Africans landed on North America, accounting to a small fraction (PBS, 2010).

After slavery became outlawed, the immigration of Africans into the United States was insignificant until the late 1960s, though there were sporadic incidence of voluntary immigration dating back to 1860s. Between 1961 and 1970, 29,000 Africans (including North Africans) were admitted to the U.S. The number increased to almost 81,000 from 1971 to 1980. Traditionally, Africans had a tendency to migrate primary to their former colonial powers. But beginning in the late 1970s, these countries (European) seized immigration because of economic slowdowns. Immigration to the U.S. then became an option. At the same time, increasing number of students and professionals who usually returned home were deciding to remain in America owing to difficult political and economical situations on the continent (Banton, 1953). Furthermore, population growth, mounting debt, lethargic growth, and high unemployment were acting as push factors.

In the 1990s, emigration was also fueled by the Structural Adjustment Program (imposed by the International Monterey Fund and World Bank) which resulted in cuts in education, health services, the discharge of public servants, private sector bankruptcies, and a decline in standard living (Takougang, 1995). This condition for receiving loans promoted a reduced role for government and a strong reliance upon free markets. It led
to the dismantling of social services, political instability, and violation of mandate for the International Monterey Fund to correct maladjustments (Takougang). Additionally, in 1994, more than a dozen of French speaking countries devalued their currencies by fifty percent which resulted in the restructuring of public sectors, numerous layoffs, more bankruptcies, and few prospects for college graduates (Takougang). These combined factors led many Africans to seek out new and better opportunities in the United States. However, African immigrants were not only pushed out of their countries, they were also pulled to the U.S. by a number of favorable immigration policies.

Since 1979, The Refugee Act, The Immigration and Nationality Act, and The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, as well as The Diversity Visa Program have provided the principal avenue for immigrants to migrate to the U.S. For example, under the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990, an average of 40,000 African immigrants have entered the country legally every year since 1995, and the number increased to more than 60,000 in 2002. As of 2002, 1.7 million people claimed Sub-Saharan ancestry with Africans representing six percent of the immigrant population in the U.S., and five percent of the African American community (Takougang, 1995). The number of African immigrants in the U.S. grew forty folds between 1960 and 2007, from 35, 355 to 1.4 million. Most of this growth has taken place since 1990 (Terrazas, 2009). The reported numbers are somewhat different depending on the study, since counting those without documentation is unreliable.

African men and women continue to migrate to the United States in one status or another either as foreign students, refugees, temporary visitors or immigrants, yet little
literature is available on the psychosocial and cultural well being of African immigrants. Consequently, Africans are perceived as ordinary immigrants with no reference to their unique cultural background (Nwadiora, 2007). The level, quality and value shift (change) experienced by African immigrants in the attempt to make their lives meaningful in America can be overwhelming. Due to the dearth of literature available on this group, examining the acculturation experience (stress factors and coping methods) from the voices of the immigrant themselves is monumental.

*Black African Immigrants in the U.S.*

Adapting to a new way of life can be an experience filled with numerous hardships and challenges. Learning a new language, finding housing, employments as well as acquiring new sets of survival skills represent only a sample of the plight immigrants have to overcome. Reconciliation of cultural differences between the natal country and the host country is one of the main acculturative challenges experienced by acculturating individuals and groups (Lieber et al., 2001). Dissonance between the two cultures can be a source of distress for acculturating individuals as they adjust to life in a host country (Farver et al., 2002; Oh, Koske & Sales, 2001). Intensity of acculturative stress varies depending on the cultural similarities and differences that exist between the natal and the host country. The more disparate the two cultures are, the greater the intensity of acculturative stress that will be endured by immigrants (Kheirkhan, 2003; Nwadiora & McAdoo, 1996; Pham & Harris, 2001).

For black African immigrants, they face the profound cultural value conflicts that affect their adjustment in the U.S. Cultural value conflicts are negative affects (guilt,
anxiety, and shame), and cognitive contradictions that result from wrestling with the values and behavioral expectations from an individual’s culture of origin and to the values present in the host culture (Inman, Ladany, Constantine, & Morano, 2001). For instance, many African cultures adapt an African centered perspective to life which includes guiding principles and values pertaining to group survival, communalism, group harmony, collective responsibility, commonality, and cooperation (Myrick, 2002; Nebedum-Ezeh, 1997; Nobles, 1991; Okeke, Draguns, Sheku & Allen, 1999). In contrast, the U.S. value system is centered on individualism and differences. Many Africans therefore struggle to find peace and comfort in the midst of these two contradicting value systems.

A study examining the cultural adjustment experiences of African international college students from Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana found that these immigrants who come from a communal cultural background and who thrive in close interpersonal relationships experienced great difficulties in their interactions with white students who emphasize independence and self-reliance in a relationship (Constantine et al., 2005). Furthermore, the study indicated that these African international college students found it challenging to make friends on their local campuses due to differences in ways of being, and due to interpersonal communication patterns (Constantine et al., 2005; Essandoh, 1995; Mori, 2000; Nebeduuum-Ezeh, 1997; Taylor & Nwoso, 2001).

For instance in college dormitory settings, African students may appear to violate American students’ norms concerning personal space because there is a greater individualistic sense of territory and ownership of space in U.S. culture than in
collectivistic cultures such as African in which space is shared (Pedersen, 1991). Relocating to an individualistic environment that tends to disparage dependence on others elicits profound sense of isolation, loneliness, loss and homesickness for many black African students who left a communal interdependent life style. In an exploratory investigation of the unique experiences of African women immigrants in the U.S., the women identified the following cultural conflicts: a lack of communality and sharing, lack of respect for adults and older people, and losing the authority to discipline their children are a few to mention (Nwadiora, 2007).

The practice of seeking help in order to address cultural adjustment difficulties and psychological/emotional distress further highlights the disparity of the two cultures (African and Western), and posses more challenge to African immigrants. The act of asking for help, formally or informally carries different meaning in different cultures (Fuertes & Chen, 2000). For some, the processes of seeking help my reveal one’s inadequacy and dependency (Nadler, 1990). For example, Deginesh (2006) writes that in most Ethiopian languages, there are no words to express clinical depression or etc. One is either “normal” or “insane” (Deginesh). Whereas most Americans feel comfortable to seek help in dealing with depression, African immigrants fear being labeled insane. The underutilization of formal mental health services by African International students in the United States has been documented (Essandoh, 1995; Pedersen, 1991). Constantine’s et al. (2005) research examining the cultural adjustment experiences of African International college students only reiterates the notion that many African international students view looking for professional psychological services as less favorable.
According to the African worldview, mental illness or psychological distress results from individuals unable to live in alignment with their nature, the universe and the natural flow of things (Parham, 2002). Moreover, many African cultures believe that all life forms are interrelated, which means there is no separation between the mind, body, and spirit, and the integration of these three domains is present in all daily activities (Constantine, Myers, Kindaichi, & Moore, 2004). In addition, many African students believe that mental illness, social stress, or other types of imbalances may have a spiritual etiology (Mbiti, 1970, as cited in Constantine, 2005). Therefore, optimal mental health and well being constitutes the restoration of harmony, order, and balance to individuals’ lives so that they may achieve a sense of peace, happiness, goodness, and cultural congruence (Parham, 2002). Furthermore, in most African communities, Africans are used to taking care of problems by being there for each other, and they seek assistance from religious/spiritual leaders and community elders as opposed to doctors or therapists. In the Study Constantine et al., (2005) conducted, the African international students expressed their skepticism in confessing their problems to strangers (counselors). As a result, unless counseling centers are designed to take culturally embedded and culturally sanctioned intervention approaches, African immigrants will fall through the crack.

An important part of acculturative stress is discrimination stress. Race plays an especially important role in relation to adjustment processes for black African immigrants. For Black African immigrants, they face the gruesome effect of discrimination and racism by the dominant culture. Coming from a country where they are the majority and individual classification is based on linguistic, religious and tribal
affiliations, race is not a particular issue until they are confronted with the practice of racial classification and the outcomes of racial hierarchy in the US. Fisher and Shaw (1994) define racial socialization as the “process of communicating behaviors and messages to children for the purpose of enhancing their sense of racial/ethnic identity particularly in preparation for racially hostile encounters” (p.396). Therefore, black African immigrants who are the racial majority in their nation of origin may not have the experience of racial socialization, which makes them more vulnerable to negative impacts of discrimination.

Phinney and Onwughalu (1996) also indicate that black African immigrants often initially have and idealized view of the United States and the potential benefits it offers. Therefore facing discriminatory experiences and having it as a barrier to economic mobility and social adjustment can be a shockingly painful discovery. According to Constantine, Ozazaki and Utsey (2004), international students may experience psychological problems, low self-esteem, disappointment, anger, sadness, and physical illness as a result of having unmet expectations regarding life in the United States. Thus, moving to a new culture may result in detrimental effects for international students (Constantine et al.). These results are posited to generalize to non-student immigrants, and also to members of other minority cultures within the United States. Additionally, Negy (2009) tested the Expectancy Violation theory with one hundred and twelve Hispanic immigrants living in the United States by determining whether discrepancies between their pre-migration expectation about life in the United States and their post-migration (actual) experience in the United States could predict their levels of
acculturative stress. The results indicated that discrepancy between pre-migration expectations and post-migration expectations were associated significantly with acculturative stress. It would be safe to predict the same finding for other immigrants, including Africans as well.

