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Transition of African Adolescent Immigrants into Urban or Suburban Schools

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In the Division of Urban Educational Leadership

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by

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Abstract

The research study design was to gleam some insight of how Black African Adolescent Immigrant (BAAI) students adjust to their new American school culture by critically analyzing that transition process. The existing research literature revealed that immigrant students experience adjustment problems when they enroll in American schools (Traoré, 2004; Brewer, 2005; Goyol, 2006). Factors such as discrimination, language barriers, cultural changes, social change and customs affected their transition. It was important to investigate since the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act and the Diversity Visa Program which increased African Immigration within the last twenty years as well the number of BAAI students entering American schools, also to investigate the affects of their transition academically and socially.

The research study used the epistemological foundation of constructionism, in particular to aid and understand this study. This philosophical position was theoretically supported by Critical Race Theory (CRT), Post-Colonial Theory (PCT), and Assimilation Theory which helped to examine the plight and adjustment issues faced by BAAI students. Under the CRT category, the Storytelling methodology emerged as a way for giving individuals an opportunity to share his or her experiences through his or her own lenses or own perspective. This qualitative exploratory research design gave direction for a research project of 12 students and 7 adults.

The researcher used a questionnaire instrument to collect storytelling information from BAAI students and their parents. Once collected, the data was analyzed and interpreted to determine whether or not there was a correlation between a smooth transition of BAAI students and their social and academic success in American schools. The results of this study indicate that BAAI students did experience some adjustment issues during their transition into United States schools. Despite adjustment difficulties they were able to obtain a smooth transition.

Dedication

First of all I would like to acknowledge Jesus Christ who is the center of my life for giving me an opportunity to be where I am today. I thank Him for his continuous goodness, his gift of learning, and his strength.

Also I want to thank my husband Eddie who has stood by me for the past twelve years of my continuous educational pursuit. He was always there to debate with me and challenge my thinking beyond what is on the written pages of the materials. He also gave me encouragement that I can do it even when I did not have confidence in myself. Thank you for what you are and thank you for being there through thick and thin. I love you for all your encouragement and support throughout the years.

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Chapter 1

The Problem

Introduction

The plane landed smoothly. As an eleven year old child, my only thought before the plane touched down was, “Is this the place everyone in Nigeria talked about, where the streets are paved with gold, there is no suffering, the best education, and the finest things in life?” Next, my thoughts quickly changed to fears of new and unknown experiences. All I was concerned with was adjusting to this new environment and making new friends. Once I arrived in the United States, I was filled with fears of a difficult adjustment process because as I heard the native language of the United States I was reminded of my inability to speak the English language and the vast challenge that posed was overwhelming.

The Black African Adolescent Immigrants (BAAI) students in this study all received some level of formal education before 40

their migration into United States Schools. On the other hand, my pre-transition was much different from theirs. In my native country, I did not receive formal training in English before migration. So my lack of English before migration had an impact on how much ease I would have adapting to the American youth culture. This lack of English proficiency had a great effect on how easily I transitioned into schools in the United States.

As a BAAI student entering a new urban school environment, I wondered how I would make friends and be accepted because I sounded, dressed, and looked different. I spoke Hausa and Edo language.

Neither language was used in the United States school system. This made my transition process very challenging because I was not able to communicate with my peers, staff or my teachers. Not only was I unable to communicate verbally in English but I was also unable to read, write, or communicate my ideas and thoughts in English. Since I was not able to communicate with my peers making friends was a challenge in the beginning because others could not understand me nor could I understand them.

I eventually learned to speak and read English at my new school. My guardians at home were unable to tutor me. During this time the school did not have an English as a Second Language class to assist me with the transition process of learning the basics of the English language. One of the ways that I enhanced my English language skills outside of the classroom was by watching American television. I received no special treatment in school because of my language barrier. The expectation from my teachers was the same for me as they had for the other students in the class.

The acquisition of American English was the most difficult transition for me. It was difficult to be accepted by my peers because no matter how hard I tried, when I spoke I sounded nothing like them. As a result, I received many questions such as “Why do you sound so funny when you talk?” “Where are you from?” “What language did you speak in your native country?” Some of the questions were for my peers to gain new knowledge, but many of the questions were asked only to make fun of me. I usually tried to explain that I spoke another language because I was from another country, and that I was just learning the English language.

My first year in a public school in the suburbs was difficult but considering the difficulties associated with transition I adjusted as well as can be expected to the middle school experience. The challenges of transition continued during my high school years. I finally

received tutoring so that I was able to achieve at the same level academically as my peers. The only program or organization that assisted me was the school's tutoring program for academics.

During this transition period, gaining new friendships was very important. I found myself explaining many times why I spoke, dressed and sounded differently. I was often teased and picked on for my appearance and dress. I quickly learned that I must try to assimilate by adjusting to the ways of the youth culture in America. The easiest thing for me at that time was to quickly adjust by changing my dress style. I quickly started wearing the latest youth fashions. This did not give me complete acceptance, but some of my peers started talking to me.

Making friends continued to be a great challenge. I found that those who accepted me as I was were those students that were not considered popular. I was still teased by my peers regarding the way I articulated the language. I learned that I will sometimes be teased for the way I spoke regardless of how hard I tried to speak "proper American English." Being socially unaccepted was hard to deal with as an adolescent. Making friends was a challenge because I had to worry about them accepting me as a foreigner and this made my transition even more difficult. At that time it was not considered "cool" to be friends with a foreigner. I tried to gravitate towards those peers who did not mind being associated with an African. The friends that I made sometimes took advantage of the fact that I had such a great need and desire for their friendship. Sometimes they were my friends and sometimes they would decide they did not want to be my friends because if I refuse to do everything they wanted. Friendship was pivotal because I had no brothers, sisters or neighbors to play with at home so in school my classmates were the only people my age that I had an opportunity to interact with. Additionally I found myself having to be very nice and funny to my peers so they would accept my differences. Ironically, in order to keep the friends I did have, I had to accept them with all their flaws.

In part, because of my experience I believe that BAAI students need a voice. Many times they are overlooked and are not given the resources they need to help them transition into the American school system. For example, they are no longer considered Africans, they are re-labeled racially and culturally as African-American students because there is not a category in most school systems that would distinguish them as Africans, only as African-Americans (Traore, 2006).

Giving a brief description of my experiences as a Black African adolescent immigrant, gives me greater depth and understanding to my role as the researcher. Therefore as a researcher I strongly desire to give BAAI students a voice through the Storytelling process. Through this process BAAI students would have an opportunity to share their own transitional experiences through their own lens. Because of my experience as a BAAI student it was easy for me to gain the confidence of the research group.

When I initially made contact with the subjects for this research study, it took only a short period of time before the BAAI students saw me as one of them and accepted me as someone who was committed to letting their voices be heard through the Storytelling process. It has been a wonderful experience being allowed to present a vehicle so that the voices of BAAI students and their concerns about their transition experiences in American schools would be heard. I am also very excited about this research enabling me to possibly discover strategies and processes that may be helpful to all BAAI students.

Region to be Studied

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory research project was to investigate the transition processes of adolescents from the sub-Saharan region of Africa into American school systems. The Sahara desert was the geo-political line of demarcation between Northern and Southern

Africa. The focus group of this study contained sub-Saharan African students who were identified as Black African Adolescent Immigrants (BAAI). The acronym BAAI will be used from this point forward to identify this group. The map below shows the southern region of Africa which was studied.

http://images.search.com

The BAAI students in the study that immigrated to the United States of America to attend school were defined by the United States Census Bureau as Blacks. This definition was very significant because it put BAAI students in the same category as African-American students, who were also defined as Black by the United States Census Bureau. Clearly there were differences in the manner in which these two subgroups of students assimilate into American schools. African-American students have been exposed to American culture since birth, and

BAAI students must make a cultural adjustment in addition to any other adjustments that may be needed for successful assimilation into the American school system.

Statement of the Problem

Many immigrants enter the United States yearly in hopes of beginning a new and better life. They bring their dreams and desires with them desiring to leave behind all struggles that they faced in their native land. This journey included BAAI students who come to the United States with their parents to receive an education that may or may not have been available to them in their native country. When these BAAI students entered the public schools they have high expectations from their parents. They may not be aware of the adjustment issues ahead of them. When BAAI students entered urban or suburban schools they are not seen any different than black Americans but are heard differently because of their accent. Their accent may or may not follow them through their elementary, middle, high school and college years. Their accent may be viewed as a major identifier that separates them from the black Americans who are native.

Studies of international students revealed that some students experienced adjustment problems in United States schools. Certain factors such as discrimination, language barriers, cultural changes, and customs affect their transition. It was important to investigate how transitioning affects the academic and social success of BAAI students. This could help schools to improve the transition process of immigrant students, and aid school districts in improving adequate yearly progress (AYP) data.

Several studies have been published that suggest that international students on the college level experience some problems transitioning into United States schools. On the other hand, there were limited studies on BAAI students and their difficulties of transitioning into United States schools. A research study by Traore (2004) of 15 Black African Adolescent Immigrant

students showed that some of the students did experience some form of transitional difficulties into United States schools. Another study by Ighodaro (1997) of Somalian students discussed the adjustment and adaptation issues faced by Somalian students within the Metro-Toronto school district. This study focused on the adjustment problems Somalian students faced in their new school environment in the Canadian society. Additional similar studies need to be performed in order to gain a better understanding of methods Black African Adolescent Immigrant students use to foster a smooth transition into United States schools.

Questions to be Answered

A series of interview questions were developed to elicit a Storytelling response about the transition experiences of BAAI students (Appendix F) and their parents (Appendix G) in American elementary and/or secondary urban or suburban schools. Next, the questions were posed to BAAI students and their parents through face-to-face interviews. Finally, the Storytelling experiences were transcribed and analyzed in an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What problems were encountered by BAAI students and their parents when transitioning or interacting with their peers?
2. Does a smooth cultural assimilation by BAAI students impact their academic success in American schools? Is the impact positive or negative?
3. What evidence exists of a strong or weak correlation between a smooth cultural assimilation and academic success?
4. What strategies/processes were helpful from parents' and students' perspective? Why? What strategies/processes were not helpful? Why?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge of factors that influenced the transition processes of BAAI students migrating from the continent of Africa into American elementary and/or secondary urban or suburban schools. Specifically, the study investigated the transition processes and the intended effects on the social and academic successes of BAAI students. Also the study intended to seek and identify effective strategies used by BAAI students and their parents to navigate through the transition process.

Importance of the Study

A review of the literature reveals there were limited studies on the transition of BAAI students in United States urban or suburban schools. There were not enough data or research studies that adequately address the struggles of BAAI students as they transition into American schools. The goal of this study was to reveal and give some insight into some of the personal transitional experiences of BAAI students through storytelling. This study was significant because it will help make others aware of some of the transitional issues and adjustment problems that BAAI students face daily in their American school experiences.

Outline the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 2 entitled Literature Review, is a summary of the existing studies that are relative to this research study on Immigrant students. The chapter began with an introduction followed by the following immigrant and immigration data: immigration legislation within the United States, current world demographics of immigrants, current demographics of immigrants in the United States and existing literature and demographics on BAAI students in the United States schools. Next is a review and definition of the following theories: Critical Race Theory focused on Storytelling, Post-colonial Theory focused on language, colonial mentality, and Black media

image, Assimilation theories focused on Classical Assimilation Theory (CAT), Segmented Assimilation Theory (SAT), Acculturation, Cultural Assimilation, and Multiculturalism. Then there's a discussion on the studies of assimilation of African immigrants in the United States, effects of assimilation on schools and school leaders and conclusion.

Chapter 3 entitled Research Design and Methodology, gives a description of the research methodology and the design of the study. The chapter begins with an overview, followed by the epistemological position of the study, Post-colonial Theory, Post-colonial Theory and language, Assimilation Theory, Classical Assimilation Theory (CAT), Segmented Assimilation Theory, Cultural Assimilation, Critical Race Theory focused on Storytelling as methodology, methodology focused on the definition of the problem, research design, characteristics of the sample, data collection procedures, data recording, data checking, data analysis, potential risk and benefits, validity of the study, strengths and limitations, future research and conclusion.

Chapter 4 entitled Analysis of Data and Findings, lays out what was found in the research on BAAI students and presents the findings in Tables, Charts and Graphs. The chapter begins with an introduction, followed by a description of the data gathering methods, data organization, coding and collection and methods of analysis used to propose a solution to the problem investigated in the study. This was followed by a summarization of the researcher's field notes. A brief description of the responses of student and parent participants was followed by a description of the Relationship to previously cited research studies. In the next section of chapter four, the data was classified into three general categories pre, current and post-transition. Pre-transition data focused on language adjustment. Current and post transition data of BAAI students focused on social, academic adjustment. The post transition category of BAAI students also focused on a smooth transition. Pre-transition data on parents focused on language. Current

and post transition data on parents also focused on BAAI social and academic adjustment. Pre-transition data focused on parent versus student responses with English theme. The next section focused on social adjustment data and programs that helped with social adjustment comparing parent and student responses. The current-transition data focused on perceptions of academic requirements. Data from parents versus students and mothers versus fathers was compared for this set of data. Finally an analysis of how the initial hypothesis was tested and conclusions from the data were presented.

Chapter 5 Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations, summarizes the findings of the study drawing generalizations from majority views and giving some recommendations. The chapter begins by presenting the problem and the methodology. Next a summary of the findings is presented by pre-, current and post-transition categories. The conclusion focused on language adjustment, social adjustment, and academic adjustment as the most prevalent issues affecting BAAI students during their transition into United States schools. The implications and recommendations focused on English recommendation, social recommendation and academic recommendation.

Segments of African Nationals have chosen to migrate to the United States due to wars, droughts, political instability, very poor economic conditions, and dreams of better equipping themselves to support their families. This coupled with the United States willingness to allow legal immigration with an open door policy for foreign nationals sets the stage for their arrival.

The goal of this study was to investigate the views of BAAI students and their parents while they are in their cultural transition into a new land. The objectives are to identify whether or not some of the tools that BAAI students and their parents used to transition socially and academically into United States schools. Furthermore this study aims to discover what the role of

the BAAI parents are during the transition process and to discover what strategies or processes if any were helpful to BAAI students while transitioning into United States schools.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Adjustment – the process through which individuals become integrated into a new cultural environment.

Social Adjustment – when Black African Adolescent Immigrant students have socially adjusted to the school environment in American school and the student believe that they have adjusted to the youth culture of the school.

Academic Adjustment – when Black African Adolescent Immigrants are able to be successful and meet or exceed the academic demands that are required by the school or school district.

Assimilation Theory – the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. Usually they are immigrants or isolated minorities who, through contact and participation in the larger culture, gradually give up most of their former culture traits and take on the new traits to such a degree that socially they become indistinguishable from other members of the society.

Acculturation – The process of adapting the culture or traits or social pattern of another group.

Classical Assimilation –It proposed that immigrants develop increasing assimilation into either the native-born culture or the culture of the dominant group as they obtain increasing economic success and access to educational opportunities.

Smooth Transition – The ability to adjust with minimal difficulties. The ability to experience the school environment the same way as their peers in America. Smooth meaning without irregularities; without unusual difficulties or problems. Transitioning from one culture to another without major hurdles. For example: eating the school lunch, making friends, being accepted by peers, dressing as their peers, learning the American vernacular.

Multiculturalism - basically states that all cultures can exist equally in the United States like a cultural salad which is one own sample tossed salad bowl.

Cultural assimilation (often called merely *assimilation*) is an intense process of consistent integration whereby members of an ethno-cultural group, typically immigrants, or other minority groups, are "absorbed" into an established, generally larger community. This presumes a loss of many characteristics which make the newcomers different. A region or society where assimilation is occurring is sometimes referred to as a melting pot.

Critcal Race Theory – Critical Race Theory (CRT) was developed during the civil-rights era of the 1960's. CRT is a movement of activists and scholars who are interested in studying the relationship among race, racism, and power that continues to persist in the United States culture. CRT implies that the everyday experiences of racial discrimination, identity problems and racial dynamics have a direct link to the United States hegemony and it history of race problems.

Storytelling – One of the six tenets of Critical Race Theory. A person telling their own personal experience through their own lens. This gives a voice to the voiceless.

Post-Colonial Theory – is defined as the changes in cultural, educational, legal and linguistic perspective that occurred in groups of people as a result of colonization.

Social Constructivism – How groups of people view the world and how their construction of the world can be seen and thought of as valid and truth.

Constructivism – Meaning is only in the mind. Reality equals how a person sees the world.

Adaptation – the process which looks at how and at what rate immigrants adapted to the new culture of a different society.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Immigrants move from one part of the world to the United States for many reasons. They come to join relatives, seek political asylum, to take advantage of economic benefits, to obtain refugee status, to increase their chances for a better life, to become educated in the American school system, or they come as traditional immigrants who simply want to relocate (Bornstein, 2006). Some people leave their native country and continent despite fear for their life, some for political reasons, but in the present day, most immigrants come to America for the economic benefits (Gordon, 1998).

Gordon (1998) proposed that immigration should be looked at as a series of pushes and pulls. She defines pushes as a lack of: economic development, opportunity, freedom, and political stability in any particular country. Push factors are any pressures on people that cause them to leave their own country and migrate into another country. Rather than facing war, religious, tribal, or political persecution, they choose to undertake a journey that may be fraught with uncertainty and suffering. Globalization sparked by advancing economics in developing countries of the world has left some continents such as Africa behind and at the lowest end of the economic spectrum. Because of the grave economic and political instability in Africa, the citizens of African countries have developed a strong desire for a life in a more politically stable, more democratic, and preferably, more economically stable country, such as the United States.

Pull factors are things that draw people such as an attractive force, to something else. Gordon (1998) says that pull factors include host countries with incentives that are used to draw

immigrants such as: immigration and refugee policies, Anglophone background from colonalization, and historical ties.

Therefore many immigrants have risked life and limb to obtain a better life. Examples include Africans traveling in fragile rafts to Europe, Asians hidden in the containers of cargo ships, Latinos crossing the desert, buying fake green cards and non-immigrants existing in the twilight of being an undocumented worker in a foreign land and risking low wages, no healthcare, and even jail. These are some of the dangers some immigrants are willing to face for a chance to get to the "promised land," a land of safety, security, and the chance to prosper.

Stories about immigration are frequently front page news. There is a strong anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States at present. This is reflected in the effort to produce legislation that would slow down immigration as well as to turn illegal aliens into felons. News programs constantly elicit fear and concern as they discuss "terrorist immigrants" sneaking over the borders with dirty bombs or with plans to blow up airplanes. This research concentrates on the legal immigrants who comprise the majority of immigrants who enter the United States, and the great struggles they may face as they try to obtain a basic education in the American school system.

Constructionism is the philosophy chosen to be the epistemological foundation for understanding and undertaking the proposed exploratory research project focusing on BAAI students. According to Crotty (2003) constructionism is the view that "all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). This philosophy provides a base understanding of Black African Adolescent Immigrants (BAAI) students who have emigrated into the United States

school systems from their native lands in Africa. The philosophy of constructionism does not allow either truly subjective or truly objective analysis. According to constructionism, “we do not create meaning, we construct meaning. We have something to work with. What we have to work with is the world and objects in the world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 44). Using this model, a description of the African immigrant transition process can be developed by constructing it from engaged thoughtfulness about the struggles, information, and ideas gleaned from BAAI students, their parents, researchers and the community dealing with their transition into the American school culture.

Social Constructionism, in particular, is the explicit position that one must take as the focal point because it concentrates on culture, because this research is basically looking at the cultural transitions that African students must make in order to fit into the culture of the American school system. The culture of a community serves as a guideline for revealing and communicating meaning. So, at the core of understanding social constructionism is the need to understand two cultures that are located on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Comparing African cultures with the American cultures in terms of language, assimilation, and cultural transition allows the differences to be noted in the behavior of BAAI students in everyday school life when compared to their American classmates. Crotty says that: “Culture is best seen as the source rather than the result of human thought and behavior” (Crotty, 1998, p. 53).

Social constructs are layouts of human actions and thinking in this context is how meaning is developed (Crotty, 1998). Social constructs can be used as a method of analyzing aspects of our educational culture so that we may identify ways for teachers, administrators, parents, and staff to help African immigrant adolescents to adjust to American school systems. This is why social constructionism is the best epistemological fit from which to view and

understand the cultural transition of BAAI students. The two theoretical perspectives that the researcher used to help explore and understand the cultural transition of BAAI students are Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Post-colonial Theory (PCT).

Since the beginning of civilization, people have traveled far from their native lands and consequently have had to adjust to life in different and strange lands. The United States population is composed entirely of immigrants including the American Indians who were nomads that traversed the Bering Straits to get to the North American continent. The next substantial wave of immigrants came in the form of Europeans who were looking for new wealth and freedom from various types of persecution.

Immigration Legislation within the United States

Immigrants moving to other parts of the world have always had bumpy, turbulent and choppy times. The western slave trade, which was initiated by the Portuguese and began in 1441 on the West Coast of Africa, gave new meaning to the choppy experiences of immigrants. The United States was settled by European immigrants who were sent to colonize North America and later to subjugate both the indigenous population and Africans who were forcefully transported as immigrant slaves (Olsen, 1997). Initially both Europeans and Africans were brought to America as indentured servants and both endured forms of slavery. More than 65 million people emigrated from Europe to the western hemisphere between the 17th and 20th centuries; another 20 million people were forcibly removed from Africa and brought to the new world (Rong & Preissle, 1998). Even though estimates range from ten to over one hundred million who were forcibly removed from Africa most died in the middle passage and approximately ten to twenty million arrived in either the Caribbean Islands, South America or Europe and others that survived the trip ended up working in the United States (Rodney, 1981).

After the American Revolutionary War, congress produced the Naturalization Act. "The Naturalization Act of 1790 only allowed citizenship to be granted to immigrant whites. In other words, slaves and African immigrants were denied the right to become United States citizens" (Spring, 2001).

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 declared that "persons born in the United States…[are] declared to be citizens of the United States" (Spring, 2001, p. 36). Passing of the 13th Amendment abolished slavery, and the 14th Amendment to the Constitution provided citizenship to former slaves after the Civil War ended.

Spring (2001) goes on to state that concurrent with the "separate but equal ruling" the citizenship rights of African Americans in the 1880's and 1890's swiftly disappeared in southern states as state laws were invoked to restrict the right of black citizens to vote, create segregated public institutions, and restrict their judicial rights. "From 1891-1900 immigration data shows only 350 Africans coming to the United States. Between 1900 and 1950, over 31,000 Africans immigrated to the United States, an average of well over 6,000 per decade, "still a trickle in the overall number of immigrants" (Gordon, 1998, p. 83). Full citizenship for African-Americans was not achieved until the 1950's and 1960's, when federal voting rights and the Civil Rights Act made it possible for African Americans to vote (Spring, 2001).

The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 reduced the vast numbers of Asian and Southern European immigrants entering the United States after World War I. However, numbers of third world immigrants entering the United Sates have increased dramatically since the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965 also known as the Hart-Celler Act. This act abolished the national origin quotas that had been in place since the Immigration Act of 1924. The act was the work of Black Americans during the Civil Rights era who worked hard to change immigration laws and

open the doors for all races. With an increasing number of immigrants crossing the United States borders, “over ninety percent of recent immigrants come from non-English speaking countries” (*Immigrant education*, 2005, p. 2). Schools are receiving increasing numbers of immigrant students with different ethnic backgrounds, mostly from third world nations and who are mostly people of color.

Current Demographic

World Current Demographic

According to statistics, the world population has increased dramatically from 4.5 billion in 1980 to over 6.6 billion people in 2007 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). The world population has not stabilized within the last 26 years, Stabilization being defined as a balance between the death rate and the birth rates. Currently, the world birth rate is greater than the world death rate. The number of deaths exceeds the number of births in developed countries. However, in developing countries, the number of births far exceeds the number of deaths. The difference between birth rates and death rates help us to determine whether the world’s population will increase or decrease (Bowman, 2006; Harris, 2006).

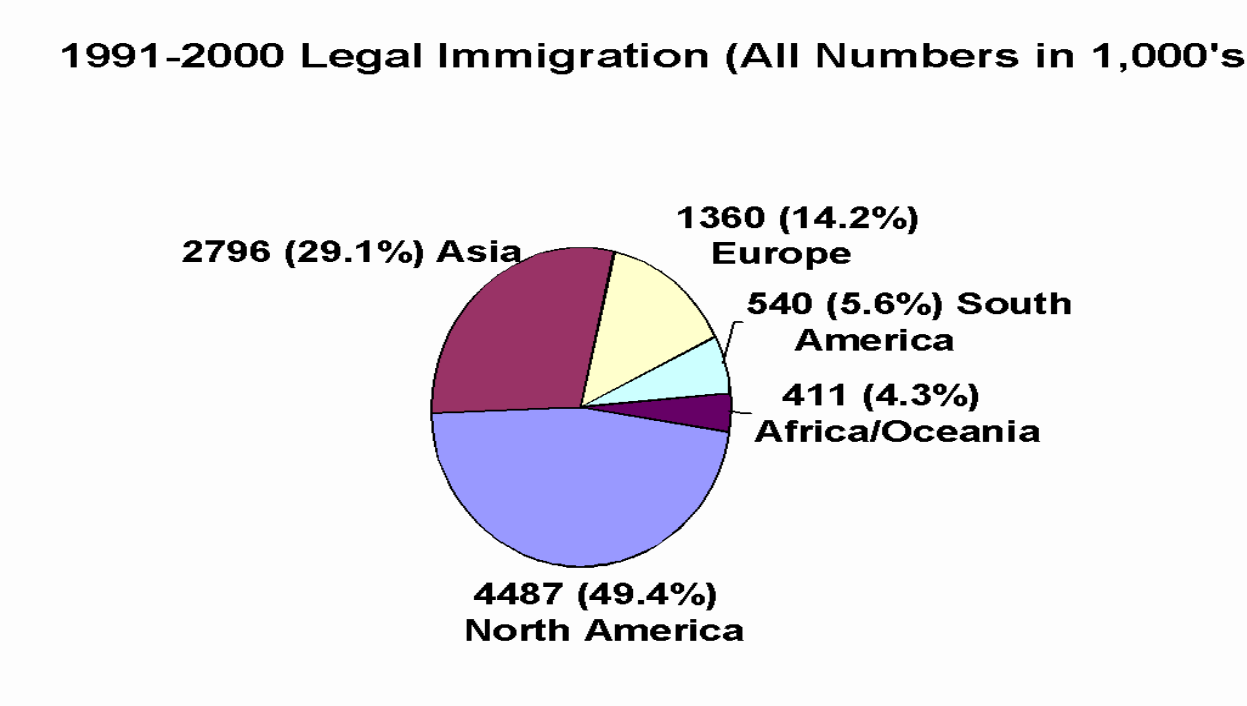
The birth rates in most developing nations are occurring at very low rates. And the mortality or death rate of the world’s population has slowed down in developing nations do to advances in science technology and food production despite wars, natural disasters and famines (Demeny & McNicoll, 2003; Harris, 2006; Tarver, 1996). It is estimated that “by 2050, world population will reach nine billion people. That would constitute a 39.5 percent jump from today’s population of 6.6 billion, and more than six times the 1.6 billion people believed to have existed in 1900” (Bowman, 2006).