In a research conducted to get some insight on how black African adolescent students adjust to their new American school culture, Aikhionabare (2007) reported that ninety one percent of the students experienced negative comments about their African culture, which made their transition harder. Some of the negative comments these students received from classmates include “Do you play with lions,” “Do you live in huts,” “Do you walk around naked in the streets,” and “Africans smell bad.” The students also reported being called “savages,” “backwards,” and “ugly” (230). Thus, the black African students (from Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal) indicated feeling degraded, angry and horrible. Most explained that they got into fights, and one participant reported being suspended (Aikhionabare). Troare (2004) explained that these negative comments often created underneath the skin of black African Adolescent immigrant students a mixture of hurt, anger, and disappointments. Therefore for black African immigrant students, the types of unwelcoming comments they received from peers, and how they react to these comments affects how well they adjust socially to the new school environment. The study Nwadiora (2007) conducted among twenty-three African women revealed discrimination to be a disempowering barrier for many of the women. The women reported their frustrations with being perceived as unintelligent and inferior
due to their accent. One participant even talked about her educated daughter who lost her employment because of her accent.

Furthermore, African immigrants are often surprised by the prejudice they encounter in the hands of African Americans due to their lack of the English language, strong accents, or negative stereotypes towards Africa. For example, Ethiopian immigrants reported being frustrated and offended more by African Americans than whites (Chacko, 2003). Bryce-Laporte (1972) also spoke of the “double invisibility” black African immigrants experience because of their race and origin. Adesioye (2009), Constantine et al. (2005), and Muller (1993) all explore the tension between African immigrants and African Americans. Because of the commonalities Africans and African Americans share, African immigrants come to the U.S. with the expectation and assumption that they will be warmly welcomed with in the African American community.

They are completely unprepared for the prejudice and discriminatory treatment they receive in the hands of African Americans, resulting in great disappointment, anger, and resentment. For example, Jackson and Cothran (2003) conducted a study based on a survey examining the relationship (contact and friendship, cross-cultural communication, thoughts and stereotypes) among Africans, African Americans and African Caribbean, and the results are the following: In terms of interpersonal relationships for Africans and African Americans, 75.8% of the participants gave negative options (they think they are superior to other blacks; perceived notions and myths about one another; poor; not good). In terms of communication between Africans and African Americans, 5.8% of 104
Africans and 10.5% of 247 African Americans chose positive communications (good, open, fine), and 84.7% of 104 Africans and 69.7% of 247 African Americans chose negative communication (ignorance, myths, and misconception; stereotypes; lacking; not good). In the study, African immigrants expressed their disappointment towards African Americans' ignorance and apathy towards Africa, as well as perceived African Americans’ negative attitude as rejection and hatred (Jackson & Cothran).

Whether the prejudice and discrimination black African immigrants face comes from the dominant culture or from African Americans, it is partially produced and fueled by the media’s presentation of Africa. Black African immigrants have to witness their origin and culture being distorted and negatively portrayed on a regular basis. Troare (2003, 2004) posits that Western media reporting of Africa goes beyond professional inadequacies and structural bias and directly affects how persons view the continent, which neither is it a single country nor does it have a single language. Yet a sizable portion of the U.S. population considers Africa as a single country or language. Cultural bias has continued to account significantly for the stereotyping of African as a jungle, with people who are diseased, unintelligent, and backwards. This inaccurate collection and dissemination of information about Africa continues to directly affect the adjustment of black African immigrants (Ahluwali, 2001; Kromah, 2002). Moreover, blacks in the United States are treated as a homogenous, monolithic group and a lack of recognition for their ethnical diversity can be an additional source of frustration. It is possible that living in a societal context (United States) that pathologies their (Africans) essence, worldviews, values, personalities, and ways of being could contribute to severe cultural
adjustment difficulties and subsequently to undue levels of psychological distress (Constantine et al., 2005). The authors go on to say such distress may affect African immigrants’ interpersonal functioning, and formal mental health intervention may be warranted at that time.

*Acculturation, Stress and its Effect on the Well-Beings of African Immigrants*

Acculturative stress is positively associated with poor mental/emotional/physical health among immigrants. Disparities between host and natal country, and adjustment difficulties make immigrants vulnerable to various health problems. Hovey (2000) examined the relationship between acculturative stress, depression, and suicidal ideation in a sample of Mexican immigrants. The result indicated that adult Mexican immigrants who experience elevated levels of acculturative stress are at risk for experiencing critical levels of depression and suicidal ideation. Similarly, among six groups of Asian immigrants elders (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Indian Filipino, and Vietnamese), Muy and Kang (2006) found a direct correlation between acculturative stress and depression. This was mainly due to cultural gaps, but other predictors also included longer residency in the United States, stressful life events, poor proximity to children, and perceived poor health (Muy & Kang). Additionally, due to acculturative stress such as language barrier, illegal immigration status, and financial problems as well as feelings of loneliness, helplessness, powerlessness, and inadequacy, working class Turkish immigrants suffer a great deal of psychological stress (Yasemin, 2008). Among most recently arrived Amerasians, Nwadiora & McAdoo (1996) found that factors primary in the areas of employment, limited formal education, ability of spoken English contributed to
acculturative stress.

An important factor of acculturative stress is the negative psychological outcome associated with racial/ethnic discrimination. There is a strong relationship between discriminatory events and stress levels. Discrimination is perceived as a stressor because it entails mistreatments, exclusions, and denial of opportunities such as education, employment, housing, and etc. (Feagin & Eckberg, 1980). The process of leaving a native land and having to transition into a new way of life in the host country is an already stressful event. Combining this experience with the negative impacts of discrimination is like poking an unhealed wound. Faur (2007) writes that although acculturative stress touches on the construct of stress associated with discrimination, it does not arrive at the complex picture of discrimination stress. In describing the harmful psychological impacts of discrimination on people, Allport (1954) said, “One’s reputation, whether false or true, cannot be hammered, hammered, hammered into one’s head without doing something to one’s character” (p. 142). Therefore, it becomes essential to evaluate discrimination stress as its own construct.

The stress caused by racism has been documented to affect the psychological well-being of minorities (Harrell, 2000; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999). For instance, Szalacha et al. (2003) described Puerto Rican children and adolescents’ negative psychological effects associated with perceived racial/ethnic discrimination. The authors found that perceived discrimination and worrying about discrimination were negatively associated with self-esteem and positively associated with depression and stress. The authors also reported that adolescents were aware of negative stereotypes
regarding Puerto Ricans, and half of them were able to describe discriminatory instances. According to Szalacha et al., these results demonstrated that both perceived discrimination and anxiety regarding discrimination were psychological risk factors.

Extensive evidence validates correlation between discriminatory events and stress levels among African Americans. In a longitudinal study that followed African American youth from ages seventeen to twenty four, Sellers, Caldwell, Scheele-Cone, and Zimmerman (2003) found that greater experiences with racial discrimination resulted in an elevated stress and psychological distress. Dawson (2009) found a high rate of discriminatory related stress among Dominican women who are racially perceived as African Americans due to their dark complexion while they are Latinos and speak Spanish. Flores (2007) conducted a study investigating factors that impact the relationship between race related stress and quality of life of 162 first generation Latino immigrant elders. Result indicated that race plays a major role in the race related stress endured by Latino Elders, specifically black and Trigueno (phenotypically black) Latinos reported higher race related stress than white Latinos. Data analyses also suggested that overall quality of life of black Latinos is affected by race related stress (Flores). Furthermore, Arab Americans are at risk of developing psychological problems as a result of increased acts of discrimination related to negative attitudes towards this group following September 11, 2001 (Amer, 2005).

Allport (1954) described two effects of discrimination: internalized discrimination is when one engages in self blame resulting in self hate, aggression towards one’s own culture, and withdrawal while externalized discrimination includes fighting back or an
increased group pride. Oppedal, Roysamb, & Hererdahl (2005) used a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (a brief behavioral screening) to gain insight into psychological problems that tenth grade immigrants (with eleven different ethnic identities) youth experience. They found adolescents who experienced discrimination and ethnic identity crisis scored high on all of the SDQ subscales such as emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems, and prosocial behavior. Higher score equates with more difficulties. Moreover, adolescent girls experienced more internalized disorders (self-hate) while the boys exhibited more externalized disorders (school misconduct-fights). Additionally, Phinney and Chavira (1993) had Hispanic/Latino adolescents view tapes presenting negative views of their group in attempt to examine the effect of ethnic threat on adolescent’s ethnic self-concept and own group ratings. The results demonstrated that the threat condition had a negative effect on participants’ rating of their ethnic group (internalization). They devalued its importance in comparison to the dominant culture. The authors state that over time this negative belief toward one’s own ethnic group is expected to lead to a negative psychological outcome (Phinney & Chavira). When everyday prejudice experiences are compounded, immigrants are overwhelmed with feelings of pain, anger, sadness, and hopelessness, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and etc.