Projections are that by “by 2050, Africa’s population, both northern and Sub-Saharan will surge from 900 million to almost two billion, while South Asia’s population is projected to swell from 1.6 billion to nearly 2.5 billion. At the same time, Europe’s population is expected to shrink from 730 million to 660 million” (Bowman, 2006, p. 1). These world figures give us a very good indication of the capacity of regions such as Europe to send migrants or to receive immigrants.

Human population growth in developed nations is mainly based upon immigration from developing nations from continents such as Africa. The number of children born to a woman in the developing world is double the number of children born to a woman living in one of the world’s more developed regions. Fertility remains high in Sub-Saharan Africa were there are six births per woman, on average and in North Africa four births per woman (Harris, 2006, "U.S. Bureau of census: International data base", 1999). In the future the majority of world growth will be determined entirely by developing regions such as Africa with high fertility rates (Harris, 2006).

Current Demographic of Immigrants in the United States

The Census Bureau data shows that the foreign-born immigrant population in the United States, both legal and illegal reached 35 million in March of 2005. Immigrants account for 12.1 percent of the United States total population. Between “1965 and 1990 about 270,000 people were admitted each year based on a preference system, each with a numerical ceiling” (Gordon, 1998, p. 82). The following figure shows the percentages of people migrating to the United States from other continents.



Graphic provided by: (Center.

The data above clearly shows that African and Oceania immigrants migrating to the United States make up less than five percent of the total immigrant population. The first half of this decade has seen the greatest increase of immigrants entering the United States in the entire history of the country. The estimated 1.5 million new immigrants that arrive in the United States yearly account for the dramatic twenty percent increase of school aged immigrant children, which translates that one in five students in schools are foreign born (Camarota, 2005).

Finally, illegal immigration needs additional studies because over 50% of illegal immigrants give birth to children in the United States and these children swell projections of school enrollment. Some immigrant parents who are illegal chose to have babies with United States citizens because once the individuals give birth to the baby inside the United States, the baby becomes the anchor that keeps the whole family in the country and stops deportation. This can occur because section 1 of the 14th Amendment gives birthright citizenship to any human being born on United States soil. This is a developing crises situation for some who note that

illegal aliens are having babies to anchor themselves to America. The number of anchor Mexican, Spanish and Asian and other illegals are approximately 2 million, and these families increase the births and overall number of children in the United States (Dinan, 2005). It is believed that the illegal immigration will vastly increase student enrollment in the United States schools.

Existing literature and demographics on BAAI students in the United States Schools

Africans account for about 3% of United States immigrants minus the Oceanians in the figure above. Two particular policies that have made it easier for African immigrants to enter the United States are the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act and the Diversity Visa Program. Reform in the Diversity Visa Program from the Immigration Act of 1990 was aimed at promoting underrepresented countries and allowed up to 50,000 eligible Africans yearly to migrate to the United States (Takougang, 2003). By 1998 the second largest diversity lottery winners were Africans which increased their legal immigration from Africa by greater than 50% (Daniels, 2004).

The 2003 annual report from the National Center for Education Statistics says that the number of Black immigrant students enrolled in elementary through high school in the United States rose to 284,000. These adolescents and children were either born in another country or have at least one parent who is an immigrant. They account for 3.5% of the total elementary through high school population ("Statistical Abstract of the United States 2006", 2005).

One background study on international students revealed that those who had quick adjustments to United States culture scored higher on tests. The author also suggested that universities should spend more money on resources to aid their adjustment (Brewer, 2005). In 1954 there were 34,332 international students studying in the United States. In 1988 the number

increased to 356,000 and by 2003 the numbers had risen to 586,000 (Kishimoto, 2005; Mori, 2000; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994). All of these authors contend that the conditions are ripe for the numbers of international students in the United States to continue to increase. As a result of the increased numbers of international students in the United States a number of studies (Goyol, 2006) have attempted to address acculturation and problems that international students must face.

These are the topics that contribute to the increase of black immigrants growth in the United States that must be addressed. The majority of foreign born black immigrant children are coming from families with incomes that are lower than that of native families (Rong & Preissle, 1998). The data shows the number of African immigrants entering United States schools is far smaller than the numbers of Asian and Hispanic students (Rong & Brown, 2002).

In the 1960's, fewer than 125,000 foreign-born blacks lived in the United States which was less than one percent. In the year 2000, Africans made up approximately 3% of the immigrants entering the United States (Rong & Brown, 2002), and many of them are bringing their school age children with them. The numbers of African adolescent immigrants has increased in the United States schools. The schools are the first point of contact for transformation and the major vehicle of assimilation for these children.

"In 2000 35% of United States children were minority, nearly one fifth of them living in poverty, a figure that is expected to climb to more than 50% by 2040. 1 in 10 United States children were born outside of the United States, and 1 in 5 lived in a household headed by an immigrant" (Rong & Brown, 2002, p. 124). "Approximately 1,000 immigrant children enter the United States schools each day" (Rong & Brown, 2002, p. 125). In the last two decades immigrant children have accounted for virtually all of the 14 percent increase in enrollment in

the United States Schools. Between 1990 and 2000, enrollment in the United States schools by immigrants increased by 14 percent. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the size of the student body will double by 2100. Without the addition of immigrant school-aged children (approximately 250,000 per year), there will be no increase enrollment in the United States schools. Immigrant populations in the schools have tripled in the past 30 years. In 1970 immigrant students made up only 6.5 percent of immigrant students in the United States schools. In 2005 there were 10.3 million school children from immigrant families in the United States (Camarota, 2005). Currently in California almost half of new students starting school are immigrants or children of immigrants (Stewart, 2006).

Black immigrant children have a greater tendency to remain in school until they receive their high school diplomas than American born school children. In school black immigrant children are more likely to be ahead of their age group in their academic performance (Rong & Preissle, 1998). Rong and Preissle (1998) and explains this may reflect the fact they enter school at a early age and maintain satisfactory or better performance in school.

Some authors believe that the lower the age of the immigrant during the time of their migration, the greater chance of that individual assimilating and the greater possibility of full adjustment and competence in the new society (Berry, 1980; Berry, & Sam, D., 1997; Fuligni, 1998; Zhou, 1997)

Costigan and Leilkind (2004) adhere to classical assimilation and acculturation models, which say that with the passage of time, an immigrant culture will wane and that their new national identity will increase. In another study of 13 countries comparing 13 ethnic groups, Berry, Sam, Phinney, and Vedder (1997) state that it is better to look at cultural changes as more of a developmental issue than anything else. This suggests that the researcher should not limit

herself to acculturation and assimilation when looking for the best possible explanation and ways of understanding immigrant children (Berry, 1980)

These authors suggest that adolescents and children are able to adjust to a new culture more quickly than parents and older family members (Bornstein, 2006; Rick, 1992)

A study of immigrant children and adolescents resulted in the development of practical solutions for school improvements to enhance the quality of learning for immigrant students. In a study of eleven urban school districts, the focal point was the success or failure of a district to properly address the needs of immigrant students (Bornstein, 2006; Dentler & Hafner, 1997)

Asian students are another immigrant group that reports problems with their ethnic identity and race issues. Asian students continue to feel inferiority, alienation and isolation in the American school system (Bowler, 1986; Gibson, 1991; Greene, 1987).

Some of the research on immigrants is aimed at finding better ways to include new immigrants in United States schools, communities and job markets (Gerstle, 2001; Gutmann, 2003; Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Jacobson, 1998; King, 2000; Tyack, 2003). This study focuses specifically on the difficulty immigrants face when adjusting to American life (Tyack, 1974)

The book by Troare and Lukens, "This Isn't the American I Thought I'd Find": African Students in the Urban U.S. High School is a bridge between African and African-American experiences in the United States that uses the Africocentric principles. American schools fail Black students and migrating Blacks from the Diaspora because they fail to provide culturally appropriate teachers, methods, curriculums and philosophies to help them to matriculate in a hostile and anti-Black academic education system (Gay, 2001; Irvine, 1990; Kunjufu, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Traoré, 2006). Another study says that demeaning stereotypes of Blacks

in the media are filtered into the American school system (Entman, 2000; Holtzman, 2001). The image of Black youth, in particular Black males depicts gang bangers, thugs and pimps ready to shoot at the drop of a hat. (Cashin, 2004).

Djamba (1999) studied White Africans and Black Africans and compared them to native Black Americans. He concludes that Black Africans and White Africans do better economically then Black Americans. He also suggests that White African immigrants adjust better than Black African immigrants in marriage and economically (DJamba, 1999). There is also a study of the process of transition for Somali African immigrant high school students within the social systems of the United States (Ighodaro, 1997).

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was developed during the civil-rights era of the 1960's. CRT is a movement of activists and scholars who are interested in studying the relationship among race, racism, and power that continues to persist in the United States culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT was originally developed from the field of law and used in sociology and other fields. CRT implies that the everyday experiences of racial discrimination, identity problems and the racial demographics of the United States hegemony have a direct link to social constructionism as demonstrated in the works of Derrick Bell, Ladson-Billings, Delgado and others. Critical race theory emerged from critical legal theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; G. Ladson-Billings, & Tate, W.T., 1995; López & Parker, 2003; Parker *et al.*, 1999) . Scholars argued that legal theory had failed to critically engage in analyzing social discourse in America, as a result, the dominant hegemony in our society continued to benefit while other members of society continued to be oppressed. (Crenshaw, 1995; Darder & Torres, 2004; Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; G. Ladson-Billings, 2005). Black critical legal scholars such as:

Derrick Bell, Patricia Williams, Randall Kennedy, Lani Guiner, and others denounced critical legal theory pointing out that it fails to address the question of "race" and how it fundamentally affects social justice issues. As a result CRT was established (Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000).

Concerning the questions generated in critical legal theory, Cornel West and Ladson-Billings' weigh in by stating that: "Critical legal theorists fundamentally question the dominant liberal paradigms prevalent and pervasive in the American culture and society. This thorough questioning is not primarily a constructive attempt to put forward a conception of a new legal and social order" (Parker et al., 1999, p. 12). The researcher agrees with West in that critical legal theory has inconsistencies, in particular in claiming that its strategies should always be aimed at producing useful changes in our society. It is not enough to think about how broken down a thing is, we must do some fixing. If the researcher uncovers flaws in the school system then the researcher must present a plan to correct those flaws in addition to reporting them (West, 1993).

There are six basic tenets of CRT. The first is storytelling which deals with disenfranchisement of an individual. Legal storytelling was encouraged by writers because they believe it gave immigrants an opportunity to share their experiences with racism and apply their unique perspective through various narratives. The second tenet is that racist behavior is not an aberration, but a normal practice of individuals. This means racist behavior is difficult to cure. The third tenet states that elite groups act against racist behavior in society only when it serves a purpose that may benefit them. The fourth tenet says that race is a "social framework" that provides the context of social thought and relationships. The authors explain that the fifth tenet says that characteristics ascribed to a particular group may change over time because of what

may be happening with that particular race of people in the cultural realm. Finally, the sixth tenet says that individuals have identities that intersect. This means they belong to more than one group and as a result, they are affected by the disenfranchisement in many ways (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Parker et al., 1999). Although there are six tenets in CRT, storytelling was the most applicable to the plight of African immigrants because it gives each of them an opportunity to tell his or her own story so that his or her own voice can be heard.

Storytelling

Storytelling is defined as an individual having an opportunity to share their experiences through their own lenses. According to Ladson-Billings, the application of Storytelling in CRT can be applied to education. In view of our education system, CRT can be a powerful tool to help promote equity for BAAI students (Parker et al., 1999) . Curriculum, instruction, assessment, school funding, and desegregation are areas where a relationship can be developed between CRT and education (Parker et al., 1999). This is important and relevant because the American legacy of racism persists and as a result, inequalities in education for dark skinned people exist.

One of the tools for CRT researchers is to become storytellers or Ethnographers who collect the insights of African immigrant students and their communities and compile them into information structures. Information structures are formats that frame students' stories so as to expose their struggles by exposing their voices and simultaneously adding counter opinions. CRT storytelling by definition will give African immigrant students an opportunity to expose any issues they encounter in their new school culture (Champion, 2003; Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; López & Parker, 2003). If by chance oppression is found, it will hopefully be motivation to transform teaching methodologies to accommodate ethnic immigrant students. The researcher believed that immigrants being heard lessens the stress of invisibility, opens ethnic

conversations with the dominant hegemony and forces at least an intellectual acknowledgement of one's hurts (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; López & Parker, 2003) . Since the majority of African immigrants are racially defined by Americans as Black, CRT is a very useful tool of analysis in the research study.

Some in our country would wonder why race should be an issue at all since some think that affirmative action was the answer to the race problem. Crenshaw, Delgado, Ladson-Billings, Lopez, and Parker, looked at the storytelling method as a part of critical race theory because this method, in particular, underscored an important point within the theoretical framing of racial issues in America. Storytelling demonstrates that racism still exists in the United States culture (1995, 2000, 2005, 2003, and 1999).

Despite the scientific refutation of race as a legitimate biological concept and attempts to marginalize race in much of the public (political) discourse, race continues to be a powerful social construct and signifier. Race has become a metaphorical way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division (Bell *et al.*, 2005; Crotty, 1998; Delgado, 1995). A spurious and useless political asset in election campaigns, racism is as healthy today as it was during the Enlightenment. It seems that it has a utility far beyond economy, embedded in daily discourse and more on display than ever before (Parker et al, 1999, Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2005; López & Parker, 2003).

Postcolonial Theory

Post-colonial theory is defined as the changes in cultural, educational, legal and linguistic perspective that occurred in groups of people as a result of colonization. Postcolonial may be referred to as after colonialism. If so, "post slavery" might fall into a similar category. On the other hand, it could refer to an anti or counter view to colonialism. Yet, at its base, PCT only

suggests how past behaviors, laws, cultures and languages of people have historically influenced our current perspectives on race, privilege, class, institutional roles as colonizers and the colonized, slave and master roles, cultural synthesis, and migration relationships. Postcolonial thoughts demonstrate how the rulers and those they rule interact in today's school environment. The strongest understanding of post colonial theory is the position that the past has had significant effects on the present American psyche and educational system. Whites and Blacks have and are still in the process of negotiating and attempting to develop better ways of relating since the colonial experiences in areas such as laws, faith and preconceived ideas about race, wealth, hatred, acceptance, and love (Hallward, 2001). At its core PCT is about seeking to understand the past trials of the colonial experience and to figure a way to negotiate modern life by expelling the bad parts of the colonial legacy so as to forge a new future for African Immigrants transitioning into America schools (Ahluwalia, 2001).

PCT is a lens with which to view past powers that have framed African countries and the United States. PCT has established tensions which effect African immigrants and their transition into the United States schools. There is a burden and legacy of colonial history which has shaped language, cultural identity, and education only in the native country of immigrant students and this legacy has a connecting link or commonality to America which is blurring their past system of schooling and culture with the present form of colonial influenced education and culture (Ahluwalia, 2001; Bhabha, 2004; Gourville, 2002; Madsen, 2003; Traoré, 2004).

PCT can help to frame the transitional experiences of African students from two perspectives. The first is in the context of the colonial history of the African continent which started around the year 1492 A.D. and continued until the commencement of the liberation movements which began during World War II. The second perspective is the thoughts and

struggles that accompanied decolonization beginning with the slave trade and extending until the liberation of African countries (El-Khawas, 2006; Gourville, 2002; Traoré, 2004). The research took place within the United States which is a former British colony, and a former slave nation, and which is also the host country whose schools are receiving African immigrant students. Postcolonial theory provides a general historical explanation and frame work to understand the cultural realities which the African students lived with prior to their American transition. Takougang says that the breakdown of the post-colonial economy and the break down of political institutions have contributed to increases in the numbers of African immigrants fleeing to the United States, since the 1980's. In contrast to their African student counterparts of the 1960s and 70s, whose main objective was to get an American education then return home and begin the task of nation-building (Takougang, 2003), contemporary African immigrants are running to the United States to seek asylum, escape wars and to improve their economic situation without any thought of returning home. Because of poverty and corruption the post Colonial authoritarian structure of decolonized African states tends to hinder the kind of open talks and mutual agreements needed for constructive criticism that could maintain economic development (Apraku, 1996; Arthur, 2000; Dodoo, 1997; Takougang, 2003)

It is critical to remember that the United States was once colonized by Britain and that colonization influences the American educational system. It must be remembered that colonial theological infrastructure as directed by the church that fundamentally influenced the America education model.

Language

Before World War I, 85% of Africa was divided between Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal, who were members of a League of Nations which had control over the continent of

Africa (Ahluwalia, 2001; Smyth, 2004). Occupation by British, French, Portuguese, Belgian, and Italian forces resulted in cultural changes on the continent of Africa. Colonial occupation changed the way the Africans communicated and interacted with one another. The British have colonized over 70% of Africa and 70% of individuals that immigrate from Africa come from those Anglophone communities. It is noteworthy that during BAAI students departure from the post-colonial educational system and their transition into the post-colonial, post slavery system of the United States, English was seen as an authoritarian language from the dominant hegemony that many Africans have learned to embrace as their own language and use to determine how educated a person is (Ahluwalia, 2001; Smyth, 2004; Tikly, 2001).

"African-Americans, Caribbean, Pacific and Atlantic Islanders, and others in the Diaspora whose indigenous languages are now lost have been constructing and creating their own languages to challenge the hegemony of the master's language and to find a way to represent cultural differences" (Lunga, 2004, p. 294). On the continent of Africa the most influential language from colonial exploration and occupation is English. Former Anglophone territories that are now countries feel they must embrace the former oppressor's language in order to compete in the world economy (Ahluwalia, 2001; Nekhwevha, 1999; Tikly, 2001). Neke explains that "English is not merely a language for communication, but was (and is still) being used to create a mindset, which is one of the cultural imprints left by colonialism" (2005, p. 74). So the Africans are left to feel that English is a language of domination and is a necessity for survival in their own countries. They see their native language in some cases as inferior.

With the effect of post-colonial nations, certain views, perceptions, and attitudes were formed regarding the English language. For example, Neke (2005) explains that an individual who lives in an African country and can speak English feels they have a tremendous advantage

over those individuals who can't write and speak English fluently because they can very easily obtain a job either inside or outside of the country. This ideology was part of the colonial enterprise which was to teach the colonial language to African children in school and in turn give Africans economic power. This colonial education model has created a belief amongst individuals that speaking English is a sign of being educated instead of making a distinction between language and education (Ahluwalia, 2001; Lunga, 2004; Neke, 2005). Neke explains, "it has been observed that the high value placed on ex-colonial languages and low status placed on local languages have led to negative consequences for educational development. Local languages have not been taken seriously as subjects of study on the one hand, while more emphasis is placed on proficiency in foreign languages and others" (2005, p. 74-75).

The interest in the pre and post-colonial governments of Britain in Africa is linked to them being the prime architects of the development of Anglophone communities which make up the majority of immigrants from the Anglophone areas which migrate to the United States. So, if African students are entering the United States from Anglophone countries, they have advantage over those from Francophone countries and others. Although they may speak the English differently from the natives, their adjustment process will be quicker because they can speak English. Those African students who have limited English or cannot speak English will find the transition process to be a long and difficult one because in order to assimilate into the American school culture, it is imperative that you speak English. Without English, their ability to transition and adapt in their new culture will be a long and difficult process.

The tactics that colonizers have utilized to make languages, such as English or French, tools of oppression include creating laws forbidding natives to speak their language, institutionally prohibiting the use of native tongues and forcing all schools to teach lessons in

English only. Children were demoted, humiliated and beaten if they spoke their mother tongue in school. The Kenyan writer Ngugi (1986) says that the West used the English and French languages and their educational institutions to control the colonized and to destroy their African culture. Ngugi (1986) contends that Africans should stop using the imperialist language and go back to the use of their mother tongues only.

For many scholars, colonial languages are the most obvious and significant manifestations of the colonial legacy in West Africa. They cite the continued dominance of European languages in official affairs and formal schooling as a curse. As a blessing, European languages provide a national language and unity to one of the most linguistically and ethnically diverse regions in the world (Ahluwalia, 2001; Lunga, 2004; Neke, 2005; Tikly, 2001). From the perspective of the author, colonial influences have used English to globalize education. For instance, in my native country of Nigeria there are over 250 languages, but English has been and continues to be a common means to communicate in order to run the government, do business, and bring different cultures together. Over the last three decades bilingual education for Hispanic immigrant kids has been the largest concession made by the United States school system regarding language barriers. But new legislation is promoting an English only society (Tikly, 2001).

Since gaining their independence from colonists, African leaders and international educators have also recognized European languages as a curse, perpetuating the colonial legacy of European cultural supremacy over indigenous knowledge and facilitating the creation of an elite group that is alienated from its cultural heritage. Instruction in European languages has caused the sacrifice of local languages and the encouragement of national and international functionality of African cultures.

Colonial Mentality

Slavery and colonialism are two events that have had an overwhelming impact on the way Africans and Westerners think about each other. The psychological residue of slavery expresses itself in the mindset of Africans, no matter their location in the Diaspora. Neo-colonialism has a fixed status for Blacks that is below that of their Caucasian brothers and also below members of other races. Slavery, particularly the buying and selling of black people between Africa the West, is an experience that seems to have left its psychological impact on the whole world. These indelible imprints left mostly un-challenged threaten racial harmony and the cohesive fabric of society (Gourville, 2002; Kromah, 2002).

> The colonial mentality that degraded Africa and Africans for hundreds of years thrives in American schools, neighborhoods, and in the media. Their Black American peers reported hearing that Africa is a jungle and Africans are savages. The African students expressed their frustrations and disappointments with their schooling experiences including the lack of awareness and accurate information about the continent of Africa. Efforts to educate Americans about Africa are critical to helping to change the colonial mentality that still exists in America today (Traoré, 2004, p. 348).

Colonial mentality Traoré (2004), Traoré (2006) and Gourville (2002) explains this continues to plague this country and adds negative experiences for immigrants in urban schools. Words such as exploit, starve, dominate, torture, persecute, brutalize, plunder, and pillage are just some words that describe the African experience during the colonial period. Today colonialism or its new form neo-colonialism is still deeply rooted in the very fabric of our society. African Americans have no connection to their heritage because long ago social discourse denied African and Black Americans access to their common shared heritage and

ancestry. African and Black American adolescents recognize that the stories told in the urban schools of America about Africa are neither encouraging a sense of connection to Africa or promoting an understanding of the rich history of Africa. The colonial portrayal of Africa is designed to maintain the colonial mentality that continues to perpetrate the divisiveness of Africans, Black American and other groups in the schools (Landau, 2002; Traoré, & Lukens, 2006; R. Traoré, 2003b).

The greatest negative impact of colonialism has been its psychological affect on the mentality of Blacks as well as Whites in America. The feeling it creates in Blacks is inferiority, and it creates in Whites the feeling of superiority and rulership. This reinforced inferiority complex promotes a loss of human dignity amongst the Blacks and African immigrants in America that exists even to this day. The feelings of inferiority, racial decimation, humiliation and oppression were set in place during the exploitation of African slaves in the colonial period and continue to affect so much of our behavior in the present (Traoré, 2004).

Another negative impact of colonialism is how the hegemony has depicted slavery in most history textbooks. American history tends to celebrate and glorify the transformation of slaves in the middle passage of the Atlantic Ocean, a time of mass murder of Africans. This transformation forced American assimilation and transformed the captured African's cultural, language and identity. It also caused 20 million deaths in the process (Traoré, 2004).

Black Media Images

The media portrayal of Africa is as negative today as it was nearly three decades ago when many Africans campaigned for the adoption of a new world information order as the best corrective approach. The Western media reporting of Africa goes beyond professional inadequacies and structural bias and it directly affects how individuals view the continent, which

is not a single country and does not have a single language. Yet a sizable portion of the United States population considers Africa as a single country or a language. Cultural bias has continued to account significantly for the stereotyping of Africa as a jungle, with people who are uneducated, savages, diseased, don't know anything, and are backwards. This inaccurate collection and dissemination of information about Africa continues to directly affect the adjustment of African immigrants (Ahluwalia, 2001; Kromah, 2002).

The images used by colonialists, imperialists and racists to ingrain the stereotyping of Africans include: cartoons, domestic and professional photography, cultural art, World Fairs, museums, school history books, commercials, Hollywood movies, Tarzan films, nature magazines, national geographic, circus posters, radio programs, local news reporting, newspaper reporting, body art, political body, countless so called academic books and especially the internet. All of the above have made contributions to the portrayal of the myth of Africa as primitive, backwards, uncivilized as a stereotypical negative reality (Asante, 1998; Bhabha, 1994, 2004; Landau, 2002; Ngugi, 1986; Traoré, & Lukens, 2006; Traoré, 2004).

The technological revolution in international broadcasting of radio and television has made an overwhelming imprint on global society. Wars and disasters are telecast to the world as they happen. Competition among American television stations over their desire to report from the scene of events has pushed almost every American network and cable group to go international. During this technological explosion and unprecedented excitement in journalism, Africa has not benefited much at all. In fact, the advancement has been used to reinforce in vivid pictures, and the stereotypic imagery that has persisted in American and other Western audiences. If events in African countries ever make it to the news, they are presented to the audience as an exception to normal things. This vicious cycle of controlling and tailoring

impressions about Africa and Africans in the Western media can be interpreted from a sociological point of view. In the United States, a new program of education about Africa and the outside world has to be designed and aggressively implemented. Well thought out and easily understood forms of public teachings on the true realities of Africa can help discard the stone-age perceptions still lingering in the America psychic about Africa and Africans (Kromah, 2002; Landau, 2002; R. Traoré, & Lukens, 2006; Traoré, 2004).

The West has not only crudely interrupted African progress, but left a legacy that propels media coverage of Africa in a skewed fashion. The equation provides that news is only news when it satisfies the expectation of the consumer whose mindset about Africa is little more than pictures of Tarzan and gorillas. It then becomes a matter of a routine display of the symbolism that convinces the Western media audience that indeed what is being viewed read or written is African. Except for the parading of malnourished and naked babies in front of television cameras, one gets the impression that Africa has remained in the dark since the days of the dinosaur, perpetuating inaccurate images of Africa and Africans (Asante, 1998; Kromah, 2002; Traoré, 2003a; Traoré, 2003b, 2004).

The researcher believes that all people, including elders and the educated must be made aware that along with the images of huts, crocodiles, wars and famines, African countries also have skyscrapers, bilingual education papers, multiple road networks, and many other manifestations of Western modern life. People must take the initiative, particularly in America, to teach the young children that Africa is neither a single country nor a single language. Let the children know that scientist say that all races of human beings come from the African continent. The educated, African Americans, others, and our school systems can play a crucial role in this re-education about what and who Africa is.

The researcher feels that African countries and peoples have suffered because of negative media images and that America has a vested interest in correcting these misconceptions. Having accurate knowledge about the outside world, whether it is Africa or anyplace else has profound dividends for a smarter and more accepting United States. Setting the agenda for the West and the international communities requires that we transform the stereotypes about Blacks, Africa and African immigrants.