Besides impairing the emotional well-being of immigrants, discrimination-related stress can also affect mental and physical health. The study Finch, Kolody, and Vega (2000) conducted among adult (ages eighteen to fifty nine) Mexican origin respondents revealed that discrimination was directly related to depression. A research comparing
experiences of discrimination and its influence on psychological distress among seven group of immigrants (Russians, Ingrian/Finnish returnees, Estonians, Somalis, Arabs, Vietnamese and Turks) showed that immigrants who faced more discrimination (Somalis and Arabs) suffered more from psychological distress such as increased anxiety, depression, apathy and feelings of alienation (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000). Furthermore a study based on a thirteen-year, four wave national panel data from the national survey of black Americans found that personal experience with racism instigates adverse and salubrious, immediate and cumulative effects on the physical and mental well-being of African Americans (Jackson, et al., 1999). Racial discrimination was related to chronic health problems, disability, psychological distress, and lower levels of psychological well being (Williams & Chung, 1997). In 1999, Clark, Anderson, and Clark, et al. proposed a model in which racism is a chronic stressor that contributes to the development of cardiovascular disease such as diabetes. Acculturation stress combined with the negative outcomes of discrimination makes Black African immigrants susceptible to various health risks

*Low Acculturation Mediates Stress*

The experience of discriminatory events and cultural conflicts translate into stress and eventually to health problems depending on the person’s appraisal of the event as well as the coping resources the individual possess. One important phenomenon to examine among immigrants is the role of acculturation and its contribution to managing stress level and to the betterment of health. There is numerous empirical evidence that supports low acculturation (adherence to cultural values and behaviors of one’s home
culture) functions as a coping mechanism by promoting resilience and leading to a better biopsycosocial outcome for various immigrants (Dawson, 2009; Han, et al., 2006; Heilemann, et al., 2002). Low acculturation is often marked by nativity, number of years in the host country, retention of language, retention of cultural values and behaviors such as religion, holidays, food, and residing among co-ethnic communities.

Low acculturation operates as a culturally based protective factor in alleviating the stress level felt among immigrants (Berry et al., 1989; Breslau et al., 2007; Burnam et al., 1987). It buffers the negative impact of acculturative stresses including discriminatory experiences by providing comfort, a sense of belonging, and supportive networks. For instance, Han, et al. (2006) identified social support as an effective resource in alleviating stress and achieving better mental health while high acculturation and lower social support were associated with depression among elderly Korean immigrants. Buddington (2002) noted that Jamaican immigrant college students with low acculturation (late arrival, return home frequently and strong communication with family and relatives) experienced less stress and depression, and thus obtained high grade point average at Howard University compared to Jamaican students with high acculturation.

Social support serves various purposes ranging from being a source of financial and emotional support to providing valuable information. It further facilitates a strong sense of ethnic identity which in turn enhances self confidence, pride, and resilience. On the vitality of language retention, among ninety six Hispanic adults, mostly recent immigrants responding in Spanish, intercultural competence contributed to variance in acculturative distress beyond that already accounted for by general coping, acculturation,
and sociodemographic variables. Intercultural competence best predicted acculturative distress (Torres & Rollock, 2004). Findings suggest that Hispanics with a low sense of intercultural and intracultural proficiency may experience increased stress (Torres & Rollock).

Padilla (1995) argues that although Latino/as in the United States feel pressured to adapt and assimilate to mainstream behaviors, their experience of discrimination may result in many Latino/as seeking comfort in their home culture. Therefore it is plausible to say that discriminatory experience among Latino/as actually strengthens their cultural ties and therefore helps to protect them from discriminatory experiences (Padilla). As mentioned before, one of the impacts of discrimination as Allport (1954) writes is it leads to a stronger cultural retention, ethnic group identity, and pride. The strength of identification with an ethnic group which entails a sense of pride, involvement in ethnic practices, and cultural commitment to one’s racial/ethnic group betters mental and emotional health. In a comparative study examining discrimination, ethnic identity, and mental health among African Americans, Caribbean Americans, and European Americans, Kimura (2008) discovered that racial and ethnic group identity helps minority group members combat the detrimental effects of perceived discrimination on mental health compared to European Americans.

It is then evident that discrimination can enhance racial or ethnic cohesion which in turn acts as a protective factor to cope with discrimination itself. To further test the validity of this statement, Dawson (2007) conducted a study among more recent Latino immigrants: Dominicans. The sample included 246 black Dominican adult women
between the ages of thirty to forty nine, and who lived in a predominantly Dominican neighborhood in New York City. Most of them have lived in the states for eleven to twenty years. By engaging in activities such as occupying ethnic enclaves, retaining Spanish as their primary language, and cultivating and sustaining cultural ties, Dominican women were able to alter the impact discrimination experiences have on their stress levels. Unexpectedly, the research also revealed that both low acculturation and high acculturation levels were significantly related to stress which is consistent with previous analyses. Several researchers have posited that persons low in acculturation (arriving recently) experience stress due to a lack of support and loss of cultural connections (Rogler et al., 1991). Similarly, those individuals high in acculturation exhibit higher stress levels due to loss of cultural protective factors (Vega et al., 1998).

Therefore, having people who come from similar ethnic backgrounds and who share similar adversities can make African immigrants feel less lonely and provides them with a safe heaven. Read and Emerson (2005) indicated in their findings that black African immigrants have a better health advantage than African Americans due to low acculturation. However those health benefits deteriorated over time due to longer residence in the United States combined with high acculturation and prolonged exposure to racism. Immigrants of any race/ethnicity in the United States are often healthier than non immigrants. Generally, foreign-born Americans have lower rates of mental disorders than those born in the United States, and increasing time in the U.S. is associated with increasing rates of mental health problems among immigrants (Alegria et al., 2002; Escobar et al., 2000; Grant et al., 2004; Williams & Collins, 2001). Increased length of
exposure to the U.S. environment causes immigrants to adapt to native-born behaviors such as diet and exercise that have important health implications (McDonald, 2004, Stephen et al., 1994). This combined with loss of cultural ties, values, and practices might lead to the imbalance of immigrants’ overall well-being.

For instance, a study examining the relationship between acculturation levels and prevalence of diabetes among 708 Mexican-Origin Hispanics, 547 non-Mexican-Origin Hispanics, and 737 Chinese participants in a multi-ethnic study of Atherosclerosis revealed the following findings: after adjusting for sociodemographics, the prevalence of diabetes was significantly higher among the most acculturated versus the least acculturated non-Mexican origin Hispanics. The higher the acculturation score is, the higher the prevalence of diabetes (Namratha et al., 2008). Furthermore, Davila, Mcfall, Cheng (2009) studied correlations between acculturation and depressive symptoms among pregnant and postpartum Latinas, and found that higher acculturation, pregnancy, and single status were positively associated with elevated depressive symptoms.

Latinos who were U.S. born, single, and who preferred English and who were pregnant were more likely to express elevated levels of depressive symptoms than Mexico born Latinas (Davila et al., 2009). In addition to the negative effect longer stay in the U.S. has on health, Ewert (2009) discovered that more stay in the U.S. increased school misbehavior, disturbing educational success. Ewert tested the effects of immigrant generation and indicators of acculturation on three measures of disciplinary problems during the senior year of high school: attending class unprepared, getting in trouble for breaking school rules, and being put on suspension. First and one-point-five
generation immigrants attend class more prepared and get their senior year of high
school. Therefore, as the aforementioned evidences demonstrate, having low
acculturation bears fruitful outcomes for many immigrants.

Gaps in the Literature

The acculturation process of immigrants has attracted considerable research
attention. However, the majority of these studies have focused on the various factors
associated with the acculturation process of immigrants in general. Therefore the major
noticeable gap in the literature review is relying on findings from studies of other
immigrant groups in order to understand African immigrants. An extensive literature
review failed to yield adequate research finding on the acculturation experience of
African immigrants. Much of the research on African immigrants has focused primary
on a specific refugee population such as Somali and Sudanese in relationship to their
mental health, and the few studies that have been inclusive of other African immigrants
have employed a quantitative method. Much of the research has also focused on one
specific issue, whether it is racism or some aspect of cultural/adjustment conflict, and has
failed to give an in depth look of resiliency. To date, the researchers have not examined
the role of low acculturation as a protective factor, specifically among African
immigrants.

What is lacking in the literature research is a comprehensive exploratory study
that gives voices to various immigrants (including different age, gender and status) from
various parts of the continent covering a number of issues affecting immigrants’ life in a
qualitative matter. In this study, some of these gaps are addressed through a holistic
qualitative design that explored all the aforementioned shortcomings. The present study focuses on the acculturation experiences of African immigrants by exploring stress factors, as well as by further exploring factors associated with low acculturation. In addition, this study also examined various African immigrant groups from East, West, and South. The qualitative approach gives the research a subjective nature that is often lacked in a quantitative study. This is likely to provide a more nuanced understanding of African immigrants and their acculturative experiences.

Summary

In this chapter, relevant literature to this project was reviewed. Some of the topics discussed in this chapter included a brief introduction, a historical background on the presence of Africans in the United States, as well as an exploration of what it is like to be a black African immigrant in the U.S., relationship between acculturation, stress and its impact on overall health, and how low acculturation mitigates stress. In the next chapter, the methods used to conduct the study are described.
Chapter 3

METHODS

Introduction

The research design and the methodology used for this study are described in this chapter. The participants, including the criteria used to determine the qualifications to participate in the study are reported, along with a description of the sample population and the sampling technique. This chapter also includes the instrumentation used to collect the data and the reporting method. The final section describes the steps taken to protect the human subjects.

Research Question

This study investigates the following research question: What is the role of acculturation and stress factors among Black African immigrants.

Research Design

In order to investigate the proceeding question, an exploratory qualitative design was selected. As reported, there is inadequate research that looks at the unique stress factors, and acculturation experiences of black African immigrants. Qualitative design allows openness to discovering new ideas about the phenomena, unveils new insights, and generates new ideas for further research (Kreuger & Neumann, 2006), which makes it most feasible towards this research. A qualitative method is also based on the concept that reality is subjective (Royse, 1999).

There are a number of benefits and drawbacks in employing a qualitative approach. On the favorable side, it gives an in depth and detailed information that may
not be covered on scales or questionnaires (Kreuger & Neumann, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Robson, 2002). It enables the researcher to capture the breadth as well as the depth of participants’ lives and experiences. An increased external validity is evident in the research because it is studying the real shared experiences of black African immigrants. Unlike quantitative research where validity equals truth, in qualitative research, validity refers to credibility (Angen, 2000). This method tends to be more flexible than a descriptive type of design, therefore, it allows for unexpected results to surface (Royse, 1999). On the other hand, the findings of a qualitative study do not allow for generalizations to be made since sample tends to be small (Kreuger and Neumann; Robson). There is a higher probability of the researcher’s bias becoming a concern (Robson). The process of conducting an interview and categorizing the result in a qualitative design can be very time consuming. Furthermore, (Royse) writes that a qualitative method is generally less respected in academia.

The specific qualitative technique used for this study is an in depth interview using open-ended questions. Breakwell, Hammond, and Fife-Schaw (2002) write that the Interview is a virtually infinitely flexible tool for research. It can encompass other techniques, and it can be placed alongside other data elicitation procedures. Using such method provides detailed information about the experiences of black African immigrants through case study. It allows the researcher to explore processes that shape and alter the lives of the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The interview process strives to understand patterns of interaction (Rubin & Rubin). Therefore the researcher in this study seeks to look at the correlation between stress and acculturation, as well as how the
interaction of these two elements impacts the individual. Unlike quantitative methods, the interview procedure allows the researcher to gain perspective without predetermining the point of view (Patton, 1983). Similarly, Robson (2002) also indicates that an interview method creates an opportunity for a truer assessment of what the participant thinks and believes. Further advantage besides being able to observe what is being said and how it is said, the researcher gets to observe and interpret vocalization, facial expression, and other bodily gestures. The aforementioned method is also ideal for follow up information on responses.

After the interview, the researcher will then apply a content analysis method to report on the data obtained through the interviews. The process of this procedure entails comparing notes and identifying emerging themes, and making coding (linking patterns and categorizing themes) (Kreuger & Neumann, 2006). Within the content analysis method there are two basic techniques: latent and manifest analysis. The latent analysis classifies the deeper meaning found within the content, whereas the manifest analysis identifies the structure or surface data (Kreuger & Neumann; Royse, 1999). Latent analysis also often works through an inductive process in which an understanding emerges from assorting the content into themes (Royse). This study will concentrate on the latent quality of data to formulate a deeper understanding of the acculturation experiences of black African immigrants, and how they are negatively and positively impacted by it.

The benefit of implementing content analysis to the collected data is it offers a greater comprehension of the phenomena (Kreuger & Neumann, 2006). It can also be
economically advantageous in terms of money and time (Royse, 1999). Related to this is that content analysis can be performed without a lot of specialized training and can be re-done without having to obtain any new data (Royse). However, reliability becomes a major concern since two researchers may come up with different themes even when analyzing the same data. Content analysis method allows qualitative data to be transformed into a quantitative form (Kreuger & Neumann)

Participants

The subjects for the present study consist of approximately ten black African immigrants from East (Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda), West (Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Ivory Coast), Central (Cameroon), and Southern Africa (Zambia, Zimbabwe) residing in the United States for fifteen years or less. They had to be born and raised in their own native land. There were seven men and three women, and their ages ranged between mid twenties to late fifties.

Sample Population

A non-probability snowball sampling procedure was used to generate participants. In this type of sampling, the researcher starts with people known to her who fit the criteria, then expands the pool through referrals (Kreuger & Neumann, 2006). The benefit of using snowball sampling is it tends to be a generally faster, cheaper and easier method to conduct than most approaches (Kreuger & Neumann). However Patton (1983) writes that truth telling of the participant might be a concern depending upon the type of relationship. For instance, there may be a tendency for some socially related participants to answer according to how they might want to be viewed by the interviewer as opposed
to giving more truthful responses. This can be controlled somewhat by the nature of the topic and assuring participants of the confidentiality nature of the interview

Instrumentation

A standardized open-ended interview was developed and utilized for the study. Such type of interview in general tends to be flexible, helps to obtain a wealth of information, encourages rapport with a subject, as well as provides an opportunity for unanticipated responses (Robson, 2002). Unstructured interviews are more vulnerable to a researcher’s bias than a standardized format in which questions are developed beforehand and asked in the same manner for each participant (Patton, 1983). Although questions were asked generally in the same manner, there was some clarification given for some of the participants based on their questions and responses. A standardized format also requires less time compared to unstructured interview (Kreuger & Neumann, 2006).

The researcher developed the interview questions (see Appendix B). The questions are broken into three topic areas. The first segment attempts to explore what it is like to be a black African immigrant in the United States. Questions inquire about the challenges individuals face when moving to the U.S., and how race plays a part in the acculturation process. Related to this was the question of interaction or relationship between Africans and African Americans. The second area focuses on correlation between acculturative stress and its impact on immigrants’ welfare. The last set of questions tries to uncover how low acculturation is able to mediate stress.
Data Gathering

The process of obtaining cooperation from participants entailed the researcher approaching people known to her who fit the criteria, and inquiring if they would participate in the research and refer others who may be interested. The researcher provided the known individuals with contact information in case they come across persons who are interested in participating. In the end, the researcher contacted half of the subjects and others called the researcher and expressed an interest. The researcher informed participants that the interview will take 30-40 minutes and that it will be tape-recorded. A time and location were then agreed upon between the researcher and participants.

Upon meeting with a participant, the researcher first asked each participant to read and to sign the informed consent form (see Appendix A). Participant read and signed the form and was asked if he/she had any questions. Afterwards, the tape recorder was started and the researcher asked each one of the questions, which were responded to by the participant. In some cases, the participant asked for clarification of a question. Also, the researcher asked follow up questions on occasion. The researcher took notes related to content throughout each interview. Kreuger and Neumann (2006) recommend that interviews be tape-recorded and that notes be taken. Following the interview, all forms, notes and the tape recordings were securely stored in a locked cabinet and separately stored at the researcher's home.

Issues encountered in obtaining the data include: the researcher found it very difficult and stressful to find adequate participants especially women, some people
cancelled interview appointments, and it was challenging to set up times convenient for both the researcher and the participant.

Data Analysis

Following the interviews, all the audiotapes were transcribed. The researcher transcribed all the tapes. A content analysis was then conducted on the written version of the responses. The researcher was looking for common themes among responses. This categorization was useful in summarizing meaningful prospects that would provide preliminary answers to the questions posed. Common themes were then identified and described within the context of the literature and theoretical frameworks reviewed for this study. Once the themes that are representative of the data as a whole emerge, the researcher developed thematic descriptions to capture each emerging theme. Once the themes and thematic descriptions were developed, the researcher returned to the data and identified direct quotes and passages that represented and exemplified each of the themes. Finally, the researcher synthesized the themes into composite descriptions/depictions of the lived experiences reported by the participants in the study (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002).

Protection of Human Subjects

Prior to the start of data collection, a human subject application was submitted and approved by the California State University, Sacramento, Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects from the Division of Social Work. This application was approved with a “minimal” risk category. The application included the interview questions, and the informed consent form used throughout the study. Participants read
the consent form and the researcher asked subjects if they had questions. After signing
the signature page, participants were given a copy of the information. This explained the
voluntary and confidential nature of the interview.

Following each interview, the tapes, informed consent signature pages, and
researcher notes were stored separately in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s home. The
researcher transcribed all the audiotapes. During the analysis of the written version of
the data, the tapes were kept in a secure location. In order to maintain confidentiality, all
content analysis was conducted using fictitious names and no other identifying
information. The only persons to have contact with the data are the researcher, and the
researcher’s thesis advisor. Upon completion and approval of the project (June 2010), all
the data will be destroyed.