Advantages of CRT in Understanding the Social Construct of BAAI Student Experiences

It has been found that dark skinned Americans rarely assimilate into American culture. The legacy of colonialism has made race a very real reference point for understanding the cultural transition of Blacks in America. Why has race become the primary indicator and example of exclusion in the United States cultural identity, assimilation, and language adjustment (Alba & Nee, 2003)? Race is the norm of separation and the difference of demarcation which distinguishes people in the United States. Emulating White culture is the measure of assimilation as portrayed as the only path to attainment of the American dream (Jacoby, 2004; Rong, 2002). The image of the White Protestant Anglo Christian elite is the standard by which others are excluded from free association. The colonial forces have maintained a white middle class which was institutionalized and which now shapes and controls the power brokers who maintained the creation of the American identity. Application of CRT to understanding the social constructs of race and American assimilation may be a valuable tool in helping researchers fathom the assimilation process for Africans immigrants (Alba & Nee, 2003).

Another advantage of CRT for immigrant students is that the students will have the opportunity to share their story through their individual lens with storytelling. By sharing their

experiences with others they can make society aware of the social discourse they may be experiencing. When students are given the opportunity to tell their story, it may reveal the social inequities that might exist in their school culture. As Champion (2003) explains, storytelling may teach others and give comfort to the students by allowing them to express their experiences in cultural realm of the United States society. Furthermore, CRT has forced the educational system to provide services for immigrant students in United States schools. Since the majority of the immigrant population are considered to be minorities the United States department of education has funding to assist BAAI other immigrant students under the Title I and Title III acts to provide programs in the schools to aid students with limited English proficiency (Capps, 2002). Breaking through the stereotypes that other students have about immigrant students particularly BAAI is important. Using CRT, Traoré (2006) explains that students gaining valuable information about immigrant students through dialogue will break down negative stereotypes that exist. Another advantage is that revelations about immigrant struggles may influence legislators to better fund immigration programs.

Finally CRT helps the African Immigrant challenge the definition at the heart of American assimilation so as to forge an easier transition into the American school system. Policymakers should find new ways to help African immigrants adjust to school environments and to change the negative aspects of assimilation that block or impede their progress as students.

Disadvantages of CRT in Understanding The Social Construct Of BAAI Student Experiences

The **disadvantage** of applying CRT to the immigrant student is that educators may believe the discrimination that immigrant students experience may only come from other races. A study by Traoré (2004) of 15 Black African Adolescent immigrant students showed that some of the students did experience discrimination. She explained that they experienced

discrimination, linguistics, cultural changes, loneliness, prejudice, and customs in schools. Traoré's study revealed that the problems of the BAAI students in the study, were caused mostly by Black American students. The discrimination they experienced was from their own racial group. It is imperative that immigrants, regardless of the demographic of the school, receive some form of assistance from the administration and student body to assist with a smooth transition (R. Traoré, L, 2004). Another **disadvantage** of applying CRT concepts to BAAI students is that there is a general assumption amongst educators that teachers automatically have the knowledge base to positively deal with immigrant students because of their university training. The teachers, as well as school administrators, need additional training in order to effectively respond to the needs of African immigrant students that might be put in their classroom or school (Sadowski, 2004).

Assimilation Theories

Theories of assimilation attempt to explain the transformation processes that immigrants must go through in order to make a smooth transition into another part of the world. The major assimilation theories discussed here include Classic Assimilation Theory developed before 1965, and other theories developed after 1965 including Segmented Assimilation Theory, Acculturation, Cultural Assimilation and Multiculturalism.

Classical Assimilation Theory (CAT) was developed prior to 1964. It was first delineated in Warner and Scrole (1945) and later synthesized by Gordon (1964). It proposes that immigrants develop increasing assimilation into either the native-born culture or the culture of the dominant group as they obtain increasing economic success and access to educational opportunities. CAT is commonly referred to by the "melting pot" metaphor. CAT assumes that the longer an immigrant remains in the dominant culture, the greater the chance that they will

adopt the new cultural values and discard their own cultural heritage (Alba & Nee, 2003; Gordon, 1964; Hirschman, 1999; Jacoby, 2004; Rong & Brown, 2002b; Salins, 1997) . Cultural Assimilation Theory also assumes that, with each passing generation, descendants of immigrants will more closely conform to American society and will also become more economically secure. The aforementioned authors also explained that CAT views first generation Americans as rarely achieving socio-economic parity with the native population because of multiple adjustment issues associated with their foreign status. Hindrances include, but are not limited to, the inability to communicate in English, lack of knowledge of the United States culture and customs, prejudice, and subjection to hostile treatment because of foreign accents.

In his book, Assimilation in American Life, Gordon (1964) examined "What happens when people meet?" He claimed that assimilation may occur as a result of any of the following situations: "colonial conquest, military occupation, redrawing of national boundaries to include diverse ethnic groups, large scale trade and missionary activity, technical assistance to underdeveloped countries, displacement of the aboriginal population, and voluntary immigration which increases the ethnic diversity of the host country" (Gordon, 1964, p. 60). The latter two scenarios have prevailed as factors that increase the immigrant population on the continent of North America. The aboriginal population of North America, the American Indians were displaced by European immigrants and have yet to be successfully assimilated into contemporary American society. The number of immigrants that are entering the United States, especially from Asia, Africa, Central and South America have increased substantially in recent years.

When considering the Classical Assimilation Theory as a framework understanding difficulties that immigrants face, the researcher found that the theory falls short in four key areas. These areas are 1) inevitability, 2) full incorporation, 3) ethnocentrism and 4) one-sidedness

without a positive contribution from ethnic cultures. The tenet of inevitability assumes that all immigrants will assimilate into their new culture. Full incorporation means that every immigrant participates in the process of cultural assimilation. Ethnocentrism assumes that all immigrants come from the same ethnic background. Finally, one-sidedness implies that there is only one correct way for immigrants to assimilate into a new society. The researcher disagrees with these tenets because time has shown that they are not accurate, especially for those who immigrate into American society.

Along with the authors cited below, the researcher believes that applying CAT specifically to the issues that African immigrants face while attempting to assimilate into the American culture has an additional limitation. There is no room for consideration of the physical, cultural, social and linguistic characteristics that are unique to Africans and that do not resemble those of the dominant hegemony in the U.S. culture (Constantine, 2005; Rong & Brown, 2001). This model is best suited for the mainstream immigrant population which is of primarily European descent (Alba & Nee, 2003). Positive contributions by Africans and/or second and third generation African Americans to the Unites States culture are often discounted or simply not recognized in Classical Assimilation Theory (Arthur, 2000).

Several post 1964 investigators of Assimilation Theory say that the most comprehensive assault on Classical Theory is raised by the basic questions of “who exactly is the mainstream?” and “what are the targets of assimilation?”. From their perspectives, these very important questions have never been answered (Alba & Nee, 2003; Hirschman, 1999; Jacoby, 2004;Rong, & Preissle, 1998). But the questions do need to be answered. By avoiding an answer the classical theorists are increasing the American cultural divide and making a mockery of the

theory of assimilation (Glazer, 1963). These questions are another key criticism of the Classical Assimilation Theory.

The Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 changed the United States immigration laws and abolished the quotas for the number of people who could enter the United States from developing nations each year. As a result, the numbers of the United States immigrants has increased dramatically. The Classical model of assimilation has under gone a transformation in order to better accommodate today's immigrants. However, the issues faced by Black African immigrants are still not sufficiently addressed by the Classical Theory model because it does not allow for the consideration of hindrances such as systematic racism and other biases in American society that are unique to immigrants of color, particularly those of African descent. For these reasons and others, alternative assimilation theories have been developed to challenge to the Classic Assimilation model (Alba & Nee, 2003; Dodoo, 1997).

The next model to be discussed is the **Segmented Assimilation Theory**. The Segmented Assimilation Theory (SAT) examines the adaptation of immigrants from the perspective of a gradual mobility across generations. One view of segmented assimilation is that a rapid advancement in wealth may occur when immigrant community members pool their resources, especially human capital, to provide: economic empowerment, mutual sharing, and social cohesion. Inevitably this produces economic advancement. The segmented theory allows for examination of individual immigrant groups instead of a general immigrant population and allows for comparison of socio-economic success of these groups with as compared to socio-economic status of citizens of the host country (Hirschman, 1999). SAT is an adaptation of CAT that adjusts for the culturally diverse background of the United States immigrant population. This

adjustment is achieved amongst groups of tangent cultures via synthesis, boundary crossing blurring and shifting (Alba & Nee, 2003).

Although the Segmented Assimilation theoretical approach was developed to address inadequacies in Classical Assimilation Theory, the two models do share the tenant that subsequent generations of immigrants become increasingly successful at assimilating and becoming part of the mainstream economically, politically and socially within American society.

However, the segmented assimilation concept does have its own drawbacks. For example, one of its tenants is that urban black culture represents an under class, which the American mainstream views as the undeserving poor. The SAT is a more ideal model for investigating and understanding how Black African immigrants are reacting to American assimilation. Especially because in American society Blacks fail to be accepted by the dominant culture into which they must assimilate. Though Black African immigrants may assimilate culturally, economically or behaviorally by copying the dominant hegemony, they are still unable to assimilate fully due to their physical looks, culture and linguistic characteristics (Alba & Nee, 2003). Because of their physical color, African immigrants are immediately placed into the same stereotypical category as Black Americans which for most in the American society is negative. For years assimilation theory has been criticized as just an Anglo demand on every other group to conform to white middle class protestant looks, ways and values. So for the African despite the differences in language, culture, ethnicity and religion, they are placed in the same category as Black Americans with the impossible task of conforming. In this country race limits, blocks and sometimes denies Africans access to resources, equitable rewards and economic power.

One thing is certain Black African immigrants cannot pass the color test, which makes it nearly impossible to avoid falling victim to the negative stereotype in American culture. Most non-Black African immigrants from developing countries can pass the test and slip under the mainstream radar by passing as white. The majority of African immigrants view the issue of race as a divisive one in American culture.

The segmented theory allows for views of success in assimilation outcomes to be determined by profession, labor, and business models for immigrants. The critical question to be considered with the segmented model, is can one be considered assimilated if they have obtained the American economic dream? If the American dream centers on home ownership, vast wealth, middle class status and American loyalty, one wonders is the American dream possible without a full cultural, ethnic, race and language transformation? Segmented allows for views of success in assimilation outcomes but has it's limits in that it does not give full assimilation status to individuals who have reached the goals of achieving the American dream.

Cultural assimilation occurs when immigrants take on all of the characteristic of the host country through language and customs including food, clothing, housing, religion, etc. (Gibson, 1988; Jacoby, 2004; Rong & Preissle, 1998). The authors of this theory believe that the longer immigrants are in the host country, the more likely they are to become proficient in the language. The length of stay is a major contributing factor in how well they can speak the language. The researcher agrees that the length of time immigrants spend in the host country will contribute to how well they understand the language. The researcher also believed although they are able to gain a better understanding of the host country's linguistics, their accent will continue to hinder how well they can be understood by the natives. Other factors that influence how well cultural immigrants assimilate are race and class. In the past, immigrants brought with them their

capital. It is no longer the rich, privileged, and educated that are coming to the United States. Individuals from all over the world now have the opportunity to come to the United States because of the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965. Consequently, many of today's immigrants have limited resources to bring with them. Also today race affects how well the immigrant is able to assimilate. Many of them experience discrimination on the basis that they don't resemble the dominant hegemony of the host country.

Once an immigrant parent enters their new American environment, they must quickly adapt to a whole new political, bureaucracy, and cultural norms that involves things such as the enrollment of children in school, dealing with new landlords, new jobs, and a new money system. In some countries of the world, cultural assimilation is viewed as automatic for newcomers into those societies, but in America the methods used in their native country will not for the most part apply in the American system (Gibson, 1988; Jacoby, 2004)

Gordon assumed that, **acculturation** involved mostly change only from one direction. That is from the direction of the immigrant culture to that of the dominant group which was as he explained for America the middle-class Anglo-American culture. In other words, the immigrant group would eventually adopt all the white American cultural traits. In today's society acculturation or cultural changes are generally seen as phenomena that result from the interaction of individuals, groups, or societies over some period of time. And the changes that accrue, take place across cultures via these interactions. Acculturation is a phenomena that occurs when groups of individuals with different cultural backgrounds come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups (Gordon, 1964). Changes may occur in one or both of the culture groups (Gordon, 1964). This is analogous to the type of cultural assimilation that many immigrants experience when they enter

United States society. Many of these immigrants rarely ever truly “melt” and lose all traces of their heritage, although many of them do experience some form of assimilation (Jacoby, 2004). The rates and path each individual takes are mainly determined by interaction between groups and the social conditioning that they receive during this process (Jacoby, 2004; Rong & Brown, 2002b).

John Adams, the second president of the United States wrote “It is our business to render our country an asylum to receive all who may fly to it (cote, P. 4).” As it was in its early history of so it is now that America has opened itself up to foreign nationals, and this has made America a population of continuously acculturating people. That is to say that America has for a long time been in the business of cultural exchange of ideas, food, clothes, language etc. We should always note that a society as diverse and as pluralistic as America will never have an immigrant population that demonstrates a unidirectional cultural exchange but that the society as a whole will always change as a result of any influx of an immigrant population.

Acculturation is very distinct from Classical Assimilation in that no ethnic group such as Anglo-Americans dominates the cultural exchange. Instead, both groups merge, sharing and exchanging to develop a new culture. Over the centuries interactions with other peoples has been the constant feature of social life and bi-directional exchange between cultures has been the most common result of these interactions. The continuous contact of cultures have always resulted in blending of: food, recipes, music, dances, clothing, language, tools, technology, religious and world views. The best quoted view of acculturation comes from Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936, P. 149) which says that, “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different culture come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups”

The Bi-directional Acculturation Model, as put forth by Berry, looks at the challenge of immigrants when choosing which cultural behaviors to adopt from the new country and which behaviors from their old culture they wish to maintain. Berry says that "Acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (cote, P.13). Berry, views adaptation for immigrants in a new culture as having three strategies: adjustment, reaction and withdrawal (Berry, 1980 & 1983). Adjustment can occur in a variety of acculturation modes but Berry presents four of the most quoted in acculturation research: integration, separation, assimilation and marginalization. Berry's view of adaptation under the acculturation process along with the multiple strategies, variables and t probabilities of adaptation itself can possibly be utilized to help us understand and explain immigrant adjustment issues in American schools culture (Berry, 2006).

Most researchers commonly agree that the most progressive account or definition of acculturation involves a two way exchange in culture sharing among two or more cultures in contact and interaction. Yet the concepts, measurements and models of acculturation remain split at best, slightly divisive, and understudied at worst. This is not the proper or only way to view acculturation or its outcomes but it may add to the understanding of immigrants and their adjustment issues. In the opinion of this researcher acculturation is the best of the assimilation models to explain the adaptation and the adjustment issues of BAAI students and their parents while transitioning into American schools.

Multiculturalism theory basically states that all cultures can exist equally in the United States like a salad which is in a tossed salad bowl. Multiculturalism is inherently a rejection of the melting pot theory because the classic assimilation American style will never work for all

groups. For instance, African immigrants face blockage because of the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow and institutional racism and thus will never measure up to the model given in Classic Assimilation. This is the only alternative to a view that America's identity is tied up in being white English speaking Anglo Saxon Protestant Christian. Immigrants will be put on a better route to success if they learn the ways to the middle class as opposed to how inferior Blacks are to whites and to try to adjust to spoken and unspoken rules. Why, because America is not a homogeneous land and that America will be a richer place if new cultures are embraced instead of being made to conform to one image.

The Classic Assimilation standard for Blacks and other minorities pushes them to be like Whites in order to assimilate. Such a concept of assimilation is unattainable for Blacks and a few other minority groups. No matter how hard they try they cannot make their skin turn white or change their ethnicity to be similar to whites. According to the Classic Assimilation standard, if an immigrant does not change his or her race, his or her is either partially or totally rejected, and therefore found to be inassimilable. Still there is hope amongst both African immigrants, Black Americans, and other minorities that one day all may add substantially to the wealth of America, and move the community from a dependence and control of White hegemony Classic Assimilation standard to a more multicultural standard for immigrants (Arthur, 2000).

Authur (2000) explains that African parents bring with them kinship, customs and bonds when they come to the United States. And as African immigrant parents they want to maintain this bond to their heritage so that their children maintain their culture. The expectations that the parents have for their children in the African societies are structured around a close knit family interaction. Parents want to maintain this structure in the United States by stressing to their children the importance of education, social responsibility, and respect for authority, hard work,

and service. Since parents are not familiar with American culture, they attempt to shield their teenagers from American culture and identities such as the clothing styles, language, food, music, dating, and sexual behavior (Arthur, 2000). Parents stress the importance of their heritage by not letting their children assimilate into American culture. Since there is such a strong desire to preserve the cultural heritage of the parents, they place restrictions on how much interaction their children can have with the American youth. Arthur explains that "although African immigrant children are seen through the prism of American-ness as opposed to black African-ness or African-American-ness, immigrant parents perceive that assimilation and Americanization are acceptable only if their children emulate mainstream American values not values of urban minority groups" (p. 116).

Authur (2000) explains that what is clear about African immigrant children is that they are daily redefining the roles and cultural identities that they want to have in America. A majority of them want to adopt the "garb" and linguistic patterns of inner city youth by wearing baggy clothes, or the large athletic clothing that are associated with the youth culture instead of their traditional African "garb." Because their children want to assimilate into the youth culture, parents fear that the values that they brought from the motherland are being weakened and devalued by the second generation, which are their children. The weakening of these values is seen in those African immigrant children born here or who came as youth into the American culture. Parents are struggling to maintaining their heritage through their children in the United States society (Arthur, 2000).

Before the Hart-Cellar Act (1965), the majority of immigrants that came to the United States came from Europe. Today's immigrants come from all different parts of the world. Many of them today reject the concept of "Classical Assimilation." They are not willing to bond their

cultural heritage with the American culture as did immigrants before them. Today's immigrants have a clear vision of why they came to America which was to establish a better life for themselves and their family. On the other hand, second generation immigrants have no problems with assimilating because they resemble the individual in the host country. But the second and third generations are opposed to assimilation because of their unwillingness to surrender their cultural heritage and become part of the homogenized American society. Many of them reject the "melting pot" idealism and prefer the tossed salad approach (Jacoby, 2004). In one example, Jacoby (2004) discussed that one second generation immigrant named Eddie desired to maintain his cultural heritage. He did not see himself as less American because he wanted to maintain his Chinese heritage. Jacoby (2004) and Alba & Nee (2003) explained that second and third generation immigrants see it as a kind of political genocide if one conforms to the host country's customs. One thing is certain, although today's immigrants feel that it is suicide to assimilate into the host country's customs and heritage, the researcher believe some form of assimilation does occur because the host country has characteristics that are different from their native country. Adjustment is necessary in order for immigrants to survive in the society.

Discussion of studies on the assimilation of African immigrants in the United States

There have been studies whose main focal point has been the cultural difficulties that African high school students have experienced in the United States schools (Harris-Reid, 1999; Wilton, 2003). Another study showed that international college students have experienced cultural adjustment issues in the United States in schools (Essandoh, 1995; Phinney, 1996).

In the United States, race is an important variable that determines an immigrants' status. Some studies contend that there is an exclusive relationship between one's race and ethnicity for African immigrants in the United States (Alba & Nee, 2003; Bashi, 1997; Traoré, 2006). Some

Americans believe that ethnicity and race are interchangeable. Yet there are other Americans who believe that ethnicity and race are inseparable. There are authors that believe that African immigrants entering the United States with an ethnic identity will acquire a racial tag. This racial tag will determine their ability to assimilate into the United States culture. Even though some African immigrants differentiate ethnicity as race in terms of their culture, language, customs, and tradition they are still racially tagged. By the American construction of race they will be seen as Black (Alba & Nee, 2003; Bashi, 1997; Traoré, 2006).

This racial tagging in the United States puts one group on top and the other group at the bottom. This process affects African immigrants ethnicity and through this process they lose their ethnic identifiers (Alba & Nee, 2003; Bashi, 1997; Traoré, 2006). According to the authors African immigrants are forced to assimilate into a racial stratification which will determine their "success" or "failure" in the host country. The researcher believed that in order for the African immigrants to be successful in the United States culture, the tossed salad approach must be applied. Each individual group in the cultural realm should be allowed to have their own distinctive identity within the culture. If they are allied, the adjustment process for African immigrants will be better.

The big criticism of the acculturation theory is that most assimilation theory deals with adults and then used to explain the realities of immigration for children and adolescents when in effect, they experience immigration very differently from adults. The younger the immigrant the smoother the process of assimilation into a new culture (Berry, & Sam, 1997; Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987; Zhou, 1997). Children and adolescents experience adjustment very differently than their parents. This may account for the past studies of immigrant children and their poor adaptation as well as their use of adult models and applying them to the assimilation of

children and adolescents (Minde, 1976; Schaller, 1974). The current studies on the acculturation of children and adolescents demonstrates that there is an easier adjustment for children and adolescents than for adults or parents (Fuligni, 1998).

In 2000-2001 there were 30,300 students from the continent of Africa enrolled in the United States higher learning institutions (Constantine, 2005). Certain factors such as discrimination, linguistics, cultural changes, finance, loneliness, prejudice, and customs are some of the factors that affect their ability to transition into the United States. It is important to investigate effects on transitioning and their academic success.

A study of Black East Africans, Black West Africans and Arabic North African students indicated that African students reported more difficulty adapting to their new school environment in America than did students of other races and regions (Adelegan, 1985)

A study of international students showed that racial discrimination may lead to or exacerbate adjustment difficulties in the classroom (Hayes, 1994; Mori, 2000). Another study of 12 Kenyan, Nigerian, and Ghanaian students showed that these students had difficulty adjusting to the American educational system and tried to deal with the adjustment head on instead of seeking out help on counseling as their coping strategy (Constantine, 2005)

Effects of Assimilation on schools and schools' leadership

Educational leaders need to understand that Black African immigrant students struggle with quick Americanization. The transition or assimilation represents endless effort, pain, self-struggle, frustration, inner turmoil, instability, restlessness, malaise, and identity collapse among immigrant adults and children while adjusting to the United States culture. Educators and other agents of the United States society have the ability to ease the process (Rong & Preissle, 1998).

School leaders need to be more concerned about addressing the needs of the poor immigrant school age population. One of the main reasons that funds were set aside from Title 1 in 1993 was for the poor and disadvantaged. This money goes to states to local education agencies (LEA's) to be used for, amongst other purposes, immigrant students (Zimmerman, 1993).

It is imperative that school administrators are made aware of their immigrant population since immigrants makes up to 20% of school population and one in five children are from immigrant homes (Rong & Brown, 2002a). Administrators need to have knowledge of what issues immigrant children may bring to the school setting. The knowledge that the school leaders have about immigrants may be shared with other staff so that strategies may be implemented to better service immigrant students.

As educators, it is extremely important to gain knowledge about the immigrant population in schools. Sadowski, explains that principals must work with teachers closely in recognizing and addressing the changing demographics of their student populations (Sadowski, 2004). The researcher believes that principals need to do a self assessment of their knowledge of assimilation and identify the immigrants and their problems so as to set up measures to help their local population of immigrant students. The self revaluation should include the following:

1. Concerning the immigrant population in my school, what are the countries of origin?
2. Where may I access additional information about these immigrant students in the community, and where is it located?
3. What steps are necessary to promote my own professional development in educating black immigrant students?
4. What steps have I taken to support the literacy development in my school?

5. What are the necessary steps to advocate for high quality instruction for the immigrant population?
6. What evidence exists in my school environment to ensure a welcome and comfortable place for black immigrants?
7. How do I understand and promote a multicultural school environment?
8. As an administrator how do I model the fair treatment of immigrant students, teachers and staff from different backgrounds? (Sadowski, 2004).

These are a few initial steps that school leaders can take to find out about themselves and their immigrant students.

If school leaders do not help facilitate a smooth transition for immigrant students, the implications are many of them will receive inadequate education. Traoré (2006) explained that leaders must promote diversity and teach students how to embrace individual differences. Traoré explains that if school leaders do not teach diversity in their schools, they will not have the ability to break down negative stereotypes that plague our society about immigrants and/or African immigrants (2006). School leaders must positively promote other cultures so as to break down pre-racial biases students have toward other groups. If the leaders do not break the racial barrier in the schools, it may result in greater conflicts in the schools. So the researcher believes that it is imperative that leaders work closely with the immigrant community to gain knowledge of the immigrant population.

Conclusion

It is clear from the legislative review that the major changes that occurred in the United States immigration policies are the main pull factors for the dramatic rise in African immigration to the United States within the last five decades. Without the1965 Hart-Cellar Act, the 1986

Immigration Reform Control Act, and the Diversity Visa Program Act of 1990, the number of Africans entering the United States would be significantly lower. These three acts allowed up to 50, 000 eligible Africans yearly to enter the country. Furthermore, because of the changes in policies, many African immigrants are no longer coming to the United States for education and returning to their native country, they are now coming with their families to settle in the land they believe to be flowing with milk and honey, a land that is a safe and secure haven from failed policies and the corrupt governments that exist in some countries in Africa.

Although the number of African immigrants entering the United States has increased within the past five decades, they still represent the second lowest numbers of immigrants coming to the United States, accounting for approximately 3% of the total immigrants entering the United States annually. Furthermore, the majority of migrating Africans are Anglophones coming to the United States from former British colonies or territories. Since the number of African immigrants entering the United States has increased dramatically within the past five decades, this has dramatically increased the number of BAAI students in American schools .

It seems that African immigrants entering the United States desire their children to maintain traditional African values and to maintain the beliefs of their native countries. The researcher believes that some of the African immigrants want to maintain the traditional values of their country and not completely assimilate into the American cultural concept. In the school culture some of the children may want to assimilate into American popular culture by listening to urban music, dressing, talking, and acting like American youth. Consequently, some conflicts may arise because of the parents' strong desire to live with the old values which counters the desires of their school-aged children to assimilate into the new school culture of the United States.

It is the contention of the researcher that since American schools are a major force and the main drive behind the melting pot that pushes immigrant adolescents into Americanization, researchers must at all costs examine closely all the facets of immigrant student assimilation, transition, and matriculation through the American school systems. It should be noted that immigrant adolescents for the most part have been shown to assimilate more quickly than adults and if the proper help is given with their transition this would ultimately help their whole family.

Finally, it is imperative that researchers should take notice of and study the increasing numbers of BAAI students in the United States schools. Some researchers and their foundations tend to receive better funding if they de-emphasize the difficulties that exist in the Black American and Black immigrant educational experience in their studies. Although BAAI students come in low numbers to most schools, all children have the right to receive an unbiased education. Educators must make every effort to learn about, evaluate and reach out to BAAI students and their parents to assure that they have a smooth transition into American school system.

With proper preparation and assistance, African immigrant students and their parents can triumph over assimilation problems in American schools. There are difficulties before them in learning American English, getting a good job, staying out of jail, being patriotic, finding a cultural identity and trying hard to assimilate so that they can achieve the America dream. Will the grotesque inequalities that they may experience in the process of acquiring citizenship prove to be too hostile for them to achieve the American dream? BAAI students should temper their greed and desire for the good life, generated from a blind faith in America as a land flowing with milk, honey and social hindrances.

CRT and PCT give an array of perspectives concerning the transition of BAAI students. These theoretical perspectives give the researcher the opportunity to tell their stories with greater insight. BAAI students can voice their concerns and issues so as to be understood in a new light within the community of American schools. PCT teaches us that if one is taught in a post-colonial African education system then they may find similarities in the American school system. African students studying in America will encounter a world view that will be different and maybe sometimes hostile. This will pose a great challenge for these students as they unearth what it means for them to be an American and to adjust to the American identity and school culture.

It seems that immigrants entering the United States experience some form of assimilation. The researcher believes that the most reasonable and fitting theories for African immigrants are the segmented theory, multiculturalism and the "tossed salad" concept. These concepts build self esteem and allow immigrant families to follow easier paths of assimilation instead of the rigid path offered by the Classical Assimilation model. If immigrant children want to assimilate into American youth culture by listening to urban music, and dressing, talking, and acting as American youth that is fine. But let all immigrants choose to assimilate by different, more fitting models rather than being forced into a single model of assimilation.

Nee and Alba (2003) contend that in segmented assimilation theory it actually takes up to three or four generations to quote "fully assimilate" into the American mainstream. It is not clearly pointed out that most of the immigrant adolescents have assimilated by their adulthood. It is the researcher's contention that because American schools play a major role in this assimilation process a much greater effort should be made by administrators to understand the

assimilation models. Researchers must at all costs examine closely all the facets of immigrant student assimilation, transition, and matriculation through the American school systems.

Finally, it is imperative that school administrators notice and study immigrant students in their schools. Although they may, in most schools, come in low numbers, all children have the right to receive a free and unbiased education. Educators must make every effort to learn about, evaluate and reach out to immigrant students and their parent to assure that they have a smooth transition into the American school system.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

Overview

The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge of factors that influenced the transition processes of Black African Adolescent Immigrants (BAAI) who have migrated from the African continent into American urban or suburban schools; to determine whether or not there was a correlation between having a smooth transition and the academic and social success of BAAI students; and to then identify any effective strategies used by BAAI students and their parents to foster a smooth transition.

Epistemological Position

Constructionism was the philosophy used to be the epistemological foundation for understanding and undertaking the proposed exploratory research focusing on BAAI students. According to Crotty (1998) constructionism was the view that "all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). This philosophy provided a base for understanding the BAAI students who have emigrated into United States school systems from their native lands in Africa. The philosophy of constructionism, did not allow either truly subjective or truly objective analysis. According to constructionism, "we do not create meaning, we construct meaning. We have something to work with. What we have to work with is the world and objects in the world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 43-44). Therefore a description of the African immigrant transition process was developed by constructing it from engaged thoughtfulness about the struggles, information, and ideas gleaned

from BAAI students, their parents, researchers and the educational communities that deal with their transition into the American school culture.

Social Constructionism in particular was the explicit position that one must take as the focal point of the study because it concentrates on culture. This research basically looked at cultural transitions that African students made in order to fit into the culture of the American school system. The culture of a community served as a guideline for revealing and communicating meaning. So, at the core of understanding Social Constructionism is required an understanding of two cultures located on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Comparing African cultures with the American culture in terms of language, assimilation, and cultural transition allowed the differences to be noted in the behavior of BAAI students in everyday school life compared to their American classmates. Crotty stated that: "Culture is best seen as the source rather than the result of human thought and behavior" (Crotty, 1998, p. 53).

The position of Constructionism was being taken because the researcher believed that individual voices needed to be heard as well as the overall voice of the small group of BAAI students and their parents. This research has given a voice to the individual as well as the group by including a focus on storytelling within culture. Constructionism is essentially the way individuals construct how they understand life (Crotty, 1998). This study focused on how BAAI students, through their experiences have been conditioned by culture to receive and transfer meaning and how the knowledge acquired from their native culture was used to adapt to a new school system and to make sense of the world. There three theoretical perspectives used to link the epistemology, inform and conceptualize the study were Post Colonial Theory (PCT), Assimilation Theory and Critical Race Theory (CRT).

Theoretical Position

Post-colonial Theory

Post-colonial Theory (PCT) was defined as the changes in cultural, educational, legal and linguistic perspective that occur in groups of people as a result of colonization. Postcolonial may be referred to as after colonialism. If so, "post slavery" may fall into a similar category. On the other hand, it could refer to an opposing or counter view to colonialism. Yet, at its base PCT only suggests how past behaviors, laws, cultures and languages of people have historically influenced our current perspectives on race, privilege, class, institutional roles as colonizers and the colonized, slave and master roles, cultural synthesis, and migration relationships. Post-colonial thought demonstrated how the rulers and those they rule interacted in today's school environment. The strongest understanding of post-colonial theory was the position that the past had significant effects on the present American psyche and educational system. Whites and Blacks have and are still in the process of negotiating and attempting to develop better ways of relating because of the colonial experiences in areas such as law, faith, preconceived ideas about race, wealth, hatred, acceptance, and love (Hallward, 2001). At its core PCT was about seeking to understand the past trials of the colonial experience and to figure a way to negotiate modern life by expelling the bad parts of the colonial legacy so as to forge a new futures for Black African Immigrants transitioning into America schools (Ahluwalia, 2001).

PCT was a lens with which to view past powers that have framed African States and the United States. PCT has established that tensions exist which affect African immigrants and their transition into the United States schools. There was a burden and legacy of colonial history which shaped language, cultural identity, and education, not only in the native country of connecting immigrant students, but also in America. The commonality of colonial history

between the two cultures was blurring the experiences of BAAI students in their past system of schooling and culture with the present form of colonial influenced education and culture that they encountered in America (Ahluwalia, 2001; Bhabha, 2004; Gourville, 2002; Madsen, 2003; Traore, 2004).

PCT helped to frame the transitional experiences of African students from two perspectives. The first was in the context of the colonial history of the African continent which started around the year 1492 A.D. and continued until the commencement of the liberation movements which began during World War II. The second perspective was the thoughts and struggles that accompanied decolonization beginning with the slave trade and extending until the liberation of African states (El-Khawas, 2006; Gourville, 2002; Traore, 2004).

It was critical to remember that the United States was once colonized by Britain and that the influences of that colonization reached into today's American educational system. America was a former British colony, and a former slave nation, and was the host country for BAAI students. Post-colonial theory provided a general historical explanation and framework to understand the cultural realities with which African students lived with prior to their American transition. Takougang (2003) stated that the breakdown of the post-colonial economy and the break down of political institutions have contributed to increased numbers of African immigrants fleeing to the United States, since the 1980's. In contrast to their African student counterparts of the 1960s and 70s, whose main objective was to get an American education then return home and begin the task of nation-building (Takougang, 2003), contemporary African Immigrants were running to the United States to seek asylum, escape wars and to improve their economic situation without any thought of returning home. Because of poverty and corruption, the post-colonial authoritarian structure of decolonized African states hindered the kind of open talks and

mutual agreements needed for constructive criticism that could maintain economic development (Apraku, 1996; Arthur, 2000; Dodoo, 1997; Takougang, 2003)

Postcolonial Theory and Language

Before World War I, 85% of Africa was divided between Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal as League of Nations which had control over the continent of Africa (Ahluwalia, 2001; Smyth, 2004). Occupation by British, French, Portuguese, Belgian, and Italian forces resulted in cultural changes on the continent of Africa. Colonial occupation changed the way the Africans communicated and interacted with one another. The British have colonized over 70% of Africa and 70% of individuals that immigrate from Africa come from those Anglophone communities. It was noteworthy that BAAI students' departure from the post-colonial educational system and their transition into the post-colonial, post slavery system of the United States where English was seen as an authoritarian language (the "master's language") from the dominant hegemony that many Africans have learned to embrace as their own language and was used to determine how educated a person is (Ahluwalia, 2001; Smyth, 2004; Tikly, 2001).

"African-Americans, Caribbean, Pacific and Atlantic Islanders, and others in the Diaspora whose indigenous languages are now lost have been constructing and creating their own languages to challenge the hegemony of the master's language and to find a way to represent cultural differences" (Lunga, 2004, p. 294). On the continent of Africa the most influential language from colonial exploration and occupation was English. Former Anglophone territories that were now countries embraced the former oppressor's language in order to compete in the world economy (Ahluwalia, 2001; Nekhwevha, 1999; Tikly, 2001). Neke explained that "English is not merely a language for communication, but was (and is still) being used to create a mindset, which is one of the cultural imprints left by colonialism" (2005, p. 74).

The Africans were left to feel that English was a language of domination and was a necessity for survival in their own countries. Their native language, in some cases, was seen as inferior.

With the emergence of post-colonial nations, certain views, perceptions, and attitudes were formed regarding English. For example, Neke explained that an individual who lives in an African country and could speak English felt he/she had a tremendous advantage over those individuals who can not write and speak English fluently because they can obtain a job inside and outside of country easily (2005). This ideology was part of the colonial enterprise which was to teach the colonial language to the African children in school and in turn give Africans economic power. This colonial education has created a belief amongst individuals that speaking English was a sign of being educated instead of making a distinction between language and education (Ahluwalia, 2001; Lunga, 2004; Neke, 2005). Neke explains, "It has been observed that the high value place on ex-colonial languages and low status placed on local languages have led to negative consequences for educational development. Local languages have not been taken seriously as subjects of study on the one hand, while more emphasis is placed on proficiency in foreign languages and other" (2005, p. 74-75).

The pre and post-colonial governments of Britain in Africa were linked to being the prime architects of the development of Anglophone communities which make up the majority of immigrants from the Anglophone areas which migrate to the United States. So if African students were entering the United States from Anglophone countries, they had an advantage over those from Francophone countries and others. Although they may speak English differently from the natives, their adjustment process would be quicker because they can already speak English. African students who have limited English or cannot speak English found the transition process to be a long and difficult because in order to assimilate into the American school culture, it was

imperative that the students speak English. Without English, their ability to transition and adapt in their new culture was a long and difficult process.

The tactics that colonizers have utilized to make languages such as: English or French tools of oppression included creating laws forbidding natives to speak their language institutionally prohibiting native tongues and forcing all schools to teach lessons in English only. Children were demoted, humiliated and beaten if they spoke their mother tongue in school. The Kenyan writer (Ngugi, 1986) stated that the West used English and French languages and their educational institutions to control the colonized and to destroy their African culture. Ngugi (1986) contended that Africans should stop using the imperialist language and go back to the use of their mother tongues only.

For many scholars, colonial languages were the most obvious and significant manifestations of the colonial legacy in West Africa. They cited the continued dominance of European languages in official affairs and formal schooling was a curse. As a blessing, European languages provided a national language and unity to one of the most linguistically and ethnically diverse regions in the world (Ahluwalia, 2001; Lunga, 2004; Neke, 2005; Tikly, 2001). From the perspective of these authors, colonial influences have used English to globalize education. For instance, in the country of Nigeria there are over 250 languages, but English has been and continues to be a common means to communicate in order to run the government, do business, and bring different cultures together. The development of a bilingual curriculum for Hispanic immigrant children over the last three decades was one of the biggest concessions that the United States school system has made for immigrant students but now legislation has changed to promote an English only society (Tikly, 2001).

Since independence, African leaders and international educators have also recognized European languages as a curse, perpetuating the colonial legacy of European cultural supremacy over indigenous knowledge and facilitating the creation of an elite that was alienated from its cultural heritage. Instruction in European languages has caused the sacrifice of local languages and the encouragement of national and international functionality of African cultures.

Assimilation Theory

Assimilation Theory was the position that immigrants must assimilate into the American culture in order to be accepted by the culture. This perspective was taken by the majority of members of American culture. Another view was that of the Acculturation Theory which takes the position that there was a sharing in the transition process between the immigrant and the citizen. This included the process of adaptation, which looked at how and at what rate immigrants adapted to the new society. Lastly, the adjustment spells out the ways that immigrants made their adjustment in the new society.

Theories of assimilation attempted to explain the transformation processes that immigrants must go through in order to make a smooth transition into another part of the world. The major assimilation theories discussed in this paper include one developed before 1965, which was Classic Assimilation Theory and other theories developed after 1965 including Segmented Assimilation Theory, Acculturation, and Cultural Assimilation.

Classical Assimilation Theory (CAT) was developed prior to 1964. It was first delineated in Warner and Scrole (1945) and later synthesized by Gordon (1964). It proposes that immigrants develop increasing assimilation into either the native-born culture or the culture of the dominant group as they obtain increasing economic success and access to educational opportunities. CAT was commonly referred to by the “melting pot” metaphor. CAT assumed that

the longer an immigrant remained in the dominant culture, the greater the chance that they will adopt the new cultural values and disregard their own cultural heritage (Alba & Nee, 2003; Gordon, 1964; Hirschman, 1999; Jacoby, 2004; Rong & Brown, 2002b; Salins, 1997) . Cultural Assimilation Theory also assumed that, with each passing generation, the descendants of immigrants more closely conformed to American society and also became more economically secure. The aforementioned authors also explained that CAT views first generation Americans as rarely achieving socio-economic parity with the native population because of multiple adjustment issues associated with their foreign status. Hindrances include, but was not limited to inability to communicate in English, lack of knowledge of United States culture and customs, prejudice, and subjection to hostile treatment because of foreign accents.

In his book titled Assimilation in American Life, Gordon (1964) examined the question "What happens when people meet?" He claimed that assimilation may occur as a result of any of the following situations: "colonial conquest, military occupation, redrawing of national boundaries to include diverse ethnic groups, large scale trade and missionary activity, technical assistance to underdeveloped countries, displacement of aboriginal population, and voluntary immigration which increases the ethnic diversity of the host country" (Gordon, 1964, p. 60). The latter two scenarios have prevailed as factors that increased the immigrant population on the continent of North America. The aboriginal population of North America, the American Indians were displaced by European immigrants and have yet to be successfully assimilated into contemporary American society. And the number of immigrants entering the United States, especially from Asia, Africa and Central and South America has increased substantially in recent years.

When considering the Classical Assimilation Theory as a framework understanding difficulties that immigrants face, it can be argued that the theory falls short in four key areas. These areas are 1) inevitability, 2) full incorporation, 3) ethnocentrism and 4) one-sidedness without a positive contribution from ethnic cultures. The tenet of inevitability assumed that all immigrants will assimilate into their new culture. Full incorporation meant that every immigrant will participate fully in the process of cultural assimilation. Ethnocentrism assumed that all immigrants come from the same ethnic background. Finally, one-sidedness implied that there was only one correct way for immigrants to assimilate into a new society. Disagreement with these tenets has been stated because time has shown that they are not accurate, especially for those who immigrate into American society.

According to the authors cited below, applying CAT specifically to the issues that African immigrants face while attempting to assimilate into American culture has an additional limitation. There was no room for consideration of the physical, cultural, social and linguistic characteristics that were unique to Africans and that did not resemble those of the dominant hegemony in the U.S. culture (Constantine, 2005; Rong & Brown, 2001). This model was best suited for the mainstream immigrant population which was of primarily European descent (Alba & Nee, 2003). Positive contributions by Africans and/or second and third generation African Americans to the U.S. culture were often discounted or simply not recognized in classical assimilation theory (Arthur, 2000).

Several post-1964 investigators of assimilation theory indicated that the most comprehensive assault on classical theory was raised by these basic questions: “Who exactly is the mainstream?” and “What are the targets of assimilation?” From their perspectives, these very important questions have never been completely answered (Alba & Nee, 2003; Hirschman, 1999;

Jacoby, 2004;Rong, & Preissle, 1998). But both questions need to be answered. By avoiding an answer the classical theorists were increasing the American cultural divide and making a mockery of the theory of assimilation (Glazer, 1963). These questions were another key criticism of the classical assimilation theory.

The Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 changed United States immigration laws and abolished the quotas for the numbers of people who could enter the United States from developing nations each year. As a result, the numbers of United States immigrants has increased dramatically. The Classical model of assimilation has undergone a transformation in order to better accommodate today's new immigrants. However, the issues faced by Black African immigrants were still not sufficiently addressed by the classical theory model because it did not allow for the consideration of hindrances such as systematic racism and other biases in American society that are unique to immigrants of color, particularly those of African descent. For these reasons and others alternative assimilation theories have been developed to challenge the classic assimilation model (Alba & Nee, 2003; Dodoo, 1997).

The next model to be discussed is the **Segmented Assimilation Theory**. The Segmented Assimilation Theory (SAT) examined the adaptation of immigrants from the perspective of a gradual mobility across generation. One view of segmented assimilation was that a rapid advancement in wealth may occur when immigrant community members pool their resources, especially human capital to provide: economic empowerment, mutual sharing, and social cohesion. Inevitably this produced economic advancement. The segmented theory allows for examination of individual immigrant groups instead of a general immigrant population and allowed for comparison of socio-economic success of these groups as compared to socio-economic status of citizens of the host country (Hirschman, 1999). SAT is an adaptation of CAT

that adjusted for the culturally diverse background of the United States immigrant population. This adjustment was achieved amongst groups of tangent cultures via synthesis, boundary crossing blurring and shifting (Alba & Nee, 2003).

Although the Segmented Assimilation theoretical approach was developed to address inadequacies in Classical Assimilation Theory, the two models did share the tenant that subsequent generations of immigrants become increasingly successful at assimilating and becoming part of the mainstream economically, politically and socially within American society.

However, the segmented assimilation concept did have its own drawbacks. For example, one of its tenants was that urban black culture represents an under class, which the American mainstream viewed as the undeserving poor. The SAT was a more ideal model for investigating and understanding how Black African Immigrants were reacting to American assimilation, especially because in American society Blacks fail to be accepted by the dominant culture into which they must assimilate. Though Black African Immigrants may assimilate culturally, economically or behaviorally by copying the dominant hegemony, they were still unable to assimilate fully due to their physical looks, culture and linguistic characteristics (Alba & Nee, 2003). Because of their physical color, African immigrants are immediately placed into the same stereotypical category as Black Americans which for most in the American society was negative. For years assimilation theory has been criticized as just an Anglo demand on every other group to conform to white middle class protestant looks, ways and values. So for the African despite the differences in language, culture, ethnicity and religion, they are placed in the same category as black American with the impossible task of conforming. In this country race limits, blocks and sometimes denies Africans access to resources, equitable rewards and economic power.

Regarding assimilation in the United States, one certainty was that Black African Immigrants can not pass the color test, which makes it nearly impossible to avoid falling victim to the negative stereotypes in American culture. Most non-Black African immigrants from developing countries passed the test and slipped under the mainstream radar by passing as white. The majority of African immigrants viewed the issue of race as a divisive one in American culture.

The segmented theory allowed for views of success in assimilation outcomes to be determined by profession, labor, and business models for immigrants. The critical question considered with the segmented model, was can one be considered assimilated if they have obtained the American economic dream? If the American dream centered on home ownership, vast wealth, middle class status and American loyalty, one wondered whether or not the American dream was possible without a full cultural, ethnic, race and language transformation. Segmented theory allows for views of success in assimilation outcomes but had its limits in that it did not give full assimilation status to individuals who have reached the goals of achieving the American dream.

Acculturation was a phenomena which occurred when groups of individuals having different culture came into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups (Gordon, 1964), this changes may occur in one or both of the culture groups (Gordon, 1964). This was analogous to the type of cultural assimilation that many immigrants experienced when they enter United States society. Many of these immigrants rarely ever truly “melted” or lost all traces of their heritage, although many of them experience some form of assimilation (Jacoby, 2004). The rates and path each individual taken were mainly

determined by interaction between groups and the social conditioning that they received during this process (Jacoby, 2004; Rong & Brown, 2002b).

Cultural assimilation occurred when immigrants took on all of the characteristic of the host country through language and customs including food, clothing, housing, religion, etc. (Gibson, 1988; Jacoby, 2004; Rong & Preissle, 1998). The authors of this theory believed that the longer immigrants were in the host country, the more likely they were to become proficient in the language. The length of stay was a major contributing factor in how well immigrants can speak the language. The length of time immigrants spent in the host country contributed to how well they understood the language. And although they were able to gain a better understanding of the host country's linguistics, the immigrant's accents continued to hinder how well they could understood by the natives. Other factors that influenced how well cultural immigrants assimilated were race and class. In the past, immigrants brought with them their capital. It was no longer the rich, privileged, and educated who were coming to the United States. Individuals from all over the world have taken the opportunity to come to the United States because of the Hart-Cell Act of 1965. Consequently, many of today's immigrants had limited resources to bring with them. Race was another factor that affected how culturally successful the immigrant was at assimilation. Many of them experience discrimination on the basis that they did not resemble the dominant hegemony of the host country.

Once immigrant parents entered their new American environment, they quickly adapted to a whole new bureaucracy that involved enrollment of children in school, dealing with new landlords, new jobs, and a new money system just to name a few. In some countries of the world, cultural assimilation was viewed as automatic for newcomers to those societies, but in America

the methods used in their native country could not for the most part apply in America (Gibson, 1988; Jacoby, 2004).

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory was the position that assumed that in the American society, race played a role in the education system of the culture and that it adversely affected the adjustment of BAAI students and their parents in the culture.

Critical Race Theory was developed during the civil-rights era of the 1960's. CRT was a movement of activists and scholars who were interested in studying the relationship among race, racism, and power that continues to persist in United States culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT was originally developed from the field of law and used in sociology and other fields. CRT implies that the everyday experiences of racial discrimination, identity problems and the racial demographics of the United States hegemony had a direct link to social constructionism as demonstrated in the works of Derrick Bell, Ladson-Billings, Delgado and others. Critical race theory emerged from critical legal theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; G. Ladson-Billings, & Tate, W.T., 1995; López & Parker, 2003; Parker *et al.*, 1999) . Scholars argued that legal theory had failed to critically engage in analyzing social discourse in America. As a result, the dominant hegemony in our society continued to benefit while other members of society continued to be oppressed. (Crenshaw, 1995; Darder & Torres, 2004; Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; G. Ladson-Billings, 2005). Black critical legal scholars such as: Derrick Bell, Patricia Williams, Randall Kennedy, Lani Guiner, and others criticized critical legal theory pointing out that it failed to address the question of "race" and how it fundamentally affected social justice issues. As a result CRT was established (Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000).

Concerning the questions generated in critical legal theory, Cornel West and Ladson-Billings' weighed in by stating that: "Critical legal theorists fundamentally question the dominant liberal paradigms prevalent and pervasive in American culture and society. This thorough questioning is not primarily a constructive attempt to put forward a conception of a new legal and social order" (Parker et al., 1999, p. 12). West (1993) stated that critical legal theory had inconsistencies, in particular in claiming that its strategies should always be aimed at producing useful changes in our society. It was not enough to think about how broken down a thing was, we must do some fixing. And if this research uncovered flaws in the school system then a plan must be presented that attempted to correct those flaws in addition to reporting them (West, 1993).

There were six basic tenets of CRT. The first was storytelling which dealt with the disenfranchisement of an individual. Legal storytelling was encouraged by writers because they believed it gave immigrants an opportunity to share their experiences with racism and apply their unique perspective through various narratives. The second tenet was that racist behavior was not an aberration, but a normal practice of individuals. Thus, racist behavior was difficult to cure. The third tenet stated that elite groups acted against racist behavior in society only when it served a purpose that benefited them. The fourth tenet stated that race was a "social framework" that provided the context of social thought and relationships. The authors explained that the fifth tenet stated that characteristics ascribed to a particular group may change over time because of what may be happening with that particular race of people in the cultural realm. Finally, the sixth tenet stated that individuals had identities that intersect. This means they belonged to more than one group and as a result, they are affected by the disenfranchisement in many ways (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Parker et al., 1999). Although there were six tenets in CRT, storytelling and

counter storytelling were most applicable to the plight of African immigrants because it gave each individual an opportunity to tell his or her own story so that his or her voice can be heard.

Storytelling as Methodology

Storytelling was defined as an individual having an opportunity to share his or her experiences through his or her own lenses or own personal perspective. Counter storytelling was defined as another individual sharing the same experience as the storyteller, but his or her own perspective or through his or her own lens. According to Ladson-Billings (2005), the application of storytelling in Critical Race Theory (CRT) can be applied to education. In view of our education system, CRT can be a powerful tool to help promote equity for BAAI students (Parker et al., 1999) . Curriculum, instruction, assessment, school funding, and desegregation were areas where a relationship can be developed between CRT and education (Parker et al., 1999). This was important and relevant because the American legacy of racism persisted and as a result, inequalities in education for dark skinned people existed.

One of the tools for CRT researchers was to become storytellers or Ethnographers who collected the insights of African immigrant students and their communities and compiled them into information structures. Information structures were formats that frame student stories to expose their struggles by exposing their voices and simultaneously adding counter opinions. CRT storytelling by definition gave African immigrant students an opportunity to expose any issues they encountered in their new school culture (Champion, 2003; Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; López & Parker, 2003). If by chance oppression was found, it would hopefully be motivation to transform teaching methodologies to accommodate ethnic immigrant students. Immigrants being heard decreased the stresses of invisibility, opens ethnic conversations with the dominant hegemony and forced, at least, an intellectual acknowledgement

of one's hurts (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; López & Parker, 2003) . Since the majority of African immigrants were racially defined by Americans as Blacks, CRT was a very useful tool of analysis in this research.

Some might have wondered why race should be an issue at all since some think that affirmative action was the answer to the race problem. Crenshaw, Delgado, Ladson-Billings, Lopez, and Parker, looked at the storytelling and counter storytelling method as a part of critical race theory because these methods, in particular, underscored an important point within the theoretical framing of racial issues in America. Storytelling and counter-storytelling demonstrated that racism was still in existence in United States culture (1995, 2000, 2005, 2003, and 1999).

Despite the scientific refutation of race as a legitimate biological concept and attempts to marginalize race in much of the public (political) discourse, race continued to be a powerful social construct and signifier. Race has become a metaphorical way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division (Bell *et al.*, 2005; Crotty, 1998; Delgado, 1995). A spurious and useless political asset in election campaigns, racism is as healthy today as it was during the Enlightenment. It seems that it had a utility far beyond economy, embedded in daily discourse and more on display than ever before (Parker et al, 1999, Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2005; López & Parker, 2003).

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge of factors that influence the transition processes of Black African Adolescent Immigrants (BAAI) who have migrated from the African continent into American urban or suburban schools; to determine whether or not there was a correlation between having a smooth transition and the academic and social success of BAAI

students; and to identify any effective strategies used by BAAI students and their parents to foster a smooth transition.

Definition of the Problem

Several studies have revealed that immigrant students experience adjustment problems when they enroll in American schools (Traoré, 2004; Brewer, 2005; Goyol, 2006). Factors such as discrimination, language barriers, cultural changes, and customs affected their transition. It was important to investigate how these factors have affected the academic success of these students. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding immigrant students and will inform school administrators about the assimilation process.