Summary

This chapter described the procedures utilized for this study. It offered a
description of a qualitative, in depth, standardized, open-ended interview research design.
In addition, the chapter contained segments on instrumentation, research participants,
sampling design, data gathering methods, data analysis, and protection of human
subjects. In the next chapter, the results of the data are analyzed and presented.
Chapter 4
DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

Interviews were conducted with ten participants who indicated an interest and volunteered to participate in this research. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the following research questions: (1) what are the challenges and struggles black African immigrants face when migrating to the United States? (2) What is the role of low acculturation in mitigating acculturative stress? The purpose for exploring these questions was to acquire a deeper understanding of the unique experiences of black African immigrants as well as point out protective factors and coping strategies. The participants were asked a set of seventeen questions (See Appendix B) related to their experiences. The main themes emerged from these interviews entail: (1) cultural adjustments; (2) racial adjustments; and (3) how low acculturation alleviates acculturative stress. This chapter will focus on each theme and highlight quotes from the interviews when discussing the themes. All study participants were given fictitious names to protect their identity.

Cultural Adjustments

Reconciliation of cultural differences between the natal country and the host country is one of the main acculturative challenges experienced by acculturating individuals and groups (Lieber et al., 2001). Disparities in value systems appear to be common challenging problems across all participants. Dissonance between the two cultures can be a source of distress for acculturating individuals as they adapt to life in a
host country (Farver et al., 2002). Intensity of acculturative stress varies depending on the cultural similarities and differences that exist between the natal and the host country. For instance, all participants have grown up and have been socialized in collective settings where the following values tend to be privileged: cooperation, respect for and deference towards elders, participation in shared progress and responsibility, reputation of the group, interdependence, and cultivation of human relations. In the U.S. immigrants are confronted and have to learn to survive in an individualistic environment where competition, independence, individual achievements, personal growth and fulfillment, self reliance, and accumulation of financial capitol deem importance. This new setting surely contradicts with African immigrants’ essence, identity, and how they perceive the world. The more the two cultures contradict, the greater the intensity of acculturative stress is for immigrants (Nwadiora & McAdoo, 1996). Areas in which all participants identified disparities between African and American values pertaining to a lack of communality include in family units, in neighborhoods, and in the community at large. First, most of the participants came from living with family units that often included extended family members (grandparents and cousins) to having to live alone or with a roommate. Already, there is a reduction and loss in the number of people that provided a foundation and a cushion for the individuals. Coming from a full and noisy house with seven siblings, grandparents and cousins, Paul (Guinea Bissau) found the quietness of the apartment he shared with his brother daunting.

Second, in African communities, neighbors play a crucial role and come second to the family in terms of their significance. A strong bond and interaction exist among
neighbors as they are part of each other’s daily lives. Neighbors rely on one another for hard times as well as to celebrate good times. In the U.S. all participants became shocked at the lack of communication and relationship between neighbors. They found it strange that neighbors failed to know anything about one another. Bob (Ivory Coast) explains, “Everybody knows all and everything about their neighbor back home.” Tim (Rwanda), two months after he arrived in the U.S., his neighbor had a party. He went to his neighbor’s house, introduced himself, and began to greet people. In Africa, one does not need to be invited to attend his/her neighbors’ party, as they play a major role in assisting with the organization of the party. His neighbor was shocked at Tim’s presence and asked who had invited him. Thelma (Zimbabwe) still faces a difficult time accepting the inability to simply drop a visit to a neighbor’s house. Julia feels saddened for her children because they cannot go outside and play with the neighborhood children. She said that in Cameroon, a spontaneous interaction takes place with neighborhood children regardless of whether they know one another or not. Thelma also professed that in order for her children to go outside and play, she needs to go out to watch them as well whereas in Africa, everybody in the neighborhood watches the children, and a parent does not necessary have to be present. The lack of dependency on neighbors elicited great sense of isolation, loneliness, loss, and homesickness for all participants.

Third, participants spoke of the distance and isolation that exists between people in a given community. They spoke about their experiences with greeting people on the street and not receiving responses in return, which they found very peculiar. Instead, they received stares as if their action was unacceptable. Steve (Tanzania) thought people were
unfriendly. It was later explained to him by a woman who noticed his newness and confusion that people in American just mind their own business. In Africa, it is ordinary for people to greet one another on the street, and strike a conversation with anyone. Tom (Senegal) explained that people in America are only concerned about their business and fail to interfere even when hurtful things are being done. Tim says, “Essentially you are alone, nobody knows you and you don’t know anybody.” Grace (Kenya) and Bob attributed the absence of interaction and connection between people as nobody caring about them. It reinforced the fact that they are no longer part of a community, which made them feel extremely lonely, and homesick. Tom says, “The hardest thing to digest was losing a community.” Those who already had a family like Tibo (Ghana) did not feel the impact as much. He had also previously worked with Americans in Ghana and was aware of the individualistic life style in the U.S.

A further profound cultural value conflict black African immigrants face emerges from the way quality of life is measured. African cultures prioritize cultivation of human capitol as oppose to financial capitol. The emphasis placed on money and materials as opposed to human relations, social values, family, and community only reinforces the cultural difference. Tim says, “American culture, value is money and is rich that way. Africa is poor in material but rich in family and social life. The whole family, community is there for you. It’s a priority.” Tom pointed out that life seems to be centered on the accumulation of money instead of cultivating human capitol in America. He says, “Money is priority here. It’s good to have money but if you don’t have people, you are not going to make it. People will always be there for you.’ The majority of the
participants described the life style in the U.S. as being fast pasted, stressful, and getting easily caught up or lost in a work routine as well as being bombarded with bills. Tibo mentioned that in Africa, it is possible to eat and live a stress free life with little money. Here however, it is easy to panic when money becomes inadequate, because bills never stop coming. Astounded with this particular stressful life style, Grace talked about her initial reaction. She says, “I said to myself, Is this the American dream? I want to go home. My friends think I have the best life; yet I have three jobs on top of being a full time student.” Participants stated that it is difficult to find joy, have a social network to belong to or fall back on, and enjoy life. The quality of life simply tends to be richer in Africa even in the absence of sufficient money. Parham (2002) writes that sever cultural adjustment difficulties can occur in African-descent individuals when they live in opposition to their nature or natural essence (values, personalities, ways of being, and etc.).

Racial Adjustments

Another acculturative challenge experienced by black African immigrants is discrimination. All participants identified their unexpected encounter with racism as a major source of conflict. The shift of coming from a place that uses tribal classification to identify a person to a country where their color skin becomes the lens in which they are defined and judged is mountainous. Black African immigrants face hostile encounters on three levels: as an immigrant (someone who is an outsider and who speaks differently), as an African, (origin), and as a black person (race), which is often described as a triple minority (Constantine et al., 2005). The U.S. has a long history of projecting hostility to
individuals who appear to be outside of the ‘norm’. Empirical studies of perceived stereotypes, discrimination, and social distance have traditionally tapped dominant majority views of immigrant and ethnic minorities (Allport, 1958; Warner & Strole, 1945). To begin with, accent signifies one’s ‘otherness’ from the norm. Because they did not speak English or because they had an accent, participants indicated their experiences of people looking down on them, and making them feel embarrassed. Paul spoke of instances where he would go to the store and people respond negatively as soon as he opens his mouth. Participants also shared their experiences of being made fun of and being a target of jokes. Grace says, “Some people don’t get pass the accents: it’s frustrating.”

Julia who understands English but speaks with an accent also expressed her frustration with receptionists who insist on giving her an interpreter at the hospital where she takes her son for his regular check-ups. She accepted an interpreter once and learned that he translates incorrectly. She commented that the receptionist never even give her a chance to speak. Jackson (Zambia) where English is the official language stated that Americans expect him to speak like them even though he already speaks English fluently. Thelma says, “They (Americans) understand you, but they want you to speak the way they speak.” A woman approached Steven (Tanzania, another English speaking country) and offered to help him lose his accent. He asked her if she has trouble understanding him in which she responded that she understood him perfectly. He then inquired her as to why it would be necessary for him to lose his accent.
Every participant in the study has encountered negative and degrading stereotypes pertaining to Africa from Americans, which many find patronizing. Participants were shaken at the juxtaposition of the U.S. being the most advanced country and the lack of knowledge among its citizens. They expressed their frustration with Americans being very ethnocentric and close-minded. People lacked knowledge and awareness about the rest of the world. In Africa, students get a world education: they learn about Europe, Asia and Latin America. Participants described the school system in the U.S. as “broken” and very exclusive. In the study Constantine et al. (2005) conducted examining the cultural adjustment experiences of African international college students, his participants expressed their concern with the educational system in the United States being Eurocentric or oriented toward White cultural values. They also indicated their alarm in many Americans lacking awareness of global issues outside of U.S. domestic concerns. Frustrated and angry with the stereotypes she encountered, Grace often asked why she even came to the U.S. Some of the typical stereotypes about Africa and Africans include, do you have cell phones and cars? Do you live on trees? Do you play with tigers and lions? How did you get here? Are your parents kings and queens? Many people also think of Africa as being one country.

Bob shared his wearisome experience with a dentist he visited. She noted to him that he must see pirates all the time, and asked why he hates Americans. He politely explained he was not from Somalia. When he told her he is from Ivory Coast, she had no idea where it was. She proceeded to ask if people in Ivory Coast use tooth brush. Even though he took the time to educate her and dismantle myths she carried, she handed him a
box of toothbrushes when he got up to leave (he had mentioned to her that he was returning to Ivory Coast for vacation). Bob walked out of the office feeling very angry. When Thelma mentions her house in Africa, people act surprise and inquire what type of a house she owns. She commented that Americans have no idea that many Africans are actually better off than them, owning beautiful houses without the burden of a mortgage payment. Julia says, “Some are very genuinely curious and have no knowledge when they ask questions, others, their question has a connotation of looking down upon you. They are very surprised to see us behaving like other human beings.”

In addition to the negative stereotypical comments, being African is also connoted with ignorance and inferiority. For example, Jackson who is in a professional development fellowship program at the University of California, Davis for a year says, “Any African thing is not of standard.” He always receives comments and questions that implicitly critique his belonging in the program. Tom being the only black student in his master’s program, his Asian and Caucasian classmates were surprised about his knowledge of world history such as Chinese and Vietnam history. They (Asian classmates) would often tell their friends about the black guy in their class who knows everything. Additionally, some of his classmates heavenly relied on calculators to calculate mathematical problems. When Tom showed them how to solve the problems without using a calculator, Tom says, “They ask how an African can do this and where did you learn this? They start to give you respect. Before that, you are nobody and you know nothing.” Grace who is fluent in English and French is often questioned by people who seem surprised of her knowledge of those languages. Bob takes engineering courses
and his classmates are shocked at the fact that someone who lacks mastery of the language (English) and has an accent can know more than they do.

Besides the prejudice and the stereotype threats, another form of hostility is the actual act of discrimination, which can be an overwhelmingly infuriating experience for most Africans. Because black African immigrants lack any racial socialization, they do not have a tangible understanding of racism until they first handedly experience it in the U.S. Fisher and Shaw (1994) write that those who have not lived with racial exposure, lack the means (racial socialization) to prepare for racial hostile encounters. Tom says, “It’s hard for us to understand what’s racial action. Where we come from we are all blacks, so we are not prepared to face it.” Some immigrants actually fail to recognize it instantly when they are confronted with discrimination for the first time. For example, during Tom’s first year in America, he worked at a gas station. When people acted in a particular way, he failed to realize the racial connotation. He says, “It takes a while to realize people act this way because I am black.” While Bob was walking home from work in the evening, a police officer stopped him. He questioned him about where he is coming from and what he was doing, he asked him if he owned a knife, searched him, and finally asked for his identification card. After checking Bob’s identification card, he let him go. Bob says, “I got home and talked to my uncle, I learned it was because of my color. I didn’t think about race for the first three month, I didn’t know that there are racist people, I thought white and black people in America, they live together and understand each other. I didn’t expect discrimination; I thought that was during Martin Luther king’s time.” For Thelma, the U.S. represented democracy. She thought that Americans had
moved beyond the racial line. She came to find out Americans have yet to advance in this particular area.

Phinney and Onwughalu (1996) also point out that because black African immigrants have an optimal image of the United States and the potential benefits its offers, having discrimination as a barrier to economic mobility and social adjustment can be a shockingly gruesome discovery. For example Thelma described her expectation of the U.S. as “The land of honey and milk where nobody suffers.” Four participants reported being denied promotion due to their race. Tim with great frustration and anger, expressed how his employer refused him a promotion even though he has worked for nine years while employees with three years of experience have been able to move up. He says, “It’s always a struggle, we fight to get ahead.” Similarly, Steven (Tanzania) was propelled to resign from his priesthood due to racial discrimination. Daily confrontations with racial mistreatments also hinder their social adjustment. Being followed inside stores, being denied entrance to clubs, being neglected or ignored of services, racial profiling, being wrongly accused, women holding on to their purses or calling out to their children in the passing of a participant are all the common incidents participants endure on a regular basis. Bob says, “I never imagined what happens here, people treat you like crap as if you have no value. It hurts a lot, it affects you emotionally, and it makes it hard to adjust here and get used to the life style.”

Moreover, black African immigrants are often startled by the prejudice they encounter in the hands of African Americans due to their triple minority status, a major concern that emerged across all participants. They come with the notion that they will
automatically connect and be accepted within the African American community in the U.S. due to the commonalities they share. Unfortunately, this expectation has failed to come true. All participants testified that great tensions exist between the two groups. Some of the reasons participants mentioned entail “African Americans believe that we (Africans) think we are better than them, and that we overshadow them,” “Africans resent African Americans’ lack of knowledge regarding Africa,” “Africans resent African Americans’ effort to fixedly distinguish themselves from Africans, and resent their failure to acknowledge their ancestry,” “African Americans possess jealousy because they cannot trace their ancestry,” “as well as “African Americans perpetuate similar stereotypes and prejudices that whites hold against Africans.” Tim says, “It hurts a lot, I don’t have African American friends. It hurts because I feel they are my people but they keep distant from us. It’s kind of sad, they should approach us, know a little bit history about the continent. I don’t know what we have done to them but we are always separate.” Bob questions why it is much easier to greet and interact with people of the African Diaspora such as Jamaicans and Haitians except with African Americans.

Tom describes, “Coming to the U.S., I thought it would be easy to make African American friends, this wasn’t the case.” He and Thelma described incidents where they would greet African Americans but a very few responded. Most of them got into a defensive mode as to question the motive of their greetings. Therefore for Tom and Thelma, they found it easier to make friends with Caucasians than African Americans. On one occasion, Tom was introduced to an African American woman at a party, but the woman kept calling him “Africa”. When he approached her, the first thing she said was,
“why do you hate us (African Americans)?” He inquired about where she got that idea from and she said her mother. Tom could not figure out why African Americans fall short in seeking out resources to learn about African people. He later recognized that they already carry negative preconceived ideas which feed into the prejudice. He took the time to explain and educate her. When Bob declined to buy a product from an African American street vendor, the vendor shoutingly said to Bob “You Africans sold us to the Americans, you criminals!””, which traumatized Bob. Tim, Thelma, and Steven explained they did not have any African American friends. Steven said he never bonded with African Americans because they seemed unfriendly.

Tibo recalled incidents where African Americans called him “Kunta Kinte” (the central character of the novel, Roots, who was enslaved from Africa and sold to the U.S). He also pointed out that it is easier to approach and interact with men than women. Grace validated this fact by explaining that though she gets along just fine with men, interactions with African American women appears negative. She says, “they have this - she thinks she is better than us attitude.” Thelma shared her perplexed experience with an African American woman who insistently and adamantly concentrated on distinguishing African Americans from Africans. Not everyone has bear unpleasant experiences with African Americans. Julia’s only interaction with African Americans is with those who actively participate in African clubs which she depicted as being positive and pleasing. Paul expressed being in the middle and hearing stories from both sides (Africans and African Americans). He explained that his talent and passion for basketball allowed him to play with African Americans and form friendships. He says,
“It was a match of respect. When you have a talent, they will respect you as a player, then as a person. You are equal even if you don’t speak the language.”

Basketball broke the barrier for Paul and prevented potential negative experiences. When asked if his relationship would be the same had it not been for basketball, he responds, “If I didn’t play basketball or sucked at it on the court, I would not have gained the level of respect and would have become a joke.” After he formed friendships with them, his African American friends have told Paul “jokingly” that his skills made him lucky in enabling them to “kick it with him” Tom also feels that one (African) needs to have something to offer in order to be friends with African Americans. For example, during his Masters program, he met and became good friends/roommates with two Senegalese men who were popular basketball players on campus. Many African Americans who ignored his greetings in the past suddenly became interested and wanted to be his friend. Though many of the participants were frustrated and hurt with African American’s lack of knowledge about Africa, as well as with the lack of bonding between them, they recognize that African Americans are part of the brainwash perpetuated by the media. All participants agree that what creates and fuels this ignorance, stereotype and prejudice about Africa and its people is the media. All of them expressed how disappointing and demeaning it is to witness the media intentionally choosing to portray their origin and culture in a single story, one inundated with stories of military coups, hunger, disease, and poverty. In exploring the relationship between stereotypes and the media, Petersson (2006) writes that the media’s depiction of non-European immigrants as an economical and social burden (or as individuals needing to be
taken care of by benevolent protectors in the host society), and as exotic human beings makes immigrants vulnerable for harassment from the larger public.