Storytelling was the procedure used to gather data for the research questions. The steps in the research study included identifying the purpose of the study, identifying the phenomenon that was being studied, selecting the participants for the study, posing the initial research questions, describing the researcher's role in the study, describing the data collection methods, describing data analysis strategies, collaborating with the participants to construct the narrative and validate the accuracy of the story in order to produce the desired outcome and finally to complete the writing of the narrative account (Creswell, 2005; Gay, Mills, G.E., & Airasian, P.W., 2006).

Research Design

This was a qualitative exploratory research design style. The researcher used a questionnaire instrument to collect storytelling information from BAAI students and their parents. Once collected, the data was analyzed and interpreted to determine whether or not there was a correlation between a smooth transition of BAAI students and their social and academic success in American schools.

Collection Techniques

The individuals that participated in the research study were foreign born, Black African immigrants and their parents who have migrated to the United States. Male and female adolescent participants were between the ages of thirteen through nineteen. Male and female adult participants were over twenty-five years old. BAAI students and their parents were recruited by direct contact or referrals.

All participants received a recruitment letter or listened to a recruitment letter read over the telephone that described the purpose of the research study. Adult students who agreed to participate in the research study were given a consent form to sign and return to the principal investigator. Parents of students who were under eighteen years of age at the time of this study, and who agreed to allow their children to participate in the research study signed a consent form. After the parents signed the consent form granting permission for their children to participate in the research study then each minor signed a assent form to grant permission to be interviewed in the research study. Parents who agreed to participate in the research study were then given a consent form for their own participation.

BAAI students, along with their parents, were given the option as to whether they wanted to be interviewed at home or at a neutral location such as the library, restaurant, or mall. All the participants selected to be interviewed at their own residence. During the interview of BAAI students all participants were asked sixteen standard questions regarding their assimilation process into the United States urban or suburban elementary or secondary school system (Appendix F). The parents were asked ten standard questions regarding their child's transition process into the United States urban or suburban elementary or secondary school system (Appendix G). During the interview, if BAAI students and their parents did not understand the

sixteen or ten standardized questions that were asked the questions were modified so as to be understood by the interviewee. This gave clarity to the BAAI students and their parents regarding the questions. Each interview was approximately forty-five to sixty minutes long. Each interview was tape recorded on two types of tape recorders. One was a three hour cassette tape recorder. The other tape recorder was a ten hour digital tape recorder. Once the interview was completed each recorded interview was transcribed by typing it verbatim into a Microsoft Word document file. During the transcription a pseudonym was used to identify each of the participants.

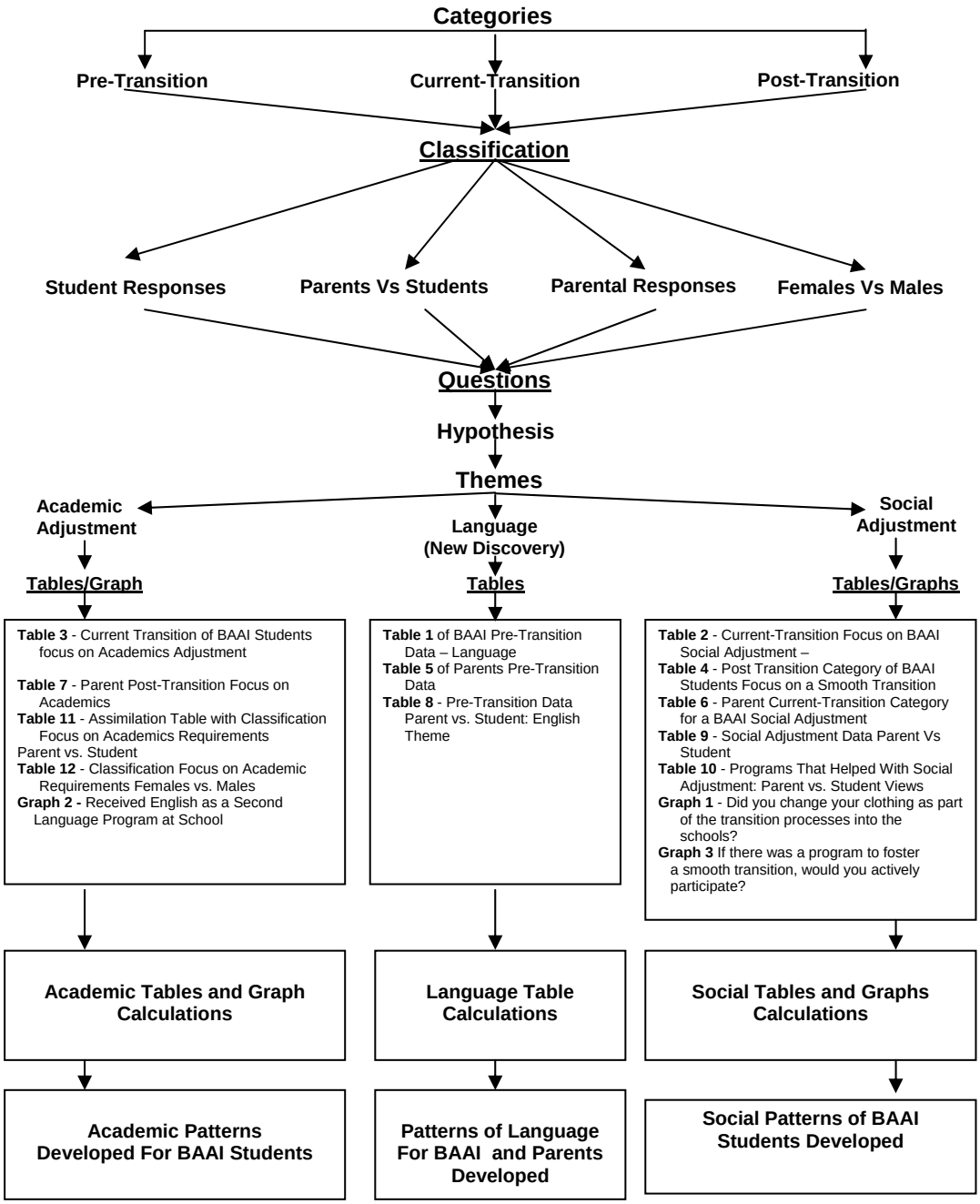
Once all the data was transcribed, each transcription was rechecked, reviewed and then categories were established. Three time categories were established from the raw data: pre-transition, current transition and post-transition. Each of the time categories were divided into four standard classifications. The first classification was BAAI responses to the interview questions. The second classification was parental responses to the interview questions. The third classification was comparing similar responses from similar questions that were asked of parents and BAAI students during the interviews. The final classification was comparing female and male parental responses to similar questions from the interviews.

Interview questions were reviewed and those particular responses that supported the hypothesis were identified. From this data themes about assimilation were established and identified. The themes that were established that supported the hypothesis were social and academic adjustment. A new theme that was discovered from the raw data was language. Once the three themes were identified tables and graphs were created. Four tables and one graph were generated to present the data concerning academic adjustment. The data for the social adjustment theme was summarized in five tables and two graphs. The data for the newly

discovered language theme was compiled into three tables. After raw data was put into tables and graphs, patterns were discovered among the calculated totals. Finally, mathematical calculations were put into percentages and fractions to illustrate the calculated totals. **(See Chart 1).**

Chart 1

DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGY MAP



Characteristics of the Sample Population

The demographic of the sample population that was researched were twelve BAAI students and seven parents. Each participant signed a consent form that explained the study and ensured that they understood the research project goals and aims.

The age range of BAAI students that participated in the research study was between thirteen and nineteen years old. Both male and female students participated in the research study. Participating BAAI students that were currently enrolled in school were interviewed to discuss the transition processes used individually to matriculate through urban or suburban elementary or secondary schools. The selection criteria for students that participated in the research study were as follows: Foreign born African Immigrants and one of their parents must have migrated to the United States. The BAAI students that participated in the research study were from Sub-Saharan African country of Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone. Nine participants were from Nigeria, one from Cameroon, one from Ghana and one from Sierra Leone.

The selection criteria for parents that participated in the research study were: adult participants were twenty-five and older, foreign born, and who were male and female. Participating parents were interviewed to discuss the transition processes used by their children as they matriculated through urban or suburban elementary or secondary school. A total of seven parents were interviewed. Six parents were from Nigeria and one was from Cameroon.

Data Collection Procedures

The participants were asked to take part in one interview. The data was collected from (storytelling) a face-to-face interview using "interview questions" as the primary instrument. Each participant was engaged in a one-on-one, semi-structured interview. Interviews were conducted to uncover things that could not be directly observed and to discover what methods

the participant used to foster a smooth transition (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) explained those things that were unobservable such as feelings, thoughts, and intentions. Qualitative interviewing assumed that other perspectives were meaningful. Qualitative research evolved from the rigid format of asking questions in a specific order. The researcher employed qualitative methods as a guide to avoid asking questions that had already been answered during the interview. This contemporary type of questioning was known as a face-to-face, semi-structured interview (Burck, 2005; Shank, 2006). This allows room to ask follow-up questions and explore other topics that were brought up by the participants (Burck, 2005; Patton, 2002).

An interview guide was used for the parents and BAAI students. The guide listed questions that dealt with the methods that BAAI students used to transition into urban or suburban elementary or secondary school. The interview guide facilitated a systematic method and is more useful when time is limited (Patton, 2002). The standardized open-ended interview required explicit and carefully worded questions that were developed before the interview. The major reason for using standardized open-ended interview for this study was to minimize variation when interviewing more than one subject. This caused the interview time to be used more efficiently and responses are easy to find and compare when the data was analyzed (Patton, 2002).

The BAAI participants and parents were interviewed at their residence. During the interview two types of questions were used: semi-structured and unstructured. Semi-structured questions were open-ended, the researcher had specific question, but the individual was allowed to give his or her own responses to the question. The unstructured questions were open-ended and broad. The researcher's intention was to ask questions related to the intended goal. The advantages of conducting an interview with open-ended questions using CRT was that BAAI

students could tell their stories using a set of guided questions that were related to their personal experiences. The questions related to transition were predetermined because there was specific intent of what needs to be gained from the response of the interviewee.

There were both advantages and disadvantages to using the interview process to obtain information. The advantage of an interview compared to a survey method, was that the researcher could obtain data that otherwise would not have been offered. The interview process gives latitude to the interviewer to clarify the responses gave by the interviewee and permitted the interviewer to obtain greater depth in the information collected. Utilizing a face-to-face interview, certain behavior could be observed which may be an indication of the need for further questioning for a response. Furthermore, the interview process could be used with individuals who were illiterate or those who are too young to read or write. Lastly, the interview process tended to reduce "no" response, and as opposed to a survey 90 to 95% subjects were willing to be interviewed (Patton, 2002).

The major disadvantages of the interview process were that it was expensive and time consuming compared to other methods of collecting data. Also the sample size were usually small due to the high cost of conducting the interview. Another disadvantage of this method of data collection was that if there was greater than 10 to 15% refusal, that may result in a bias in the research (Patton, 2002).

Data Recording

The interviews were tape recorded. Two types of recorders were used: one was a portable cassette tape recorder with several three hour cassettes, and the other a digital voice recorder with ten hours of electronic memory. Also notes were taken with a pad and pen during the interview while the participants responded to the questions.

Data Checking

During each interview session each question was checked off of the interview guide to ensure that a response was given for each question that was asked. Every individual's storytelling response was rechecked for data transcription errors.

Data Analysis

Standard qualitative analysis of the interviewer's notes during the interview and recorded interviews was used to identify any similar patterns in the transitional process for BAAI students into urban or suburban schools. The data collected from the taped interviews was electronically typed. The questions that were similar were grouped into similar categories.

Once the data was transcribed, the interview questions were organized question by question (Patton, 2002). The coding process involved looking at all of the individual responses to the interview questions and categorizing similar responses into the same tables and graphs. Coding assisted with the facilitation of the analysis of the data. After the coding, the researcher divided the data into categories based on responses received from the interviewees. Each question was reviewed and the following categories of pre, current and post transition were created**.** The questions were then grouped so that they were related to pre-transition into categories. "Did you speak English before coming to the United States? Did you learn English at home or at school?" were examples of pre-transition questions. Then the researcher looked at what questions focused on current transition of BAAI students into the United States schools. Some of the examples of the questions that were grouped into categories are, "Does your school offer English as a second language class? Are you aware of any programs designed to help immigrants at your school?" Finally, the questions that were categorized into the post transition category of BAAI students into the United States schools using such questions as, "If there were

programs to foster a smooth transition would you actively participate? Was there a particular school community or club organization that helped with a smooth transition?"

Once the categories were established, the students and parents responses were classified into pre, current and post transition. This was to determine which of the categories addressed the research hypothesis. During the analysis process of the hypothesis, it was discovered that BAAI students expressed that language was a prerequisite that assisted with the transition process into the United States urban or suburban schools. This was not part of the hypothesis, this was a new discovery.

Tables and graphs were created to address the academic and social adjustment of the BAAI students to answer the hypothesis. Tables and graphs were tabulated to determine whether there were patterns that supported the hypothesis.

Potential Risk and Benefits

There was no potential risk or discomfort for the participants in this research study. During the interview if the participants had expressed concern or if discomfort or frustration associated with the interview process was noticed, the participant was given an option to end the interview process. During the interview, the participant's family or guardian were permitted to be present during the interview process in case the interviewee expressed discomfort and requested to end the interview. Before the interview parents were made aware they had the option to pause or stop the process if it became too difficult for their child. Visual discomfort was not noticed and the participants did not express discomfort during the interview process. The interview would have been ended if a participant would have expressed discomfort.

Validity of the study

The trustworthiness of this research was the accuracy of details in asking, recording and analyzing all materials related to this study. It was necessary for the author to be objective and as neutral as possible during the collection of the data. The key to the trustworthiness of this study was that each student's voice could be heard through the writing. The essential components to establishing trustworthiness in this study were to ensure that there were no biases during the transcription and to ensure that what students and parents said was recorded.

Strengths and Limitations

The purpose of this study was to learn what factors influenced the transition of BAAI students into the United States schools. There were limited research studies that have given a voice to BAAI students. Many times BAAI students were not given an opportunity to tell their experience through their own lens. The objective of this research was to given BAAI students and opportunity to tell their own story using storytelling from their own perspective (Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Through the interview process BAAI students were able to tell their stories from their own viewpoints.

One of the strengths of this study was that students were given an opportunity to self-express and discuss their experiences in the United States schools. It gave them an opportunity to grapple with the transition process in how they interacted with their peers. This study also gave BAAI students a voice and the opportunity to share their experiences. The BAAI students were adjusting by any means necessary including utilizing their own strength, their community and friends.

Another advantage of this study was that the parents of BAAI students were given an opportunity to reflect on the transition process of their child from the time they entered United

States schools to present. This gave the parents an insight on how well or how difficult the transition process was for their child.

During the study some limitations were discovered. One limitation of the study was that it covered a small region of the United States. The students and parents were self selected. The study was limited by the number of students and parents in this sample. Another limitation was that there were not enough participants to get an accurate analysis of how in general BAAI students transitioned into the United States schools. The number of BAAI students from francophone countries that participated in the research study did not give a true picture of how they transitioned into the United States schools. The majority of the individuals that participated in the research study were mainly from one country.

Future Research

There should be further research conducted that focuses on what truly defines a smooth transition for BAAI students. Defining a smooth transition for BAAI students' adjustment into American schools will help at creating a systematic way of developing adjustment principles which may prove to help future generations of Sub-Saharan Africans transition into the United States.

Conclusion

The methods that were used for this research study was the interview process using several tape recorders. The process of the research study design was to gleam some insight of how BAAI students adjust to their new school culture through their own lens. The methods that the researcher used have given a better understanding of how BAAI students have adjusted in their American school culture.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Data and Findings

Introduction

The level of immigrants entering the United States from developing nations has increased dramatically in the last four decades. The Immigrant Act of 1965 also known as the Hart-Celler Act increased the number of immigrants coming from the continent of Africa to the United States. Although there is an increase in the number of African immigrants entering the United States, this number is still relatively low compared to other ethnic groups that are migrating to the United States. Rong and Brown (2002) explained that this relatively low number is associated with the long and expensive journey and a lack of strong domestic Black advocacy groups influencing United States immigrant law. As a result of the large influx of immigrant students into American schools, the schools themselves now reflect a variety of ethnic groups from developing nations. Typically, these people have their own beliefs and traditions, which have changed the face of the United States school systems dramatically.

The hypothesis was set to identify relevant underlying factors that affect the social and academic transition of Black African Adolescent Immigrant (BAAI) students into United States urban or suburban schools. To determine once BAAI students enter United States schools, what methods do they and their parents use to ensure the student's smooth transition socially and academically? In addition, this study was designed to determine whether or not there exists any correlation between a smooth transition and the academic success of BAAI students.

This study analyzed the data by comparing the responses of parents and students using closed and opened ended interview questions. These questions were designed to elicit storytelling responses to gleam the transitional experiences that BAAI students have encountered

in American schools. The findings revealed three major categories: pre-transition, current-transition, and post-transition which captured the experiences of BAAI students.

Description of the Data Gathering Methods

Standard qualitative analysis of researcher notes during the interview and recorded interviews were used to identify similar patterns in the transitional process for BAAI—students into American urban or suburban elementary or secondary schools.

The interviews were tape recorded. Two recorders were used: One was a portable cassette tape recorder with several three hour cassettes. The other one was a ten hour digital tape recorder. The data collected from the interview questions was tape recorded while the interviewer made additional notations on paper. The tapes were transcribed electronically. To facilitate analysis of the data, responses to each interview question were evaluated and response categories developed. Individual answers to questions were then grouped accordingly and organized into tables. Finally, the researcher classified responses into pre-, current, and post-transitional categories to identify similarities and differences affecting the transition of BAAI students to American schools.

Description of Data Procedures Used

Data was collected from a face-to-face interview using “interview questions” as the primary instrument. Participants were engaged in one-on-one semi-structured interviews geared toward them telling their story. Interviews were conducted to uncover things that cannot be directly observed and to discover BAAI experiences and those of their parents; as well as to determine what methods the participant are using or had used to foster a smooth transition.

Methods of Analysis to the Solution of the Problem

The researcher conducted this research to find out how BAAI students transition into American urban or suburban schools and what methods they and their parents used to ensure a smooth transition. It is imperative that this research be conducted because little data is available to support the growing number of BAAI students entering urban and suburban schools and to aid the school personnel address the issues they must face.

The method used for this research was to elicit each BAAI student and his/her guardian(s) electing to be interviewed to answer questions in a storytelling manner regarding any methods used when transitioning into urban or suburban schools.

The theoretical framework that was used for the study was Critical Race Theory (CRT). Under CRT, storytelling is a culturally viable form of information transference between interviewer and interviewee.

How Data was organized, coded and collected

Once the data was transcribed, through the analysis of the data, categories emerged. The data was categorized into three basic categories: pre, current, and post-transition. It was further sub-divided into four classifications: BAAI students, parents, student versus parents and parents divided by gender. Data tables were created to give a side by side comparison of student and parent responses to each question that was asked. The hypothesis was evaluated in terms of groups of questions and themes were labeled. Then fractions and percentages as representations to denote the patterns that developed.

Researcher's Descriptive Field Notes

The Children

During the interview process, the first group of BAAI students interviewed was initially very reluctant to answer the questions. The researcher had to assure them that pseudonyms would be used to protect their identities. During the interviews, the majority of the questions had to be reworded several times to be understood by the students. There are several factors that may have made rewording necessary. The vocabulary used in the interview was probably above the grade level of the interviewees. The researcher's accent may have been viewed as too americanized, and this may have added to the difficulty students had in understanding the questions. Finally, the standardized form of the questions could have also added to their difficulty understanding the initial questions. The researcher used probing questions to elicit additional information as needed to gain more in depth responses.

In the first interview there were three sisters Mary, Joy, and Helen. The oldest, Helen, was enthusiastic about how well she had adjusted to her new culture. Similarly, Joy expressed that it was difficult at first, but that she had adjusted. Mary appeared to have had the most difficulty adjusting because she said that when she first came, she did not attend the same school as her two sisters. So, she had to learn to adjust on her own without anyone there who understood what she was going through because she was the only African student at her school.

Once the tape recorder was turned off, the three girls discussed a common concern, namely, that their parents wanted them to only marry an African man, preferably one from their own tribe. The girls admitted that their parents feel that the American men are no good. But, the girls feel they should be able to select whom they want to marry and that it should not be based

on whether he is African or what his tribal affiliation is. All three of them believed one's race and tribe should not be a determining factor in whom they should marry.

Two young men were interviewed in the second session. They are friends, Daniel and Brian. After the interview, Daniel, a Muslim, expressed his belief that his religious affiliation affected his acceptance into the American youth culture of his school. Daniel says, "The majority of my friends are African or soccer players. I feel that all Muslims should not be judged by what a few Muslims are doing wrong in society; it should be based on individual merit." Brian, on the other hand, showed a great deal of confidence in himself. He said that this confidence comes from having to deal with so much rejection by his peers in the beginning of the transition period. Now, he believes that what people do or say don't really matter and their comments no longer bother him very much.

The third interview session was with Victor and Monroe. These two brothers approached the transition process very differently. Victor wanted neither to be seen nor heard as an African. When talking to him, one cannot hear an accent from his speech. He behaved much like the typical American youth. Within the last four years that he has been in America, he felt he had successfully transitioned socially and mastered the vernacular of the youth culture. Monroe, his brother, was more reserved and quiet, concerning himself primarily with developing his academic abilities and achievement rather than being concerned about acceptance into the youth culture.

The fourth session was with two sisters, Faith and Grace. Both appeared to have a great deal of confidence. They were interested in maintaining their African culture and identity while at the same time showed interest in dating. They believed that most likely the young men they

will be involved with would not be from their ethnic or cultural group; this reality caused some concern to their mom whose wish was for her daughters to marry a man from their tribe.

The fifth session with Rose was fascinating. She lived in the outskirts away from the African or African-American community. She struggled with speaking English language fluently. The interview questions had to be reworded many times before she understood enough to respond to them. Before the interview, Rose expressed that she was very lonely because she had no friends. Rose smiled a lot but it appeared that she greatly missed her former life before transitioning from Cameroon to the United States. Rose expressed the desire to have friends she can go out with and who can call her at home sometimes.

During the sixth session, Janet was interviewed. The presence of her father during the interview process influenced her responses to the questions. Had her father not been present, as was the case with all of the others students interviewed, she may have answered some or all of the questions differently.

The seventh and final interview was with a student named JoAnne who had just completed her first year of college. The questions did not have to be repeated because she understood them. She understood them and was able to identify clearly what the transition issues of BAAI students were. She had lived in the United States for nine years and she was able to reflect on the adolescent transition process.

Each student expressed a sincere desire to answer each question asked. In the midst of struggling with teenage issues, BAAI students also had to navigate two cultures, one old and one new. At the core of the struggle was their ability to successfully assimilate into a new school culture by integrating it with the conflicts and mixed imprints from their old society.

The Parents

In the first session, two parents were interviewed. A husband and wife team was very open about their view of how they see the country. Before the interview process started, Ada BAAI mother welcomed me with open arms into her home. Ada stated that she does not like the behavior of American children at all. She believed that they were very disrespectful to their parents and do not have any regard for established rules in society. She further explained that where she comes from one was required to show respect toward the elders of the community. Additionally, she explained that since American children were so rude, she had no desire for her three daughters to date American boys. Ada said "I only want them to date Nigerian men and preferably from my own ethnic group." Also, both Ada and her husband, James explained that they have noticed their children do not want to speak their native language when they are in public. Both of them explained that they made it clear that this behavior will not be acceptable. Not only were their children now required to communicate in their native language to their parents in public, they were not permitted to speak English in their household. They explained that it was important not to forget where you were from. Ada and James stated that, the only thing that will identify their children as a Nigerian in time will be their ability to speak their native language. The longer they are here, the more they become Americanized. They also expressed that when, go back to Nigeria, they would still need to be in communication with their people.

Next, Joseph and Anna were interviewed (After the interview I had an opportunity to talk with them extensively). Anna's major concern for her children was how difficult the transition process had been for her children. She explained that "I have been debating about purchasing a house." She went on to explain that the reason was because the transition process has been very

difficult for them and, “I don’t want them to experience it again. I am afraid if we buy a house and move to another school district they will have to start all over again with getting used to the school.” She further explained that she was not really willing to see her children go through the transition difficulties of being called names, food being thrown at them and classmates making fun of them because they were Africans.

Joseph explained that his biggest disappointment so far had been the education system, specifically, the limited assistance offered to immigrant children to help with transition to school. He said, “Since this is a nation of immigrants, one should be accepted without being [victims of] discrimination by members of society because of your accent, skin color, race, and ethnicity. There should be a program at each school designed specifically to help immigrant children with transition difficulties they experience in the school. Since this is a nation of immigrants the country should be accustomed to immigrants and not treat them badly. All of us were once immigrants, except the Native Americans. There should be no problem once you come to the United States because we are all immigrants.”

The last three interviews were with Eunice, Ven, and Timothy who all expressed concerns regarding how American children do not respect adults. Eunice finds that it had been difficult to maintain African traditions because the pressure to assimilate was so strong. She explained that she maintained her African culture with her children by making sure they spoke their native language at home and she constantly showed them the customs of their native country.

The parents wanted to hold on to their traditional beliefs and were working as diligently as possible to make sure they do not lose the cultural beliefs they brought with them from their native country. They were also working hard to transfer those beliefs to their children.

It was to the advantage of this research to bring together the intergenerational relationship between the child and their parents. Documenting the experiences of both the child and their parent(s) as they navigated the cross-cultural boundaries during their immigrant transition revealed that there were many perspectives within the same family regarding the challenges that BAAI students and their families faced as they integrated into a new society.

Participants

Twelve students and seven parents participated in the research study. The study focused on student participants from sub-Saharan African countries. The students that were interviewed were from the following countries: Cameroon, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. The majority of the students were from Nigeria. The students were between thirteen and nineteen years of age. There was one thirteen year old, one fourteen year old, five sixteen year old teenagers, three eighteen year old adolescents, and one nineteen year old adolescent. The length of their stay in the United States ranged from two to eleven years. Fifty percent of them attended urban schools and the other fifty percent attended suburban schools.

Of the seven parents interviewed, three mothers and four fathers were included. The parents were from Cameroon and Nigeria. The majority of the parents interviewed were from Nigeria. Many of the parents interviewed had more than one child that participated in the study. One parent had three children that were interviewed. Seventy-five percent of the students who were interviewed also had at least one parent who participated in the study. Twenty-five percent of the students that participated in the research study did not have their parent or another sibling to participate in the research study with them. Forty percent of the children interviewed had both parents participate in the study.

The research consisted of interview questions designed to elicit storytelling to reveal possible methods used by BAAI students and parents that contributed to a smooth transition into the American school systems. The data collection method used was face-to-face interviews with each individual. The collected data from the closed and open ended interview questions were: taped, transcribed, and tabulated into three descriptive tables: a pre-transition table, a current-transition table, and a post-transition table; and bar graphs.