Low Acculturation as a Protective Factor against Acculturative Stress

The experiences of cultural conflicts and discrimination inflicts negative affects (anger, frustration, disappointment, shame, sadness, loneliness) on the well beings of Black African immigrants. However, participants utilize their own resources to diffuse the pain of acculturative stress. Low acculturation, adherence to cultural practices and values, helps to insulate black African immigrants from stressful experiences. For instance, to eradicate loneliness, Tom used food and his passion for soccer to create a community around him. When he lived in the dorms during his early school years, he would be the only one left in the building during the weekend. He started cooking and organizing soccer tournament. After a while, he became popular and his place became the “hang out” area. He says, “The only way you can survive is to create a community wherever you go.” Steven would also cook and invite African friends which became an outlet to talk, release stress, and find solutions to their common problems. Other participants lived with other African immigrants and provided support for one another. Having someone who understands what they are going through and to be able to talk about shared experiences as well as to talk about strategies to overcome challenges is a form of therapy. Steven says, “Birds of the same feather fly together”.

Social support is a key component of low acculturation that participants use to distress. In examining the college transition experience of minority immigrant students, Eunyoung (2009) discovered that through social networks, students were able to relate to
others like themselves, build ethnic bonds and cultivate their ethnic identity, and mutually exchange help to acquire the patterns of behavior that enhances academic achievement. For participants, social network brings back the culture they were separated from and makes it alive, it makes them feel home, and their communal spirits get re-enacted. It helps them elude feeling lonely and lost. Social support further acts as a resource base for providing information. Julia commented on the fruitfulness of social support in helping her and her family from being lost in the busy and rigid routine life style of America. She drives with her family to Las Vegas, California to engage with the Cameroon community. Having parents around is also another form of social support that serves as a coping strategy. Paul praises his parents (who live abroad) for keeping him grounded and away from diving into destructive ways to deal with stress. For Grace, her parents talked to her about discrimination when she arrived in the U.S, they explained to her that it is part of life, and to always keep her head up and be proud of her roots. Therefore, she refuses to dwell on discriminative stress.

Conserving faith plays a crucial role in offsetting stress as well. Tom says, “We don’t and can’t control everything so having faith helps you digest all the challenges.” Listening to native music, celebrating holidays, being active in African communities, staying connected with families and friends in the native land through phone calls, emails, personal visits are all common ways participants employ to retain culture, to rejuvenate, and to avoid being lost. For instance, calling her family in Zimbabwe and listening to a Zimbabwean radio station everyday de-stresses and soothes Thelma’s mind and spirit. She says, “It makes me feel like I am back in my community.” The importance
of low acculturation is that not only is it a shield against the toxic of acculturative stress but it “speaks to who you are, you are non-existent without it” (Grace). Julia explains that maintaining values helps immigrants to stay grounded, humble, and to solve problems. Tim says, “Running away from culture, you will be lost. Assimilating would be going against nature: nature is so diverse and we are a reflection of that.” Therefore all participants commented on the imperativeness of low acculturation in order to keep their sanity and lead meaningful lives. For all participants, low acculturation restores their confidence, pride, and resilience in the face of stressful obstacles. Cuellar (1997), and Cuellar & Roberts (1984), and Heilemann et al. (2002) argue that low acculturation has not only been associated with adherence to the cultural values and behaviors of one’s home culture, but they have been found to protect the mental health and stress outcomes of individuals when they experience negative events. The argument of these aforementioned authors was clearly affirmed by participants of this study.

Padilla (1995) posits that discriminatory experiences in fact enhance low acculturation which in turn acts as a shield against racial encounters. For instance, participants testified that enduring stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination strengthened their pride and desire to retain their culture. Tibo, Grace, Paul, and Jackson talked about feeling powerful because they spoke multiple languages than the people who made fun of their accent or language skills. Participants also felt confident and proud for demonstrating broader world knowledge. Tom expressed his strong pride as well as his desire to teach Americans about Africa. Participants described that they are prouder than ever to be an African as a result of their status as a triple minority.
Summary

In this chapter, the data from the study was analyzed and discussed. Chapter five is a description of the conclusions and recommendations. The limitations of this study and the implications for social work practice and policy are also discussed.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the conclusions extracted from his study. This chapter will include a discussion of the findings pertaining to what it means to be a black African immigrant in the United States (cultural and racial adjustments) as well as the moderating effects of low acculturation on acculturative stress. In addition, this chapter will discuss future recommendations, explain the limitations of the study, and outline the implications for social work policy and practice.

Conclusions

Although the nature and degree of adjustment difficulties experienced by immigrants in general have been shown to vary as a function of many different factors (degree of English language proficiency, degree of social acceptance in the host country, disparities in cultural differences, and amount of time spent in the U.S., and etc.), few prior studies have focused specifically on the experience of African immigrants (Kamaya, 2001). Kamaya re-emphasized the need for further studies of African immigrants that include respondents from various parts of Africa to investigate adjustment issues, and aspects of racism that keep many African immigrants invisible. She deems that studies that examine these variables qualitatively with individual interviews are needed to provide a rather depth, richness, and complexity. As such, the intent of this study was to examine particular cultural and racial adjustment issues, their relationship to stress
(impact on well-being) as well as the impact of low acculturation as a protective factor in a sample of black African immigrants.

Prior investigations such as Constantine et al. (2004), and Nebedurn-Ezeh (1997) have documented that African immigrants face unique stressors and concerns related to their adjustment to the U.S. culture. The finding of this research supported the assumption that black African Immigrants fall prey to various stress factors due to their cultural and racial background, which can be detrimental to their welfare (emotional, mental, and physical health). Participants in this study reported a range of acculturation problems upon coming to the U.S. Of particular note were the facts that all of the interviewees indicated mismatch of cultural values between the native and host country as well as prejudicial and discriminatory treatments. The respondents addressed cultural conflicts in reference to the impersonality of the American society. All respondent sated feeling alienated from American society. The sense of alienation was attributed to the collision of their traditional African values with those of American where the respondents traditionally were more communal oriented. In America, society is oriented to the individual. Nwadiora (2005) writes that in the African community, one has an obligation to live up to the community’s expectation. All participants reported feeling homesick, isolated, and lonely as a result.

Participants also addressed the issue of daily racial degrading, including stereotypes and discrimination which can impede social adjustment and economic mobility. This racial discrimination is a new phenomenon for most of the respondents with the exception of those who lived in Europe prior to migrating to the U.S. They
expressed their bewilderment at the depth of racism that devalues African humanity. African immigrants have grown up in contexts in which their racial or cultural groups represent the numerical majority (Bagley & Young, 1998). Therefore, experiencing racial discrimination may be a relatively new phenomenon (Adeleke, 1998; Mori, 2000; Winkelman, 1994). Furthermore, African immigrants have certain expectations and assumptions about what their lives will be like when they move to the U.S., and they may experience disappointment, anger, resentment, depression, and cultural shock when their experiences or assumptions are unsupported (Mori; Puritt, 1978). This only exacerbated their acculturative stress.

The results of this research are also consistent with prior investigation and literature noting the benefits of low acculturation in offering immigrants a culturally based protective factor against stressful events and enhancing their well-beings (Alba, 2005). Preserving cultural practices and values by any means (social support/network, faith, language, holiday, food, and etc.) helps black African immigrants cope with acculturative stress factors (discrimination and cultural conflicts). The findings prove the importance of African immigrants’ maintaining social connections with individuals who can validate their sense of self and ways of being. All participants reported that these connections reflect their cultural values and provide them a sense of communal belonging (Grills, 2000). Furthermore, social support networks offer critical ways of coping with acculturative stress.

Recommendations

Morris (2001) suggests in his study that professionals who work with African
Americans be culturally competent diagnosticians with African American clients. However, Morris (2001) admits neither of these tasks is easy, and suggests that these tasks require ongoing supervision, literature searches, workshops, and personal growth. These tasks are not professionally overwhelming; all of these tasks contribute to skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are more congruent with being a culturally competent therapist, diagnostician, service provider and evaluator (Morris). Keeping in mind the challenges that black African immigrant face, the scarcity of research, and the ultimate goal of meaningfully serving them, this researcher agrees with Morris. In addition to ongoing supervision, literature searches, workshops, and personal growth, social workers need to go further. Professionals should enter African communities they are attempting to serve, learn about them, discover the support systems that are already in place, and interweave their own lived experiences, both professional and personal, with the communities’ reality. With this new understanding of the immigrants’ experiences, social workers and helping professionals alike will be much better equipped to serve African immigrants effectively.

Moreover Berger (2004) states that helping professionals/service providers need to ask themselves the following questions: 1) How can these stories of immigrants help develop informed interventions?; 2) What should the nature of services be to best address their needs?; and 3) How can the responses of the participants inform service development and delivery? Helping professionals should work towards preventing depression, emotional stress, and the many losses that coincide with acculturation experiences. It should always be recognized that African immigrants are not a
homogenous cohort. Their resettlement needs differ and all of them cannot be treated in the same way. The researcher hopes that this study will be applied by social workers and other service providers.