Relationship to previously cited research explicitly

Studies of international students revealed that some of them experience adjustment problems in U.S. schools. Certain factors such as discrimination, language barriers, cultural changes, and customs affected their transition. It was important to investigate the effects of transitioning and the affect on academic success. The findings could help schools to ease the transition of immigrant students, and aid in district's adequate yearly progress (AYP) data.

One background study on international students revealed that those who had quick adjustments to U.S. culture scored higher on test. The author further suggested that universities should spend more money on resources to aid their adjustment (Brewer, 2004). In 1954 there were 34,332 international students studying in the U.S., in 1988 the number increased to 356,000 and by 2003 the numbers had risen to 586,000 (Kishimoto, 2005; Mori, 2000; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994). All of these authors contend that the conditions were ripe for the numbers of international students in the U.S. to continue to increase. As a result of the increased numbers of international students a number of studies (Essandoh, 1995; Goyol, 2006; Hayes & Lin, 1994; & Pedersen; 1991) have attempted to address acculturation and problems that international students must face.

There are many studies that suggested that international students on the college level experienced some problems transitioning into U.S. schools. On the other hand, there were limited studies on Black African adolescent immigrants and their difficulties transitioning into U.S. schools. A study by Traore (2004) of 15 Black African Adolescent Immigrant students showed that some of the students did experience some form of transitional difficulties into U.S. schools. In order to gain a better understanding of methods Black African Adolescent Immigrant students used to foster a smooth transition into U.S. schools.

The issues that BAAI students faced during assimilation into American culture and school systems were evaluated using Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Post-Colonial Theory (PCT). Once BAAI students entered United States urban or suburban schools, many of them felt they had to assimilate into the school culture. By assimilating they felt they had to abandon their native culture and take on the characteristics of host country's ideas and beliefs (Authur, 2000; Gordon 1964; Rong & Preissle 1998; Salins, 1997). Although many BAAI students try to use the "melting" concept to fit into their new school environment, some experience greater success if they approached the culture with the "tossed salad" approach rather than changing themselves to fit into the school environment (Dodoo, 1997; Jacoby, 2004; Rong & Brown, 2004).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was developed out of the civil-rights era and is an excellent theory to help evaluate the findings of the BAAI study. Theorist like: Gloria Ladson-Billings, Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Kimberle Crenshaw and William Tate helped to examine the relationship that race played in the transition process of BAAI students. In particular, CRT advocated storytelling as a way to uncover the personal experiences of BAAI students in the transition process of the assimilation into U.S. urban or suburban schools (Champion, 2003; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006).

Takougang (2005) contended that post-colonial structures such as the educational system were helping to block a wide open exchange about oppressive pressures on certain international students such as BAAI's. Fhulu, suggested that the educational system had been negatively influenced by its colonial past and now needed to embrace a pedagogy of hope (Nekhwevha, 1999).

The Anglophone communities instituted in Africa and America are the most obvious and significant manifestation of colonialism and European dominance. This manifestation in an educational system may be a curse or a blessing to the formal education of an international student (Neke, 2005). Violet reported that hybridity was rendered so that international students could use colonial languages in conjunction with their native language. This way, each language could be utilized alongside the others (Lunga, 2004). Ngugi contended that strong dominance of English backed by governments, businesses, institutions destroyed African culture (Currey, 1986).

Social stratifications in society backed by western hegemony maintained a colonial mentality (Tikly, 2001). Colonial mentality was a slave mentality that placed people of color behind the Caucasian. The psychological residue was intimidation, exploitation, and degradation as exemplified in education, media, and history (Traoré, 2004; & Kromah, 2002). Post-colonial theory sheds light the theoretical perspective on the present day vestiges of the past colonizers from a historical point of view (Hallward, 2001).

Classifying Data into Several General Categories

The data was divided into three major categories: pre-transition, current-transition, and post-transition. Each of these categories was sub-divided into four classifications. The first classification contains the responses of BAAI students to the interview questions. The second

classification contains the responses of the parents of BAAI students. The third classification compares the responses of BAAI parents to the responses of BAAI students. The finale classification compares the responses of the parents divided by gender. The data from each classification was displayed in several tables and bar graphs. After summarizing the data in tables and bar graphs, each classification was matched against the hypothesis to address the issues in the hypothesis and to determine the division of the themes. Each table and its group of questions addressed a particular theme. Finally, mathematical calculations were used to determine the pattern and trend of all the answers for each of the storytelling responses.

BAAI students were asked sixteen standard questions regarding their adjustment process into the United States urban or suburban elementary or secondary schools (Appendix F) CRT was theoretical frame work that was used. Under CRT, storytelling was a valid communication method which allowed each individual an opportunity to tell his or her experience from his or her own prospective. To illustrate, students were asked the following: 1) What is the name of the country where you were born? 2) Before you came to the United States, did you speak English? and 3) How long have you lived in the United States?

Table 1 summarizes a variety of student responses to a group of questions asked. Table 1 addressed the pre-transition data of BAAI students. The developing theme surrounded whether English was acquired prior to transitioning to America. This was in order to determine whether or not the acquisition of English helped to facilitate a smooth transition for BAAI students.

Table 1 of BAAI Pre-Transition Data											
Country	**Name**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Years lived in Native Country**	**Years lived in America**	**Spoke English Before coming to the United States**	**Learned English at Home**	**Learned English at School**	**Learned English at Home/ School**	**Learned English at Church**	**Learned English in Community**
Nigeria	Mary	Female	13	11	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Nigeria	Victor	Male	14	10	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Cameroon	Rose	Female	16	14	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Nigeria	Monroe	Male	16	12	4	Yes		Yes			
Nigeria	Joy	Female	16	14	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Nigeria	Grace	Female	16	6	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Nigeria	Janet	Female	16	8	8	Yes		Yes			
Nigeria	Helen	Female	17	15	2	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Ghana	Daniel	Male	18	13	5	No		Yes			
Nigeria	Faith	Female	18	7	11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Sierra Leone	Brian	Male	18	12	6	Yes		Yes			
Nigeria	JoAnne	Female	19	10	9	Yes		Yes			
9-Nigeria 1-Cameroon 1-Ghana 1-Sierra Leone		**Females =8 Males=4**	**Range 13-19**	**Range 6-15**	**Range 2-11**	**Yes=11 No=1**	**Yes=7**	**Yes=12**	**Yes=6**	**Yes=1**	**Yes=1**

Pre-Transition Data of BAAI Students

The BAAI students' pre-transition data indicated that there were four countries of origin: Cameroon (one student), Ghana (one student), Sierra Leone (one student), and Nigeria (nine students). Under the classification of BAAI students with a theme of English preparation before immigrating to the United States three scenarios of how English was acquired were investigated: 1) English speaker before coming to the United States; 2) years of exposure to English before immigration to the United States; and 3) how did you learn English before coming to the United States.

The data in Table 1 revealed that seven of the twelve students learned some English at home. All twelve students learned a big portion of their English from grade school. Six of the

twelve students learned English from both home and grade school in their native country before immigrating. One student credited the church for teaching her English. One male student cited the community as a place where English was taught. The first pattern that emerged was that eleven of the twelve students acquired English before they immigrated to America. The second pattern that emerged was that all of the students were taught English from school, home, church and the community before migrating abroad.

The theme of whether or not English was spoken before immigrating to the United States was addressed in Table 1. Eleven of the twelve students spoke English before migrating to America. The question posed to the BAAI students did not address the level or degree of English that was learned or its comparability to American English. The pattern in Table 1 showed that a majority of the twelve respondents had some level of English proficiency before immigrating to the United States.

Finally, the question of BAAI students' exposure to English was addressed in Table 1 with the fact that Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Ghana were traditionally known as Anglophone countries, while Cameroon has a colonial history of being a Francophone-speaking country. The number of students from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Ghana, the Anglophone countries, adds up to eleven. The remaining student was from Cameroon, a Francophone community. The student from Cameroon was a female was from an Anglophone speaking portion of the country of Cameroon.

The range of years BAAI students lived in their native country prior to immigrating to the United States was six to fifteen years. Each of the twelve students was exposed to an average of eleven years in their native country before migrating to the United States. The pattern emerging

was that Anglophone communities dominate as the country of origin for those in the group who had migrated to the United States.

Under the category of current transition and the classification of BAAI students, Table 2 looked at the theme of social adjustment. Seven questions were designed to answer questions related to the hypothesis concerning BAAI students' social adjustment.

Table 2
Current-Transition Focus on BAAI Social Adjustment

Name	Gender	Years lived in the United States	Have you Heard negative cultural comments	Have you change your clothes	Do you have friends in school	Have you adjusted socially to the new school	Have you joined any organization that helped transition	Have you assimilated into school youth culture	Are you seen or heard as foreigner
Mary	Female	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Victor	Male	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rose	Female	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Monroe	Male	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Joy	Female	2	Yes & No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Grace	Female	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Janet	Female	8	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Helen	Female	2	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Daniel	Male	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Faith	Female	11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Brian	Male	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
JoAnne	Female	9	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Student=12	Females=8 Males=4	Range 2-11	N=1 Y=10 Y/N=1	N=3 Y=9	N=2 Y=10	N=3 Y=9	N=10 Y=02	N=1 Y=11	N=2 Y=10

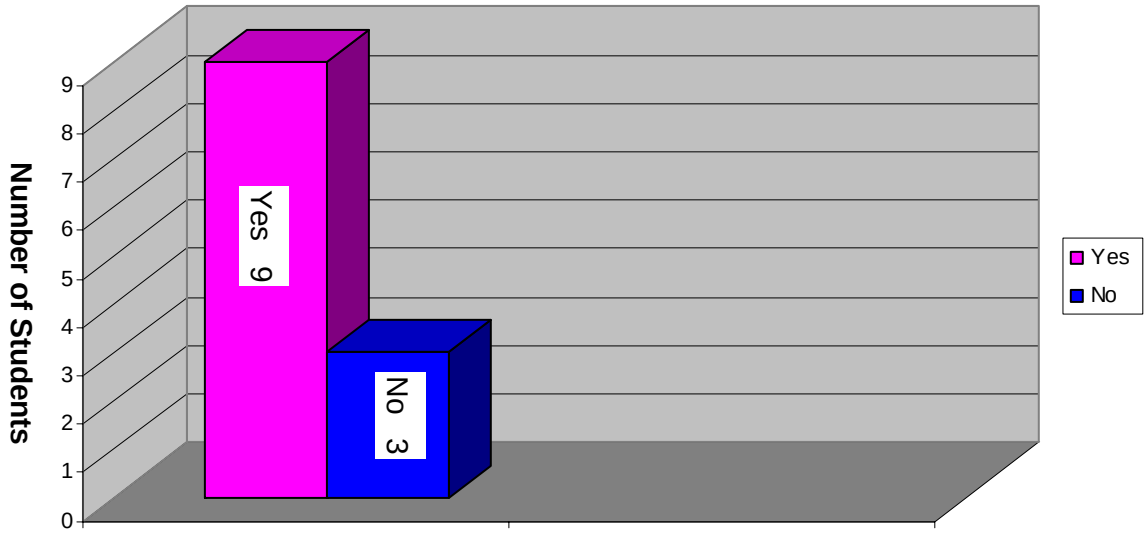
Current-Transition Focus on BAAI Social Adjustment

According to Table 2, eleven of the twelve BAAI students indicated that they have heard negative comments from their classmates about their African cultural heritage. Victor explained, "So, do you shoot things out of a straw, do you kill lions and bears with your bare hands? I think these are stupid questions; [they] made me angry, got [me] into fights and suspended from school. I believe they were asking me these questions to make fun of me." Grace had a similar experience: "Africans are ugly, African booty [is] scratchier and things like that. When I first came here [and] these things happened, I got into a lot of fights with kids because I thought I will not take it." Brian heard lots of comments like 'Africans smell bad!' or questions such as 'Do

you all walk around naked in the streets? Do you guys live with animals?' Brian continued, "We hear all that stuff. Most of the stuff I have heard from kids is degrading. I think they don't know that much." JoAnne recalled being asked 'Do you play with lions? Do you walk around naked?' but admitted, "You know there is a misconception about African continent, including the [African] countries." Some BAAI students explained that although these questions were degrading, they felt that the students were asking these questions to gain knowledge. Still, a majority of them believed the comments were deliberately being posed to make fun of them. The data in Table 2 and excerpts from the transcripts indicated that eleven of the twelve surveyed BAAI students experienced negative comments about their African culture.

According to Table 2 and illustrated in the graph 1 below, nine of the twelve BAAI students found it necessary to change their clothing to fit into the culture of the school. On the other hand, three of twelve stated their disagreement by saying they did not change their clothing as part of their assimilation process into the school system. The majority of the students answered that they changed their clothing to be accepted by their peers.

Graph 1
Did You Change Your Clothing as Part of the Transition Processes into the Schools?



The data in Table 2 showed that eleven of twelve answered yes that they have assimilated into the school culture. JoAnne explained, “In the beginning, it was a long and difficult transition. I had to assimilate to the way people act, the way people talk, the English is much faster. I actually [had] to get used to the way the teachers teach, to the school, to everything pretty much, including the weather.” Faith, too, remembered that it was a struggle: “At first when I came, but now I say yea, being here [for] eleven years. Getting use[d] to the people, it was a lot of new things. Back in Nigeria everybody would come as one, but here nobody knows you, [you] are just out there by yourself [and] it [was] kind of hard [to] really get along with people. I was so different, people really didn’t understand me. I looked different, everything about me was different.” The pattern was that most of the BAAI students felt that they had assimilated into the school youth culture. The transcript also suggested that of the eleven students who feel that they had assimilated all feel that the adjustment to the new school youth culture had taken place over time.

Furthermore, Table 2 data showed that nine of twelve or seventy-five percent of BAAI students said that they had socially adjusted to their new school environment. Grace said, “When I came, I found some people wanted to be my friends and others did not, it did matter to me. It was really hard for me because I was friends with only those who wanted to be my friend.” Joy agreed, “I adjusted talking to them. If you don’t talk you will not make any friends, [so] you teach them everything you know.” Victor said, “I have adjusted. I had an American friend who hooked me up, told me how to pronounce things.” For Faith, knowing and keeping her focus helped her transition socially: When I came here, I had in my mind that education was number one. That was what really drove me. It did [not] matter someone was talking about me, did [not] like the way I dress; education was on my mind and that is what I want [ed] to achieve. My parents support me, my family being there for me, my teachers, they helped me out. That is how I made it. That is how I went out socially and that is how I got my friends now.”

Ten of the twelve BAAI students in the study were able to forge out new friendships with their peers. This was despite challenges presented by differences in cultural background and language. Such friendships were reflective of the successful efforts to assimilate into their school youth culture. Brian said, “I was able to form friendships. It did not happen over night, it took me a long time. Being quiet, I took my time to know the right kids and it took me a while to study the kids who were my type or the right ones. The first thing that help[ed] me out was that I was smart; [I] did my work. I stayed on my own and a lot of them came to me and ask[ed] me for help with the [school] assignments, so that helped me. I got to know the kids [this way] and that help[ed] me.” Rose’s response was not typical of the other responses: “Sometimes I go to the principal. I don’t have close friends yet.” The pattern was that the most of BAAI students were able to acquire new friendships in their new environment.

Table 2 indicated that ten of the twelve students said they were seen or perceived of as foreigners. Daniel said, “People do realize that you are different, by your accent.” “Yes,” said Brian, “when they hear me, they hear my foreign accent. On the other hand two of twelve students explained they were neither seen [treated as foreigners] nor were their accents in their view, heard by their classmates as foreigner. The pattern was that ten of the twelve students believe that they were not only heard but were seen as foreign.

Under the theme question “Have you joined any organization that my have helped you with the transition?” ten of the twelve students answered no. The two students who answered yes made reference to sports teams that they joined at school. The pattern that emerged was that the majority of the students did not join any organization to aid them with their transition into their new school.

Table 3 was summarized the category of current transition. This category was sub-divided under the classification of BAAI students which looked at the theme of academic adjustment. Five questions were put into Table 3 to address the students’ academic adjustment.

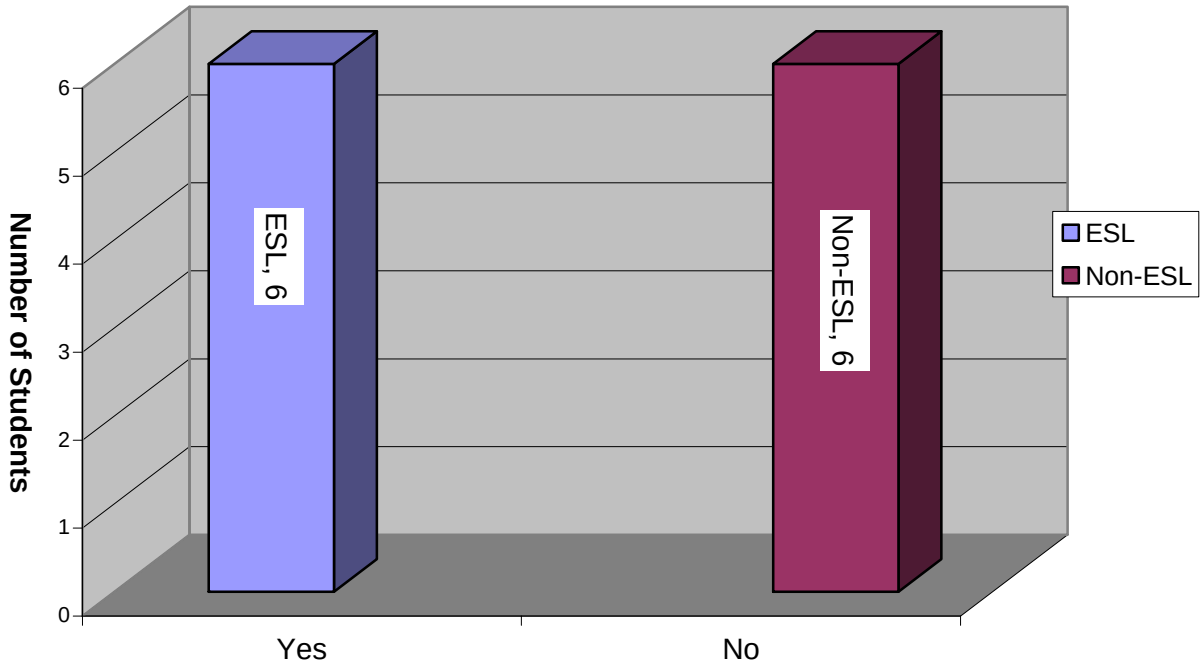
Table 3
Current Transition of BAAI Students focus on Academics Adjustment

Name	Gender	Years lived in the United States	Do your school offer ESL classes	Programs design to help with the Academics requirements	Have you joined any organization that helped transition	Have you assimilated into school youth culture	Are you seen or heard as foreigner
Mary	Female	2	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Victor	Male	4	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rose	Female	2	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Monroe	Male	4	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Joy	Female	2	No	No	No	No	Yes
Grace	Female	10	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Janet	Female	8	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Helen	Female	2	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Daniel	Male	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Faith	Female	11	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Brian	Male	6	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
JoAnne	Female	9	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Student = 12	Females =8 Males=4	Range 2-11	N=6 Y=6	N=8 Y=4	N=10 Y=2	N=1 Y=11	N=2 Y=10

Current Transition of BAAI Students focus on Academics Adjustment

Table 3 showed that eleven of the twelve or ninety-one percent of BAAI students indicated that they had successfully assimilated into the youth culture of their school while one or nine percent responded that they had not assimilated. Of the twelve students that were interviewed, two indicated that they were not seen or heard as a foreigner while ten indicated they were seen and heard as a foreigner. Table 3 and Graph 2 illustrated that of the twelve BAAI students interviewed, six received some form of English as a Second Language class to improve their English. Grace explained, “When I came, yes, I did in Middletown. Instead of going to English classes, we went to ESL. We would do computer games in English. It would teach us how to sound words out. I learned English better compared to if I didn’t have it.” Daniel concurred, saying, “It was a requirement. You had to take an English class every year.” Of the six BAAI students that received ESL program at their school two were from an urban school district and four were from a suburban school district. Half of the interested students actively participated in a program designed by the school to improve their academic performance.

Graph 2
Received English As a Second Language Program at School



Ten of the twelve students interviewed did not participate in an organization designed to ease the difficulty of transitioning. When asked if they joined any organization designed to address these challenges, ten BAAI students responded no; only two respondents actually participated in a school entity designed specifically for this purpose. Further, when asked if they were aware of programs designed to help immigrants meet academic requirements, eight BAAI students were unaware of any such program while two students responded that they knew of and participated in programs meant to assist them meet academic requirements (see Table 3).

Table 4 summarized data from the post transition category for the BAAI student classification. This category addressed the theme of whether or not there is a smooth transition in the post-transition phase of immigration. Five of the sixteen questions asked in the interview were presented because they were best suited to address the post-transition theme of BAAI students.

Table 4
Post Transition Category of BAAI Students Focus on a Smooth Transition

Name	Gender	Years lived in the United States	Changed Clothing part of transition process	Have you joined any organization that helped transition	Have you attended more than one school	If programs available to foster a smooth transition will you actively participate.
Mary	Female	2	Yes	No	Yes	No Answer Given
Victor	Male	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rose	Female	2	Yes	No	No	Yes
Monroe	Male	4	Yes	No	No	Yes
Joy	Female	2	No	No	No	Yes
Grace	Female	10	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Janet	Female	8	No	No	Yes	Yes
Helen	Female	2	No	No	No	No Answer Given
Daniel	Male	5	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Faith	Female	11	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Brian	Male	6	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
JoAnne	Female	9	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Female=8 Male=4		Range=2-11	N=3 Y=9	N=10 Y=2	N=5 Y=7	Yes=10 No answer given=2

Post Transition Category of BAAI Students Focus on a Smooth Transition

American youth culture has distinctive dress and often serves to include or exclude individuals from various peer groupings (Table 4 above). Not surprisingly, nine of the twelve or seventy-five percent felt compelled to change their clothing in order to be accepted by their peers. Victor said "[I] start wearing baggy clothes to fit in. In Nigeria, I tucked [in] my shirt," said Monroe. Faith observed, "I watched what the other students w[ore]. [I] mimicked them." Three of the students as the data showed did not change their clothing as part of the transition process into the United States school system.

Of the twelve students interviewed, Table 4 showed that seven attended more than one school while five have attended only one school each. Students explained that they changed schools once their parents were able to buy or rent their own home instead of living with friends or relatives.

Graph 3
If there Was a Program To Foster a Smooth Transition
Will You Actively Participate?

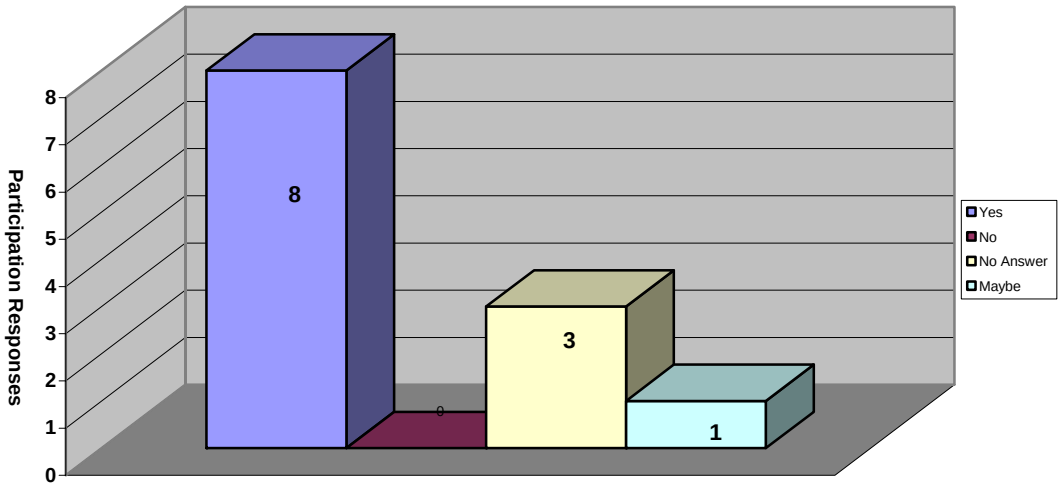


Table 4 and graph 3 showed that, if programs were available to foster a smooth transition, ten of the twelve BAAI student said they would have actively participated in the program. Two students did not respond to the question. One indicated she or he may have participated in the program.

Ten of the twelve students interviewed did not participate in an organization designed to ease the difficulty of transitioning. When asked if they joined any organization designed to address these challenges, ten BAAI students responded no; only two respondents actually participated in a school entity designed specifically for this purpose.

Parents Pre-Transition Data

An analysis of the data summarized in Table 5 revealed the following. The parents interviewed numbered seven. The countries of origin were Cameroon and Nigeria. Under the category of pre-transition for parents, language was closely examined. Since English was the language of the host country where the initial transition took place, the parents' language was closely examined. To begin the process, parents were asked to respond to these four questions:

1. Did you speak English before coming to America?

2. Did you teach English to your child?

3. Did your child receive any formal training in English?

4. Did you teach your child your native tongue?

In response to the first question, all seven parents indicated that they learned to speak English before immigrating to the United Sates. Note, however, that neither the degree of English learned nor nationality of the teacher of English was asked. Still, all seven parents spoke English before their transition to the United States and five of the seven parents taught English to their children. Only two of the seven parents responded that they did not teach English to their children.

Table 5 of Parents Pre-Transition Data

Country	**Parent**	**Did you speak English before you came to the United States**	**Did you teach your child English**	**Did your child receive formal training in English**	**Did you teach your child native language**
Nigeria	Adam	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Eunice	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Anna	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Nigeria	James	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	Venn	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Joseph	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Nigeria	Timothy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nigeria=6 Cameroon=1	Parent=7	Y=7	Y=5 N=2	Y=7	Y=5 N=2

All of the BAAI students' parents received formal training in English before coming to the United States. However, the degree, level, accent or how long the training occurred was unknown. Under the question "whether their children received formal training in English," the parents responded seven of seven that their children received formal training in English.

Finally, parents responded to the question of whether they taught their children their native tongue. Five parents responded yes, that they taught their native language to their child or

children. Ada said, “In fact, we used our mother language at home and they were taught English in school.” Two of the parents responded that they did not teach their native language to their child or children. Joseph explained, “Within our own family, we spoke English. Beside the school, they learn[ed] English. Unfortunately, I did not teach them our native language. I am regretting it now.”

Table 6
Parent Current-Transition Category for a BAAI Social Adjustment

Country	Parent	Did your child make major changes to language	Did your child make changes to dress	Did your child social adjust to the school environment
Nigeria	Ada	No	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Eunice	Yes	Yes	No
Nigeria	Anna	Yes	No	No
Nigeria	James	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	Ven	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Joseph	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Timothy	No	No	Yes
Nigeria=6 Cameroon=1	Parent=7	Y=5 N=2	Y=5 N=2	Y=5 N=2

Parent Current-Transition Category for a BAAI Social Adjustment

The total number of parents interviewed was seven, six were from Nigeria and one from Cameroon. This section of the study addressed the social transition period from their arrival in the United States to the present and how successfully they feel that their children have assimilated into the United States school system. Four questions were asked regarding these assimilation issues addressing language, change in attire, and social adjustment.