Limitations

This exploratory finding should be considered in light of several potential limitations. First due to the sample size (ten participants), generalizability of the findings to all African immigrants is not possible. Second, since this was a qualitative study, it might be difficult to replicate. Third, face-to-face process of collecting data may have resulted in eliciting a bias response. Fourth, the study is limited to the extent that it is based on one set of researcher’s interpretation of one set of data pertaining to the acculturation experiences of black African immigrants. Although the researcher attempted to account for biases and expectations in the context of analyzing the data, it is possible that the researcher’s perception uniquely influenced some aspects of the research such as the formulation of research questions, which in turn affected the data acquired (Cresswell, 2003). Fifth, the findings might also be limited because the researcher analyzed the data by combining all the different country subgroups into one larger group of African immigrants. Although there are individual differences associated with racial adjustment difficulties, it is vital to note that black African immigrants do share some fundamental similarities (Essandoh, 1995). However, the results are still deemed reliable and usable.
Implications for Social Work Policy and Practice

As the United States continues to experience an enormous influx of African refugees and immigrants, it generates a number of challenges for the social work profession. It is the mission of the social work profession to protect and enhance the well being of all persons especially of minority groups (NASW, 2009). In order to achieve this code of ethics, social workers must first gain understanding of the psychological and sociocultural experiences of black African immigrants through the acculturation process. Once they gain this knowledge, social workers will be better equipped to assist and advocate for this particular population. It is the hope of this researcher that information provided in this study will offer valuable information when confronted with this challenging responsibility.

On a micro level of practice, social works and other helping professions can utilize this type of study to increase their knowledge and awareness about the cultural and racial backgrounds of this population as well as the challenges they face. Most importantly, social workers should be aware of the value placed on interdependent relationships and connections by many African immigrants so that they avoid erroneously pathologizing these immigrants’ strong reliance on families/friends/community members for support. It is also imperative that social service programs and interventions be culturally competent, and engrain approaches compatible with the immigrants’ values.

On the meso level of practice, social workers can utilize the importance of African cultural value of family and community interdependence, and integrate it to their intervention plan. African immigrants who lose their connection to communality as a
result of migrating to the U.S can benefit tremendously from this type of approach. Furthermore, social workers can engage in outreach efforts to dismantle stigmas around seeking mental/emotional health services. They can further educate African immigrants about various forms of discrimination and oppression they might experience as members of their racial group along with ways to address this type of racism when encountered. Holding workshops or educational programs about Africa and its people in communities, and eliciting media support can help dismantle stereotypes as well.

On the macro level of practice, social workers should strive to engage in the crafting of policies so that the needs and concerns of cultural minority groups are addressed. They should advocate for policies that incorporate non-Eurocentric theoretical models and interventions. Other ways social workers can advocate for their clients on this level is to lobby politicians regarding improved treatments and services for minority immigrants, and additional financial resources to create more trainings and programs that enrich cultural competency as well as expand educational and outreach programs.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the cultural and racial challenge black African immigrants face as they attempt to make a new life in the United States, and how low acculturation alleviates acculturative stress. The results of this study underscore the need for increased understanding of black African immigrants during their acculturation process. It is the researcher’s contention that more research studies be devoted in the future that further examines the qualitative domains identified in this study. In particular, cultural adjustment issues, discriminatory experiences, and mental health issues and
access to social services. Future research should include a broader sample of respondents from all African countries. These approaches can increase the practitioner’s understanding of and ability to advocate for the black African immigrant population. They can also illuminate critical information about how practitioners (social workers, counselors and etc.) could better intervene to address cultural adjustment difficulties in this population. Research of this nature will inform researchers, practitioners, and policy makers of the knowledge base of the prevalence of discriminatory experience and their impact on the well being of African immigrants. Kershaw (1992) argues that the black experience is worthy of researching and can enrich and educate others about human beings; can change the negative images of black folks through emancipator research. This type of research is a great importance in order to inform fields such as social work, and increase effective programs and interventions with this growing population.

It would also be valuable that future researchers explore the extent to which approaches and interventions applied in training programs address the cultural needs of African immigrants (Parham & Parham, 2002). Additionally, further research on the examination of the efficacy of culture specific coping behaviors among African immigrants especially as they relate to African centered world views and principles may inform social workers and the likes about the types of interventions that would be most effective for this overlooked population. Moreover, it has been argued that biculturalism (adherence to both the home and the host society’s culture) has psychological advantages, versus only low or high acculturation levels (Padilla, 1995). In the words of one participant, “It’s wealthy to have both cultures: it’s good to take what’s good from both.”
Perhaps the next steps in this line of research are to investigate the advantages of biculturalism among African immigrants in addition to the benefits of low acculturation. Due to the dearth of literature devoted to African immigrants, this researcher hopes that this study will bridge that gap.
APPENDIX A

Consent to Participate as a Research Subject

You are being asked to participate in research that will be conducted by Lelina Beru, a Master’s student in social work at the division of social work, California State University, Sacramento. The study will explore to understand stress factors and acculturation experiences of black African Immigrants in the United States.

**Procedures:**

You will be asked to participate in an interview regarding your experiences with acculturation and related stress factors. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You maintain the right to decline to answer any question or end the session at any time during the interview. You will not be required to disclose any personal information regarding your identity or any information that makes you feel uncomfortable. If you agree to participate in this study, I will set up a time and place at your convenience. The interview will approximately last 30-45 minutes. If you feel uncomfortable signing the consent form with your full name, you have the option of initialing it. The interview will be audio taped, which you will be asked to give a verbal consent in the beginning of the interview as well.

**Risks:**

The study presents a minimal risk since recalling stressful experiences may elicit an emotional response. Should you experience any psychological discomfort, please contact
The Wellness and Recovery Center
(916) 485- 4175
3815 Marconi Avenue, suit #1 Sacramento, CA 95821.
Monday 9:00-7:00 pm, Tuesday-Friday; 9:00- 6:00pm, and Saturday 10:00-6:00 pm.

Or

La Familia Counseling Center
(916) 452-3601
5523 34th St., Sacramento, CA 95820
Monday -Friday: 9:00-6:00pm

The agencies require no payment for the service they provide.

Benefits:

Even though, you will not receive any compensation for participating in this study, it is hoped that your experience will serve an educational purpose in raising awareness to the unique experiences and struggles of black African Immigrants as well as help develop resources that enhances the well being of this population.

Confidentiality:

All information is confidential and every effort will be made to protect your information. Your responses on the audiotape will be kept confidential. Information you provide on the consent form and on the audiotape will be stored separately in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s home. The researcher or transcriptionist will transcribe all audiotapes. The transcriptionist will be given only the tape and no other identifying information. All written analysis will only use fictitious names. The researcher’s thesis advisor will have
access to the transcriptions for the duration of the project. The final research report will not include any identifying information. All of the data will be destroyed upon completion of the project (June 2010).

**Compensation:**

Participants will receive no compensation for their participation in this project.

**Rights to withdraw:**

If you decide to participate in this interview, you can withdraw at any point. During the interview you can elect not to answer any specific question.

I have read the descriptive information on the Research Participation consent form. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary. My signature indicates that I have received a copy of the Research Participation consent form and I agree to participate in the study.

I ______________________________ agree to be audio taped.

______________________________     ________________________
Signature of Participant       Date

______________________________     ________________________
Initial of Participant        Date
If you have any question, you may contact me at

213 327-7250

lb754@saclink.csus.edu

Or, if you need further information, you may contact my thesis advisor:

Maria Dinis, Ph.D., MSW

C/o California State University, Sacramento

916-278-7161

dinis@csus.edu
APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

For the purpose of this study, definition of:

Acculturation: the process of adaptation in a new country

Low acculturation: adherence to one's home cultural values and behaviors

High acculturation: assimilation to the host country and less retention of cultural values and practices

What it means to be a black African Immigrant?

1. What are the challenges you faced when moving to the U.S.?
2. What positive impacts (pride, and cultural retention) did race play in your acculturation process?
3. What negative impacts (shame of one’s original culture, isolation, and assimilation) did race play in your acculturation process?
4. How has race affected your employment opportunities?
5. How has race affected your educational opportunities?
6. How has race affected your housing opportunities?
7. How has race affected your daily life?
8. How have your relationship been like with African Americans?
9. How have you been received within the African American community?

Acculturation, stress and its effect on the well being of African immigrants

1. How would you describe your stress as a result of your experiences as a black African immigrant?
2. How has stress affected your emotional health?
3. How has stress affected your mental health?
4. How has stress affected your relationship with others such as family members?

*How low acculturation mediates stress*

1. What is the importance of low acculturation to you?
2. Has low acculturation been a coping mechanism in offsetting stress? If so, how?
3. How do you maintain low acculturation?
4. How have you improved in terms of your overall welfare as a result of low acculturation?
5. How have you improved in terms of your overall welfare as a result of high acculturation?
REFERENCES


The American Enterprise Institute.


Grant B. F., Stinson, P. S., et al. (2004). Immigration and lifetime prevalence of DSM-IV psychiatric disorders among Mexican Americans and non-Hispanics whites in the United States: Results from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and
Related Conditions. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*, 61, 1226-1233.


Yasemin, S. (2008). Assessing the need for mental health services among Turkish Immigrants in the U.S. *Dissertation abstracts international section B: The Sciences and Engineering, 68*(9-B), 6337.