Approximately seventy-one percent of the parents believe that their child made major changes in their use of language when transitioning into the schools in the United States. Joseph complained, “Within that year, [they] had forgotten the sweet accent that we brought from

Nigeria. They have completely lost that. I think it is for their good. If you blend with the society that is in, you will enjoy it better." Approximately twenty-nine percent of the parents believed their child did not have to make major language changes while adjusting into the American school system.

Concerning changes in the way that the parents felt their child had to dress, approximately seventy-one percent or five of the seven parents felt that significant changes had been made in dress as part of their adjustment process into the United States school system. Seventy one percent of the parents said no program was available to help their child's transition.

When asked whether parents believed that their children had to make social adjustment to their new American school environment, most answered yes. Five of the seven parents believed that their child had to make social adjustments as BAAI students entered their new school environment. Two of the seven parents believed that their child did not make any adjustments in order to adapt to the new school. Across the board, approximately seventy-one percent of the parents believed that their child had to make changes to language, dress and social adjustment to be accepted in the youth culture.

Table 7
Parent Post-Transition Focus on Academics

Country	Parent	Was there a particular school community or club organization helped with smooth transition	Was there any program available in your community to help your child with a smooth transition into school	Was there a Program available to help your child with the academic requirements
Nigeria	Ada	No	No	No
Nigeria	Eunice	No	No	No
Nigeria	Anna	No	No	No
Nigeria	James	No	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	Ven	Yes	No	Yes
Nigeria	Joseph	No	No	No
Nigeria	Timothy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nigeria=6 Cameroon=1	Parent=7	Yes=2 N=5	Y=2 N=5	Y=2 N=5

Parent Post-Transition Focus on Academics

When parents were asked if there was a particular community, school, or club organization that helped them and their family transition smoothly into the school and/or community, five of the seven parents responded no; only two of the parents answered that they did receive help from a school, community and/or organization.

Table 7 also showed that of the seven parents interviewed, five or approximately seventy-one percent answered that there were no program available in their community to help their child or children with a smooth transition into the school. Two or approximately twenty-one percent said there were no program to help them transition smoothly into the school environment.

Finally, when asked "Was there a program available to help your child or children with the academic requirements of the school?" five parents said they were not aware of any program that was designed by the school to help with the academic requirements. Parents explained their child or children had to find out on the own what the academic requirements were in order to take the appropriate classes. Two parents explained that there was a program in the school to help students find out what the academic requirements were and help them select the appropriate classes. Approximately seventy-one percent of the parents believed there were no organizations or community programs to help facilitate a smooth transition for their child. Approximately twenty-nine percent believe that there were organizations, community programs or school programs to foster a smooth transition.

Table 8 Pre-Transition Data Parent vs. Student: English Theme			
Did you speak English before coming to the U.S.			
Parent	**Parent Response**	**Students**	**Students Response**
Ada	Yes	**Mary**	Yes
Eunice	Yes	**Victor**	Yes
Anna	Yes	**Rose**	Yes
James	Yes	**Monroe**	Yes
Ven	Yes	**Joy**	Yes
Joseph	Yes	**Grace**	Yes
Timothy	Yes	**Janet**	Yes
		Helen	Yes
		Daniel	No
		Faith	Yes
		Brian	Yes
		JoAnne	Yes
Parent=7	Y=7	**Students=12**	Y=11 N=1

Pre-Transition Data Parent vs. Student: English Theme

The data in Table 8 affirms that seven of the seven parents spoke English before emigrating and they also taught their children English. Eleven of the twelve students spoke English before migrating and learned it at home, school, community, and church (Table 1). This is an indication that there were some preparations made to assist the child on the part of the family with having a smooth transition into the United States school culture. This could possibly be viewed as the number one tool for BAAI students to acquire before transition into the United States school culture. Furthermore, it strongly indicates that eleven of the twelve students' advancement and future development in the American school system has a potentially strong link to their amount of English exposure in school, church, community, and home. The data seems to be indicating that their success could be linked to learning English prior to coming to the United States because they come from an Anglophone community. It could also indicate that it helped them greatly during the assimilation process.

Table 9 Social Adjustment Data Parent Vs Student			
Parents	**Did your child social adjust to the school environment**	**Students**	**Have you adjust to socially to the new school**
Ada	Yes	**Mary 13**	Yes
Eunice	No	**Victor14**	Yes
Anna	No	**Rose 16**	Yes
James	Yes	**Monroe 16**	Yes
Ven	Yes	**Joy**	Yes
Joseph	Yes	**Grace16**	Yes
Timothy	No	**Janet 16**	Yes
		Helen 17	Yes
		Daniel 18	No
		Faith 18	Yes
		Brian 18	No
		JoAnne 19	No
Parent=7	Y=4 N=3	Students=12	Y=9 N=3

Social Adjustment Data Parent Vs Student

Table 9 shows that when parents were asked if their child or children had adjusted to the social environment of the school, over fifty percent parents believed that their child or children have adjusted to the climate of the school culture. Less than fifty percent believed the opposite that their child have not adjusted to the school culture.

Also the data indicated that nine or seventy-five percent of the students who were asked if they had adjusted to the school environment although different from the school of their native country believed that they had indeed adjusted to their school. Three or twenty-five percent of the BAAI expressed that they were still experiencing difficulties adjusting to the school environment.

The data shows that over fifty percent of the parents believed that social adjustment was achieved smoothly. While seventy-five percent of the students believed that social adjustment was achieved smoothly. This adjustment included the ability to communicate with peers, make friends, and interact with others within the school realm.

Programs that Helped with Social Adjustment: Parent vs. Student Views

When asked if there were programs designed by the community to help with a smooth transition into the school, seventy-one percent of the parents that participated in the study expressed they were not aware of any program designed by the school to help with a smooth transition. While sixty-seven percent of the students that participated in the study expressed they were not aware of any programs designed by the school to help with a smooth transition (Table 10). On the other hand, approximately twenty-nine percent parents respectively expressed that they participated in a program designed to foster a smooth. Thirty-three percent of the students respectively expressed that they participated in a program designed to foster a smooth transition into the United States school.

Table 10
Programs That Helped With Social Adjustment: Parent vs. Student Views

Parents	Are there program designed by community to help your self and your child with a smooth transition into the school	Students	Are you aware of program designed to help with a smooth transition into the school
Ada	No	**Mary 13**	No
Eunice	No	**Victor14**	No
Anna	No	**Rose 16**	No
James	Yes	**Monroe 16**	No
Ven	No	**Joy 16**	Yes
Joseph	Yes	**Grace16**	Yes
Timothy	No	**Janet 16**	Yes
		Helen 17	No
		Daniel 18	Yes
		Faith 18	No
		Brian 18	No
		JoAnne 19	No
Parent=7	Y=2 N=5	Students=12	Y=4 N=8

Current-Transition Focus on Academic Requirements: Parents vs. Students

The data in Table 11 indicated that when parents and students were asked if they were aware of programs designed by the school to help immigrant students with their academic requirements, over fifty percent of the parents and approximately sixty-seven percent students expressed that they of the school fewer than fifty percent of the parents and thirty-three percent of the students indicated that they were made aware of program designed to assist with the academic requirements.

Table 11
Assimilation Table with Classification Focus on Academics Requirements
Parent vs. Student

Program or Programs available to help with the academic requirements			
Parents	**Parent Response**	**Students**	**Students Response**
Ada	No	**Mary 13**	Yes
Eunice	No	**Victor14**	No
Anna	No	**Rose 16**	Yes
James	Yes	**Monroe 16**	No
Ven	Yes	**Joy 16**	No
Joseph	No	**Grace16**	No
Timothy	Yes	**Janet 16**	Yes
		Helen 17	No
		Daniel 18	Yes
		Faith 18	No
		Brian 18	No
		JoAnne 19	No
Parent=7	Y=3 N=4	Students=12	Y=4 N=8

Classification Focus on Academic Requirements Mothers vs. Fathers

The purpose of this section to compare how mothers and fathers responded to a similar question. Both parents were asked if there were programs to advise their child or children about school academic requirements (i.e., required classes, electives, etc.). The results show that the beliefs of the mothers and fathers were nearly opposites. While none of the three mothers believed such programs existed, three-fourths of the fathers believed that such programs did exist. What accounts for this difference?

Table 12 Classification Focus on Academic Requirements Females vs. Males			
Program or programs available to help with the Academic requirements			
Mothers		**Fathers**	
Ada	No	James	Yes
Eunice	No	Ven	Yes
Anna	No	Joseph	No
		Timothy	Yes
Parent=3	N=3	Parent=4	N=1 Y=3

Test Initial Hypothesis

The initial hypothesis was to find out whether or not there was a correlation between smooth transition and social and academic success of BAAI student in American middle and secondary schools. In other words, does a smooth transition equal and/or aid the academic success of BAAI students in school? On the other hand, if BAAI students do not transition smoothly, can we say it does affect them academically? And, is the affect good or bad? Storytelling based on a series of interview questions was used to collect data from BAAI students. In the interview each BAAI student related their own experience constructed through their own lens. Based on these collected stories from face-to-face interviews, the data indicates a correlation between a smooth transition and the social adjustment of BAAI students. There was strong evidence that a smooth transition leads to the *positive* social adjustment of BAAI students. On the other hand, the data does not clearly show whether a smooth transition equates to academic success of BAAI students in United States urban or suburban schools.

Constructionism was the epistemological foundation for this study. CRT then provides the theoretical perspective for my social construct of the transition of BAAI students. Under CRT Storytelling was the base method for the research. A questionnaire and observation were used to collect data from each BAAI student regarding his/her transition experience through

his/her own lens. A comparative analysis was then performed on the collected data and notes. Based on the analysis of the collected data, there was a correlation between a smooth transition and the social adjustment of BAAI students. Additionally, it was revealed that BAAI students were linguistically prepared by their parents before their migration to America. Exposure to the English language in an English speaking school, church community and as well as being taught to speak English at home aided in the adjustment process at United States schools. Based on this analysis, it does not appear to be an obvious correlation between a smooth cultural transition and the academic success of BAAI students.

Conclusion

In Table 1 the first pattern that emerged was that eleven of the twelve students acquired English before they immigrated to America. The second pattern that emerged was that all of the students were taught English from school, home, church and the community before migrating abroad. The third pattern that emerged was that Anglophone communities dominate as the place of origin for those in the group who had migrated to the United States. The last pattern in Table 1 showed that a majority of the twelve respondents had some level of English proficiency before to immigrate to the United States.

The first pattern that emerged from data in Table 2 and excerpts from the transcripts was that eleven of the twelve surveyed students experienced negative comments about their African culture. The second pattern according to Table 2 and illustrated in Graph 1, was that nine of the twelve BAAI students changed their clothing to fit into the culture of the school and for peer acceptance. The third pattern concerning data in Table 2 shows that eleven of twelve students answered yes that they have assimilated into the school culture. The fourth pattern said that furthermore, data in Table 2 showed that nine of twelve or seventy-five percent of BAAI

students said that they have socially adjusted to their new school environment. The fifth pattern was that ten of the twelve BAAI students in the study were able to forge new friendships with their peers. The sixth pattern was that ten of the twelve students believe that they are not only heard but are seen as foreign. Lastly, in Table 2, ten of the twelve students answered no and only two answered yes in reference to joining any organization which aided with their transition into their new school.

The first pattern that emerged from data in Table 3 showed that nine of the twelve or seventy-five percent of BAAI students indicated that they have successfully assimilated into the youth culture of their school while three or twenty-five percent responded that they have not assimilated. The second pattern said that of the twelve students that were interviewed, two indicated that they were not seen or heard of as foreigners while ten indicated they were seen and heard of as a foreigner. The third pattern concerning data in Table 3 and Graph 2 illustrated that of the twelve BAAI students interviewed, six received some form of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to improve their English. The fourth pattern was that ten of the twelve students interviewed did not participate in an organization designed to ease the difficulty of transitioning. The fifth pattern was that when asked if they were aware of programs designed to help immigrants meet academic requirements, eight BAAI students were unaware of any such program while two students responded that they knew of and participated in programs meant to assist them to meet academic requirements.

The first pattern that emerged from data in Table 4 that nine of the twelve or seventy-five percent of BAAI students felt compelled to change their clothing in order to forge a smoother transition by being accepted by their peers. The second pattern was that of the twelve students interviewed, seven attended more that one school while the remaining five attended only one

school each. The third pattern in Table 4 and Graph 3 showed that programs were available to foster a smooth transition ten of the twelve BAAI student said they would have actively participate in the program. The fourth pattern was that ten of the twelve students interviewed did not participate in an organization designed to ease their transition difficulty.

The first pattern that emerged from the parents' data in Table 5 was that all of the seven parents learned to speak English before immigrating to the United Sates. The second pattern was that five of the seven parents taught English to their children. The third pattern in Table 5 was that the parents responded seven of seven that their child received formal training in English. Finally, parents responded to the question of whether or not they taught their children their native tongue. Five of the seven parents responded yes, they taught their native language to their child or children.

The first pattern that emerged from parent's data in Table 6 was that approximately seventy-one percent of the parents believe that their child made major changes in their use of language when transitioning into the schools in the United States. The second pattern said that approximately seventy-one percent or five of the seven parents felt that there had been significant changes made in dress as part of their child's adjustment process into the United States school system. The third pattern in Table 5 indicated that five of the seven parents answered yes, that their child had to make social adjustments once the BAAI students entered their new school environment. Finally, Seventy one percent of the parents said no programs were available to help the child's transition.

The first pattern that emerged from Table 7 was when parents were asked if there was a particular community, school, or club organization that helped them and their family transition smoothly five of the seven parents responded no. Secondly, Table 7 showed that of the seven

parents interviewed, five or approximately seventy-one percent answered that there were no program available in their community to help their child or children with a smooth transition into the school. Finally, when asked if there was a program available to help your child or children with the academic requirements of the school, five of the seven parents said they were not aware of any program that was designed by the school to help with the academic requirements.

The data in Table 8 affirmed that seven of the seven parents spoke English before immigrating to America. Secondly, that eleven of the twelve students spoke English before migrating to America. The data in Table 9 indicates that over fifty percent of the parents and seventy-five percent of the students believed that social adjustment were achieved smoothly. The data in Table 10 showed that seventy-one percent of parent and approximately sixty-seven percent of the students that participated in the research study expressed they were not aware of any program designed by the school to help with a smooth transition.

The data in Table 11 indicated when parents and students were asked rather they were aware of programs designed by the school to help immigrant students with the academic requirements, over fifty percent of the parents and approximately sixty-seven percent students expressed that they were not aware of any program designed to assist with the academic requirements. The data in Table 12 indicated that three of the three mothers believed that no such programs existed, while three-fourths of the fathers believed that such programs did exist.

Chapter 5

Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

The Problem

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the issues affecting Black African Adolescent Immigrants (BAAI) students that transition into American schools. Specifically, this study is designed to examine whether or not there was a correlation between successful academic and or social adjustment for BAAI students and a smooth transition into American schools.

A review of the literature revealed that a host of problems were encountered by students migrating into the United States. Several studies revealed that immigrant students typically experienced adjustment problems when they enrolled in American schools. These adjustment problems were the result of factors such as discrimination, language (accent) barriers, cultural changes, and customs that affected their transition (Troare, 2006; Brewer, 2005; Goyol, 2006; Berry,2006; Spring,2001; Ighodaro,1997; Rong & Preissle1998). The issues faced by students who have migrated into the United States were significant enough to justify researching the specific problems that students faced when assimilating into the American school culture. Investigating how these factors affected the adjustment of BAAI students may specifically reveal strategies that help promote their academic success and aid school personnel and administrators in assisting BAAI students during the transitioning process.

A set of questions that encouraged a sample of BAAI students and their parents to recount their experiences while adjusting to United States school culture in a storytelling format was utilized. Understanding the obstacles that these students faced while transitioning from their native school culture to that of the United States school system from their perspective was very

crucial to the American assimilation process. The cultural insensitivity of students and school officials, and the lack of programs that addressed these issues in the schools compounded the difficulties faced by BAAI students and their parents as they tried to adjust to a whole new culture. The experiences of BAAI students must be explored so that these adjustment issues can be overcome.

Methodology

Participants were BAAI students ranging in age from thirteen to nineteen years of age and their parent(s). This sample included people from four countries of Sub-Saharan region of Africa. A total of twelve youths and seven parents were interviewed. These were first generation immigrants the majority of whom were from Anglophone countries and all of whom were from Anglophone communities.

Data were collected from a face-to-face interview using “interview questions” as the primary instrument. Before the interview, each participant was informed that his or her answers were voluntary and that each immigrant’s response would be kept anonymous. Although most of the students sampled were bi-lingual, all interview questions were asked in English and recorded in English. Participants were engaged in one-on-one, semi-structured interviews geared toward telling their own story. Interviews were conducted in this manner to enable the researcher to observe intonations and experiences that might not be detected using other methods. An additional goal of the interviews was to identify methods that the participants were using or had used to foster a smooth transition. The interviews were tape recorded. Two recorders were used: one was a portable cassette tape recorder with several four hour cassettes the other was a ten hour digital recorder. The researcher also took notes with a pad and pen during the interviews while the participants gave responses to the questions.

When presenting the data, pseudonym were utilized to protect the anonymity of the respondents. Categories of data were divided into pre-, current and post-transition time segments. Data was then put into four classifications according to the two participating groups including: *BAAI students*; *BAAI parents*; *parents and students*; and *mothers and fathers by gender*. Twelve tables, three bar graphs and a data analysis strategy map were used to present the data results, condense data and to facilitate a comparative analysis of the data. The use of tables allowed the researcher to determine consistencies and inconsistencies in the numerical data and then to group them as patterns. Fractional and percentage representations of these trends which developed into patterns which developed from calculating table data. Themes resulted from the groups of calculations which were linked to addressing the objectives of the study with the initial hypothesis. The hypothesis was evaluated by grouping similar sets of questions which were linked to the hypothesis in terms of the academic or social adjustment component. Along with the themes of academic and social adjustment there emerged a new unintended development of a language theme.

Findings

Pre-Transition Category Unveils English Theme

The Data Analysis Strategy Map (Figure 1) showed how calculations were extracted under the pre-transition category for three of the four response classifications: *BAAI students*, *BAAI parents*, and *parents and students* responses to common questions. The *BAAI students* responses were tabulated in Table 1. The responses of the parents of BAAI students were tabulated in Table 5. The data for the *students and parents* data was tabulated in Table 8. The fourth classification of *mothers versus fathers* was not used because there was no differentiation in the responses of the mothers or fathers on the questions of English.

In Table 1, the first pattern that emerged was that eleven of the twelve students acquired English before they immigrated to America. The second pattern that emerged was that all of the students were taught English from school, home, church and the community before migrating abroad. The third pattern that emerged was that Anglophone communities dominated as the place of origin for those in the group who had migrated to the United States. The fifth pattern showed that the majority of the twelve respondents had some level of English proficiency prior to immigration into the United States.

The first pattern that emerged from the *BAAI parents* data in Table 5 was that all of the parents learned to speak English before immigrating to the United Sates. The second pattern was that five of the seven parents taught English to their children. The third pattern in Table 5 was that the parents responded seven of seven that their child received formal training in English. Finally, when asked whether or not they taught their children their native tongue five of the seven parents responded affirmatively. The pattern revealed in Table 8 was that all of the parents spoke English before coming to America and eleven out of twelve students spoke English before immigrating to the United States.

Social Adjustment Data from Current and Post Category

Half of the social adjustment data were taken from the current transition category. Under the current transition category three of the four standard classifications were used to produce tables. Table 2 was produced using data from the *BAAI student* classification. Table 6 was produced using data from *BAAI parent* classification. Tables 9 and 10 were produced using data from the *parents versus students* classification. One graph (graph 1) was also constructed to summarize the *BAAI student* responses to the question regarding the role of their attire in the transition process. The fourth classification of *mothers versus fathers* views on the social

adjustment of their child was not tabulated. However, it did appear that parents were divided on whether or not their child had socially adjusted to the United States.

The pattern that emerged from data in Table 2 and excerpts from the transcripts was that ninety-one percent of the students experienced negative comments about their African culture. Also eighty-three percent of the students believed that they were not only heard, but were seen as foreign. One of the key components to adjusting to a new environment was to be accepted by their peers (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; G. Ladson-Billings, & Tate, W.T., 1995; Lopez & Parker, 2003; Parker et al., 1999). BAAI students had to adjust to the social school environment. Through this adjustment process, they heard comments that did not necessarily invite them into the new school culture. For example, “Do you live in huts?” “Do you live in a house there, do you play soccer with stone(s)?” were some of the negative comments Rose and Monroe heard from fellow classmates that were perceived to be negative. A few of the American youth participants encountered imagined Africa as nothing but jungle, very different from the place experienced by the BAAI students. Images that Africans live as savages were reinforced in homes, schools, and communities, by the American media (Troare, 2004). Faith explained when she was called these names she felt horrible. Additionally, Helen explained that some of the questions students were asking derived from what they have seen in the media. Negative stereotype images of Africa that are portrayed in the media may have contributed to how BAAI students were perceived and whether or not they were accepted in their new culture. Troare (2004) explained that these negative comments often created underneath the skin of BAAI students a mixture of hurt anger and disappointment as reflected in their current school experiences. Furthermore, data showed that BAAI students endured many unwelcome comments

from their peers. How well they responded to these unwelcome comments may have directly effected how well they adjusted socially to the new school cultural environment.

The media portrayal of Africa was negative just as it was nearly two decades ago when many Africans campaigned for the adoption of a new world information order as the best corrective approach (Troare 2003 & Troare 2004). The Western media reporting of Africa went beyond professional inadequacies and structural bias but it directly effects how individual view the continent. The psychological cultural factors have continued to account significantly for the stereotyping of Africa as a jungle continent with uneducated, savage, diseased, diseased individuals. This hallmark of Western discrimination, the perpetual spread of inaccurate information about Africa and its peoples continued to directly effect the perception of the people in the United States and the adjustment of BAAI students into the American school culture. The reform initiative by the Civil Rights Movement noticed even as late as 1995 textbooks used by the schools still were not accurately representing the most significant events and experience affecting people of African descent (Troare, 2003).

The data presented in Table 2 and illustrated in Graph 1 showed that seventy-five percent of the BAAI students found it necessary to change their clothing to fit into the culture of the school and for peer acceptance. The students explained that they felt that they had to assimilate into the culture by changing their appearance. They felt that in order to be accepted by their peers they had to dress in the latest fashions. The students where compelled to change their clothing because if not they were teased by their peers and made fun of. Those students who answered that they did not change their clothing explained they wore the same clothes in their native country as they are wearing in the United States. Their country's colonial history coupled with the spread of global western attire may have accounted for this answer. BAAI students who

stated that they did not change their clothing while transitioning explained that this was because they came from an Anglophone Western culture dressing community in Africa which encouraged western clothing. Their family wore western style clothing at home and so it was a continuation of that dress style in the United States.

The data in table 2 shows that ninety-one percent of the students answered that they have assimilated into the school culture. When asked "How did you assimilate?" Victor explained, "Well, first of all I had to start by loosing my accent, because they did not understand me. I would be around them and it [started] to change and I don't know how. Keeping my accent is a bad thing because they would not understand me and they would stay away from me. They would not understand what I'm saying" Joy also explained, "With my accent, they can't hear me very well, [they] would say something to me." Monroe explained, "Playing basketball and soccer help me assimilate." One student, Rose explained that she has not assimilated into the culture of the school. She explained, "I struggle with the teachers speaking real real fast, I could not open my locker, and I got help from other students. In Cameroon the building was one level, here too many levels. In Cameroon in class the teachers came and met us students and taught us there, here in the U.S. the students go to the class and meet the teachers, difficult for me."

Rose, who felt she had not adjusted to the school culture, explained during the interview process that she was the only African or African-American in her school. Her difficulties could have possibly been linked to race. She explained that she had no friends, no one from her school called her at home and none of her peers had visited her at home. She passionately explained that she greatly desires to have friends as she did in her native country. The BAAI students that expressed they have assimilated explained this process was gradual. They did not just enter the

school system and immediately assimilate into the school culture (Authur, 2000; Alba & Nee, 2003).

The data in Table 2 shows that seventy-five percent of BAAI students said that they have socially adjusted to their new school environment. Victor explained "I feel that [I] have [adjusted] to what works here." JoAnne explained, "I have assimilated to the way people act and talk."

Table 2 also shows that twenty-five percent of the students said they have not adjusted socially into the new school environment. Daniel explained, "I just need to adjust to the language." Brian and JoAnne explained that initially no, but eventually after being here for several years they were able to adjust to the school culture. Although eighty-three percent BAAI students in the study were able to forge out new friendships with their peers, they explained that they found it to be difficult at first to make fiends. Initially they felt alone and isolated in many settings in the school. The students explained that making friends was a slow gradual process for them. First they learned to have conversations with fellow classmates. Eventually found that they developed friendships with some of the students.

Lastly eighty-three percent of the students answered no and only two or seventeen percent answered yes in reference to joining any organization which aided with their transition into their new school. Those two students that answered yes credited sport programs with helping them with the transitional process because they were able to interact socially with their peers and with other BAAI students that were involved in sports activities.

The pattern that emerged from *BAAI parent* data in table 6 was that approximately seventy-one percent of the parents believe that their children made major changes in their use of language when transitioning into the schools in the United States. The majority of the parents

agreed that their children had to change their language in order to adjust socially to their new school environment. Eunice explained, “They kind of changed a little bit but not much. At home I had to maintain more of the African culture.”

Twenty-nine percent of the parents explained that their children did not have to make any adjustments to language in order to socially fit into the school environment because their children spoke English in their native country and used it to interact with their peers. The data in table 6 showed that approximately seventy-one percent of the parents felt that there had been significant changes made in dress as part of their child’s adjustment process into the United States school system. Eunice said, “the main thing is that they dress decently not too different but be like the other children.” James explained, “There had to be some changes because in Nigeria girls do not wear pants. When they got here they had to adjust. It was not even difficult for them because the age that they are it is easy for them to adjust. No need to fuss like adults. It was difficult for us adult to adjust. But children they adjust easily.” On the other hand two parents or twenty-nine percent said that there were no changes to dress because their children wore Western clothing in their native country.

When data were reviewed in Table 6 regarding whether or not their child or children had to make modification to language, dress and custom, female and male parents differed slightly in their perception of changes their children had to make in order to fit into the culture of the school. Also the parents in general didn’t see significant differences between the school environment of the United States and the school environment in their native country.

All the parents agreed on the matter of their child losing their accent to fit into the school environment that it was more important to them then their child changing their dress, because many of them dressed similar to how they dressed in their native country anyway. Joseph

expressed “yes their dress changed, the way they speak, and suddenly within that one year my [children] had forgotten the sweet accent that we brought from Nigeria. They have completely loss that, I think for their good.”

The data in table 6 shows that seventy-one percent of the parents stated that their child had to make social adjustments once the BAAI students entered their new school environment. Anna a parent explained,

> “In the beginning I don’t think they adjust[ed] so well. Children started making fun of them and [saying] they are from Africa. Why [are] you here and where are you from. They threw food at my oldest son. When he complained to me, I told him what ever happens, go tell your teacher. Now that you are in America when you [fight] you get suspended. Every time he would report to the teacher, they made fun of him even more. When the teacher called the student and said what are you doing, that seems to give the student a license to do [it] more. One threw food at him, my son threw back and it hit the student. They start[ed] fighting him. [We] went to court. My son said in court they always throwing things at me. This always happens to foreign students. They cause[d] problems for the foreign students. The court said my son was guilty because he threw back the food at him. We got a lawyer and they ask my husband do you have anything to say and my husband said that this boy has been harassing my son and he reported it. So the (judge) decided to dismiss the case. So they dismiss because the judge felt sympathy for my son. He also knew that this is happening in American schools. [The] foreigners they always make fun of them. Even my second boy they had problems with [people] saying that I hate you and I don’t like you. One day he was opening his locker and they attacked him and [said we] are going to beat [you up]. He was forced to free himself.

> They said he was fighting. He was not fighting. The one that did this was [an] African American. This is why we are still in an apartment. We are still in this apartment because we do not want to go to another school and start over again. We don't want to move to another school district."

Eunice, another parent, explained, "They had to make new friends, they had to find teachers that have interest in them and make them feel welcomed." The data clearly showed that some of the parents went through transitional issues with their children while they were adjusting to the new school environment which was difficult for some. Twenty-nine percent of the parents explained they did not have to adjust social because the school environment is similar to the one they were accustomed to in their native country. Through this adjustment process, seventy-one percent of the parents said no program was available to assist their child's transition process. Those parents that answered yes credited such programs as the school chorus and teachers' conferences that assisted them with the transitional process.

Data in Table 9 indicates that over fifty percent of the parents and seventy-five percent of the students believed that the BAAI student's social adjustments were achieved smoothly. Students believe they adjusted more quickly than their parents believed they adjusted. The data in table 10 shows that seventy-one percent of parents and approximately sixty-seven percent of the students that participated in the research study expressed that they were not aware of any program designed by the school to help with a smooth transition. There were twenty-nine percent of the parents and the thirty-three percent of the students who acknowledged that sports, chorus and teacher's conferences helped them to transition into their new school.

Table 10 shows that seventy-one percent of parents and approximately sixty-seven percent of students that participated in the research study expressed that they were not aware of any program that was designed to assist with the transitional processes into the school. Of those

students and parents who participated in programs to assist with the transition process credited ESL programs, service club, athletic and teacher conferences. As the responses provide evidence that programs are needed and that additional programs should be developed that will specifically help BAAI students in their transitional process.

When parents and students were asked if they were aware of any programs designed by the school to help students with their academic requirements over fifty-percent of the parents and sixty-seven percent of the students expressed they were not aware of any program that assist with the academic requirements in the school. Those students who answered yes that they participated in programs designed to assist with their academic needs, cited that they had to study and get good grades before they were allowed to participate in athletic programs. Those parents who answered yes that they participated in programs designed to assist with the academic needs of their child, cited: after school programs, teacher conferences and homework were factors that helped their children academically.

Post-Transition Social Adjustment Students and Parents View

The other half of the social adjustment issue was addressed under the post transition time segment. Only one classification was addressed, that of *BAAI students* in Table 4 focusing on the smooth transition issues from the parent child view but from a social adjustment perspective. Finally, a graph (Graph 3) was produced, concerning whether or not the student would have participated in a program to foster a smooth transition if one had been available.

The pattern that emerged from data in Table 4 is that seventy-five percent of BAAI students felt compelled to change their clothing in order to forge out a smoother transition by being accepted by their peers (Authur, 2000; Alba & Nee, 2003). Twenty-five percent did not change their clothing as part of their transition process into the school because they wore similar

clothing in their native country. The second pattern is that of the twelve students interviewed, over fifty percent attended more than one school while the remaining only attended one school each. Attending several schools could have affected how well BAAI student assimilated into the school culture. BAAI students changing schools could have had an adverse affect in the transition process because every time they attended a new school they had to assimilate all over again.

The third pattern in Table 4 and Graph 3 showed that if programs were available to foster a smooth transition then ten of the twelve BAAI students said they would have actively participate in the program. Two students did not respond to the question. Additionally the data showed that ten of the twelve students interviewed did not participate in an organization designed to ease their transition difficulty. The table clearly showed that the majority of BAAI students did desire programs that were designed to foster a smooth transition.

Current Category Focus on Academics Adjustment

Seventy-five percent of the academic adjustment data came from the category of current transition. Under this category their where only two of the classifications addressed: *BAAI students* and *mothers versus fathers* of BAAI students. Table 3 focused on the academic adjustment of BAAI students. Graph 2 also focused on the on the academic adjustment of BAAI students. Finally, Table 12 summarizes data from the classification of mothers versus fathers regarding their child's academic transition.

The pattern that emerged from data in Table 3 showed that ninety-one percent of BAAI students indicated that they have successfully assimilated into the youth culture of their school while nine percent responded that they have not assimilated. Although the majority of the students that were interviewed indicated they have assimilated into the culture of the school, this

assimilation process could have effected how well they perform academically because if they were not able to socially assimilate into the culture of the school, it may have had an adverse effect on their academic performance.

Next, the data in table 3 showed that of the twelve students that were interviewed, seventeen percent indicated that they were not seen or heard as a foreigner while eighty-three percent indicated they are seen and heard of as a foreigner. Being seen and heard as a foreigner could have impacted their academic performances in school. They may not be aware of what they need to be successful academically in their school.

The third pattern concerning data in table 3 and graph 2 illustrated that of the twelve BAAI students interviewed, fifty percent received some form of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to improve their English. The students that participated in the ESL programs explained that it benefited them greatly. Grace explained, "Yes when I came instead of going to English class, we went to ESL. We play[ed] computer games in English. It [taught] us how to sound word[s] out. I learned English better compare[d] to if I did [not] have it." Of the six BAAI students that received ESL four of them received it in a suburban school district. The other six students interviewed did not have an opportunity to participate in ESL programs which could have given them better command of the language and as a result help them academically.

The fourth pattern illustrated in table 3 was that eighty-three percent of the students interviewed did not participate in an organization designed to ease the difficulty of transitioning into the school. These BAAI students were required to find their own means to transition smoothly into the school. These students used whatever means necessary to successfully assimilate into the culture of the school. The other two students' credited their sports activities as a way to ease the transition difficulties they may have experienced.

The fifth pattern, in Table 3 was that when asked whether or not they were aware of programs designed to help immigrants meet academic requirements, eighty-three percent of the BAAI students responded that they were unaware of any such program while seventeen percent of the students responded that they knew of and participated in programs meant to assist them with the academic requirements. Those BAAI students responded yes explained they were told only that they had to study and get good grades to be successful academically. Although two students responded yes, they participated in programs designed to help with the academic requirements, in reality they did not participate in any programs, they were just told to study and get good grades.

The data in table 12 indicated that all mothers believed that there were no programs available for the academic requirement, while three-fourths of the fathers believed that such programs did exist. Timothy stated that the after school program assisted his children with their academic requirements. James cited the teacher conferences and signing papers confirming that their children have completed their homework assignments as a program. James stated, “By signing the homework that means that the child has done it.” These fathers credited a variety of programs that assisted with the academic requirements. On the other hand one father, Joseph was not aware of any program that was designed to aid with the academic requirements.

Post Academic Adjustment

Twenty-five percent of the academic adjustment data were taken from the category of post transition. Under this category only two classifications were addressed: BAAI students and parents versus students in programs and organizations that the parents believed assisted their child with the academic transition. Table 7, focused on the *BAAI students* academic transition. Table 11, focused on *parents versus student* views on whether or not programs were available to

help with the academic requirements to make academic transition smooth for BAAI students into the American school system.

The pattern that emerged from Table 7 was that when parents were asked if there was a particular community, school, or club organization that helped them and their family transition smoothly, seventy-one percent of the parents responded no while twenty-nine percent responded "yes" and credited teacher conferences and tutoring as programs that helped the transition difficulties. Secondly, Table 7 shows that of the seven parents interviewed, approximately seventy-one percent answered that there was no program available in their community to help their child or children with a smooth transition into the school. Finally, when asked if there was a program available to help their child or children with the academic requirements of the school, seventy-one percent of the parents said they were not aware of any program that was designed by the school to help with the academic requirements. Although two parents or twenty-nine percent responded "yes" they were aware of programs designed to help with the academic requirements their response was based on teacher conferences and after school programs.

Neither parents nor students were informed or made aware of any community or school program that would help themselves or their child adjust to the United States school culture. When parents and students were asked if they would participate if programs were available in the school and or the community to help foster a smooth transition for them into the American urban and or suburban school, they responded yes.

Parents did not feel that their child needed any additional support or help to aid him or her in achieving greater success. One particular parent explained that her child was enrolled in the third grade in the morning and by mid day my child was moved to the fourth grade because she was not being challenged by the third grade academics. The parent said that her child already

knew everything that was presented to her in the third grade. Another parent who came with her child in the middle of the school year, who was in the eighth grade, was put back in the seventh grade because she arrived in the middle of the year. The parent explained that this was no problem because her daughter was getting good grades that put her at the ease of knowing that her daughter had adjusted to the school at this level.

The students, on the other hand, found that they had to be more attentive in the classroom, because if not the parents would not be able to help them at home with their assignments. Some of the students utilized the teachers extra help before and after school to help them academically to adjust to the homework challenges of the classroom. Some of the students used their educated parents to help with their homework assignments.

Table 7 presented responses that parents gave when they were asked if there was a program available to help their child or children with the academic requirements of the school. Seventy-one percent of the parents said they were not aware of any programs designed by the school to help with the academic requirements while twenty-nine percent of parents said that they were aware of programs that help with the academic requirements. Although two parents said yes they were aware of programs designed to assist with the academic requirements, they credited after school programs, teacher conferences and homework clubs as programs that assist with the academic requirements.

Limitations of Research Study

The hypothesis did not take into account the significant issue of how the BAAI students' families viewed and made mandatory the learning of the English language upon BAAI students before migrating. The importance of learning English among African BAAI families was a factor that should be assessed and considered in future studies. It seems to suggest that Anglophone

communities may have chosen countries that have similar English speaking communities as a choice before migrating. Further research around the issue of language and the transition of BAAI students and their families needs to be undertaken.

The type of questions that were asked limited the responses that were given by interviewees (Example, Do you feel that you have assimilated into the culture of your school?). Assimilation models need to be developed for adaptation and adjustment that include a scale to define and measure and develop the concept of a smooth transition for migrant students. Another limitation was the number of questions asked regarding the perspectives of academic officials in the BAAI students' schools regarding the transition of this group of students. Insights from administrators, teachers, superintendents, politicians and community leaders concerning BAAI transition issues would provide a larger and much needed perspective regarding how to improve the overall transition process for these students. The hypothesis might have been more fully addressed by the questions that were asked during the interview and additional questions could have lead to greater insights from BAAI students that were transitioning into urban and suburban schools.

Further research that focuses on and defines what is truly a smooth transition for BAAI students should be understood. Defining the parameters of a smooth transition process for BAAI students as they adjust to American schools might assist in the creation of a systematic way of developing adjustment principles as useful tool which may prove to be helpful for future generations of migrant Sub-Saharan Africans navigating into United States school systems.

The study was limited by the number of students and parents in this sample. The setting for the interviews for the parents all took place at their homes where observation was somewhat limited.

The academic portion which was half of the research hypothesis did not give a clear conclusion because the data that was collected did not provide a correlation between having academic success and a smooth transition into the school. This may have occurred because the framing of the question and who answered the question restricted the results. On the other hand framing the question better in the minds of students and parent could have given more productive results.

The social side of the hypothesis along with the pre-transition of English provides possible answers regarding how BAAI students adjusted socially in their new environment. There were additional questions that might have lead to generalizations about all of the areas where social adjustment was achieved. A scale used to assess the level of social adjustment were achieved by BAAI students in their school environment is needed to separate operations on a more general scale what it means in American society to adjust socially.

The question that inquires about whether or not parents attributed organizations such as churches and the communities, to assist in their transition process needed to be more clearly defined. Only twenty-one percent of the parents said they received help from the school. It may be that assistance with transitioning came from the many entities that the immigrants encountered outside of school as they went about the business of conducting life. Also, the question regarding the availability of school programs that might aid in transition should have been expanded to include PTA and other parents' organizations that could have helped with the transition process. A scale that presented a common definition for social adjustment and a series of questions that focused on this definition needed to be developed to give more solidarity to the research. The personal issues of BAAI students or parents in the transition process were not addressed in this study.

A small percentage of students and parents knew about programs that helped BAAI students with their academic requirements in school. There should be greater research aimed at identifying programs that already exist which could help make the academic transition for BAAI students smoother.

Seven parents participated in the research study. A larger number of these parents gained information about gender differentiation regarding social adjustment of their children. More research is needed on parent opinions of the social adjustment of their children in the assimilation process.

Conclusion

Language Adjustment

In the initial design of the study, knowledge of the English language was included in the interview questions but it was not correlated directly to the objective or the hypothesis. The question about English did not contribute to answering the research hypothesis or the objectives originally posed. Yet, the information gained from Tables 1, 5, and 8 revealed that learning and proficiency of English should be included as a new developmental focus of language as a factor in aiding BAAI student's adjustment while transitioning into United States urban or suburban schools.

The general patterns and trends that emerged from the data in Tables 1, 5, and 8 was that all of the parents learned to speak English before immigrating to the United States. Seventy-one percent of the parents taught English to their children. What emerged from the data was that ninety-one percent of the students acquired English before they immigrated to America. All of the parents said that their child received formal training in English in their native country. Of the parents seventy-one percent said, they taught their native language to their child or children in

order to maintain the mother tongue (Berry, 2006). All of the students were taught English from school, home, church or the community before migrating abroad. The Anglophone communities dominate as the place of origin for those in the group who had migrated to the United States. Ninety-one percent of BAAI students responded that they had some level of English proficiency before electing to immigrate to the United States.

Smooth transition was more likely to result if immigrant families come from Anglophone countries or communities, send their child to English speaking churches, send their children to a school that teaches in English, and or if the parents allow English to be spoken in their household. Any of these activities will allow a student to develop some level of English competency before immigrating. The Parents of BAAI students made it a priority that English be learned before migration. The Colonial influence on Africa, as well as on the sampled group and the belief about English before migrating, greatly helped their adjustment process in the United States. It was important that formal English was taught to their child in the old colonial school system of today's Africa. The fact that Anglophone communities were the dominant place of origin for many students interviewed in this study played a significant role in their smooth transition into America. Families of BAAI students seemed to believe that English was a major component of the assimilation process. Their responses suggest that learning English before migrating may equate to a smooth transition.

Social Adjustment

In the beginning of the study, social adjustment information was design to be gleaned from questions directly linked to the objectives and the hypothesis. The information gained from Tables 2, 4, 6, 9, and 10 along with Graphs 1 and 3 revealed that patterns and trends developed from the research data strongly link the social adjustment of BAAI students to the objectives and

the hypothesis of the study. These patterns point to the fact that if BAAI students have a smooth school transition it is strongly linked to how well those BAAI student have or had socially adjusted to their new school culture in American.

The responses of the respondents indicated that smooth transition would be made easier if BAAI students: learned to deal with negative comments about race and African culture, change their clothes to fit youth culture attire, develop friendship with their peers, work on making their accent not so obvious, work on improving their English, and to join any organization to improve their social condition in their new school.

Academic Adjustment

At the beginning of the study, academic information was designed to be gleaned from questions which had a linkage to the objectives and the hypothesis. The information from Tables 3, 7, 6, 11, and 12 along with Graphs 2 gave an opportunity to show that patterns and trends could develop from the research data on the academics of BAAI students as they told their story. These patterns point to the fact that if BAAI students would have a smooth transition if they are given ESL classes to help with adjustment. Greater input from teachers and educators would provide a more complete picture of this academic transition.

These patterns point to the fact that if BAAI students would have somehow achieved a smooth transition into American urban and/or suburban school culture academically, it would be strongly linked to other factors like report cards and other achievement measurements.

Implications and Recommendations

English Recommendation

Before coming to the United States, all the parents and all of BAAI students except one had some command of the English language. The extent to which they had command of the

language was not known, because it was not one of the questions. Still, having some English preparation before migration helped with the transition process. Although BAAI students and their parents spoke a mixed British African form of English before they arrived in the United States, many expressed that they still experienced difficulty because of the accent associated with their speech. Furthermore, it is the belief of the researcher that entering the United States with some understanding of the language should become a prerequisite which may help with making the assimilation process smooth (Berry,2006; Ighodaro,1997)

Before any parent from a sub-Saharan African country considers relocating to an English speaking country such as the United States, they may want to do as the parents in this study did and send their children to English speaking schools. Otherwise the language impediment faced by BAAI students in terms of accent with not using English or not sounding American may affect their ability to be understood in American culture (Author, 2000; Alba & Nee, 2003).

Educators should consider that an ESL program may be an even greater catalyst for a smooth transition for BAAI students who already speak English but with an accent so as to help them adjust into the school youth culture more quickly and smoothly. This recommendation can be expanded to say that any parents and students contemplating migration should try to learn the language of the country they are migrating to before the migration takes place. English was a key to successful migration to the United States. Without English communication in American culture may become very difficult. The ability to speak English was the easiest way to integrate into the chosen country of migration. English helps with relating culturally and without English it may cause the parents to have difficulties in terms of interacting when it comes to doing business, getting a job, and interacting with Americans. Without English children will have an uphill battle in school communicating, interacting and making friends with their peers.

Linguistic was another important factor which affects immigrants who have a Limited-English-Proficiency (LEP), if CRT was applied it could help to inform educators and give them greater knowledge of how African immigrants are multilingual. Most of the BAAI students were multilingual, meaning they speak two or more languages. Torres (2004) suggested ways that teachers could improve on teaching bilingual and multilingual students in practice with classroom research as the tool. This information was very useful for developing relevant curriculums for different students with second language issues.

Social Recommendation

Schools need to work on their diversity policies and training. Schools need to develop curricula and programs that are more culturally sensitive so that immigrant children's diversity is embrace not mocked. Students will change clothes for social adjustments. Most feel they have socially adjusted. Most believe they have socially adjusted to the school culture. Social adjustment is demonstrated by BAAI students in their ability to make new friends.

Negative comments about African culture can be seen as discrimination which could negatively affect their emotional and mental adjustment. Since ninety-three percent of the students received negative comments from many different schools system, schools should develop diversity programs to help students learn to tolerate, even embrace individual differences. BAAI students greatly desire to change their clothes in order to fit into the American youth culture. Ninety-three percent of the students feel that they have assimilated and have adjusted to the school socially. Ninety-three percent adjust by the ability to make friends. Yet, eighty-three percent explained they are seen as a foreigner. Eighty-three percent said they have not joined any organization that aided with the transition process.

A program is needed to help BAAI student's transition within the community. A program that will help BAAI students with transition should be developed. Pairing up BAAI students with American students in the school system is another method that could foster a smooth transition.

Eighty-percent of the students and seventy-one percent of the parents said they would participate in a program if it was available to them. Ninety-three percent did not participate but there was no program to help them with transition. There should have been a question about why the students did not participate in school organizations which may have eased their transition difficulties.

Most of the parents in the research study believed that their children have made changes in language, dress and friends. They equate those changes to social adjustment. Schools, churches, communities, and African organizations must develop programs to help BAAI students in their adjustment process in their new environment.

Parents must take the initiative in getting involved in their child's school. Furthermore, parent should seek out organizations that could assist with the transition process of their child. Furthermore, parents should seek out assistance from the school personnel to find out what are the academic requirements in order for the child to graduate. African organizations need to get more involved in facilitating and developing programs at schools that currently do not have programs for BAAI students.

The majority of the parents believed that their child had to make new friends, and other changes in order to socially adjust within the transition process of their school. Most of the parents also believed that there were no programs available to help their BAAI child with social adjustment process. Trying to identify the differences in response between the parent's answers

may give an insight to this study. Seventy-one percent of the parents had no knowledge what-so-ever of any program that would help their child succeed academically.

To assist the parents, a research study must be done in American communities to help discover, find and identify resources to help BAAI students. A major task for researchers is to define BAAI transitional problems and link them to available resources as well as to help develop resources that do not currently exist in the communities. A smooth transition will greatly depend upon available resources for the students, parents, and other family members in order to facilitate a smooth transition into the new culture. Even a buddy program may be a valuable tool to students as well as parents with the transition process. Connecting BAAI students and parents to an individual who has lived in the United States for some time and who they have common heritage with from Africa may be able to give insight to what is the best methods to transition smoothly into the United States culture. This may help because the majority of the parents are not aware of any transitional program to assist in the community with school organizations that aid them with a smooth transition.

Social adjustment was much more important than the academic adjustment. It is crucial that society addressed the social adjustment of BAAI students because it determines how successful they will be in United States society. Research is needed in the area of social adjustment. African organizations as well as African-American institutions which are affected by immigrants should lobby for legislation, policies, and funding to develop programs aimed at BAAI students' success in United States urban or suburban schools. Students find that parents are the individuals that assist them with the academic requirements. Parents and students who knew of available programs listed the following: ESL, sports, tutoring in the school, teachers' assistance, parent teacher conferences and parents help at home as resources that assist them.

Although over half of the parents and seventy-five percent of the students believe that social adjustment was achieved, less than half of the parents and twenty-five percent of the students disagree with this assessment. A majority of the parents and students were unaware of programs to aide with social adjustment process or aware of any program for academic requirements.

Over half of the parents and sixty-seven percent of the students said that they were unaware of programs to help with BAAI academics in school. Thirty-three percent and less than half of the parents know of program designed to help them with the transition academically in school.

Further studies are needed regarding gender of African mothers and fathers of BAAI students. The African mothers and fathers may differ in their opinion of the social adjustment of their children in the school.

Academic Recommendations

In storytelling teachers should possess enough instructional conviction to seek to educate via the storytelling voices of BAAI students. They could potentially tip the scales of power by (shape shifting) between classroom power and choosing to uplift African immigrant adolescents. Learning the ethnographies of African adolescents could help to ensure an equal education by promoting their academic advancement and forming support partnerships with immigrant families.

Case study as a research method should always have as its focal point the classroom teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff and parents. They are the practitioners who are most in need of this valuable information. A great praxis would be to link the art of classroom instruction with that of research in order to develop better teaching methods for BAAI students.

The case study method is the best tool for connecting research with the classroom practitioners. Case studies will refine classroom teaching methods by exposing ethnic culture and improving the lives of BAAI students and their peers with different backgrounds.

Policies and procedures set by the urban and suburban schools should focus on in-service training of teachers in the following areas: attitudes, teaching methods, race, ethnicity, culture, and language. Curriculums should be developed and implemented which are culturally sensitive and that celebrate diversity. Educators need to seek out social, and cultural resources in the immigrant's community to help better service BAAI students (Rong & Brown, 2002). The experience of African immigrant adolescents in urban or suburban schools through this research shows that efforts need to be made by educators to embrace individual differences and celebrate immigrant culture instead of oppressing groups due to race, ethnicity, nationality and linguistic differences.

More research is needed in the area of BAAI academic adjustments. Better questions are needed to be asked of BAAI students. Of the sample group most of the students felt they have assimilated into the youth culture which may greatly assist with their academics. The ESL program is a school sponsored course that has made a difference. A program to ease the transition should be developed by the community and the schools.

The majority of student participants admit their peers see them as foreigners. Half of the students attended ESL classes to improve their American English. Yet, eighty-three percent said they did not participate in an organization that helped with transition. Schools need to develop a program geared to assist BAAI students with the academic requirements.

The impact of social and academic adjustment may greatly affect the success of the BAAI students transition process. How smoothly this transitional process occurs may be directly

linked to how well BAAI students are accepted by the dominant hegemony. Lastly, the data clearly shows that the assimilation process is a key component in the social adjustment process. Adjusting socially seemed to be the metaphor that determined the rate at which these BAAI students are able to assimilate into the new culture of their school. The educational process must welcome this group of students into the school system. They must be identified as Africans and categorized separately on a racial bases from African-American students because their academic and social needs are different from that of African-Americans. When they are identified as an African-American they may be overlooked by educators and many of their needs may not be met because they are viewed as natives and not as Africans but as Black only in the United States school system. First generation African immigrant students should not been seen as African-American because their needs are different from native Blacks. Using the same assimilation and adjustment rules may result in them receiving inadequate education from the school system which was designed to educate all individuals regardless of ethnic or any other background (Traore, 2006).

By giving "voice" to BAAI students' transition issues, this research study was able to give power to those who *are not being heard.* The use of voice or naming enables researchers to relate and give form and substance to the plight of BAAI issues in United States schools. It was very important that the researcher not report a "right" or "wrong" method of assimilation, but rather view and compare each BAAI participant's perceptions and social constructions and relate those responses to the hypothesis.

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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Dear: Potential Participant,

A research study is being planned that may be of interest to you. This research study is about **Black** African students and their parents' experiences after enrolling into U.S. schools. **The goal of this research study is to interview students and their parents.**

Please be aware that taking part in this research study is your choice. There are no consequences to you if you choose not to take part in the research study. This research study is being done by Cecelia Aikhionbare under the University of Cincinnati.

You will not benefit from taking part in this research study. You will be asked to take part in an interview which will last up to **one hour**. You may decide at the time of the interview whether or not you wish to take part in the research study.

All the information gathered with your name on it will be changed to a different name. Your name will be changed if the research study is published or presented. All materials from the research study will be kept in a locked file and destroyed at the end of the research study. Being a part of this research study is entirely your choice. If you take part, you may choose to stop at any time. There are no penalties for quitting. Quitting will not affect your status or experience in the school. This research study will not affect you in any way.

Sincerely,

Cecelia Aikhionbare

APPENDIX B

TELEPHONE RECRUITMENT LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Dear: Potential Participant,

I am calling you about a research study. This research study may be of interest to you. This research study is about Black African students and their parents' experiences after enrolling into U.S. schools. The goal of this research study is to interview students and their parents.

Please be aware that taking part in this research study is your choice. There are no consequences to you if you choose not to take part in the research study. This research study is being done by Cecelia Aikhionbare under Dr. Ted Zigler at the University of Cincinnati.

You will not benefit from taking part in this research study. You will be asked to take part in an interview which will last up to one hour. You may decide at the time of the interview whether or not you wish to take part in the research study.

All the information gathered with your name on it will be changed to a different name. Your name will be changed if the research study is published or presented. All materials from the research study will be kept in a locked file and destroyed at the end of the research study. Being a part of this research study is entirely your choice. If you take part, you may choose to stop at any time. There are no penalties for quitting. Quitting will not affect your status or experience in the school. This research study will not affect you in any way.

Sincerely,

Cecelia Aikhionbare

APPENDIX C

PARENT PERMISSION FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Title of Research study: Transition Processes of African Adolescent Immigrants in Urban or Suburban Schools

Introduction: Your child may take part in a research study on Black African students in schools. Please read this form and ask questions about anything you do not understand.

Purpose: This research study is to find out what methods your child used to adjust~~s~~ to a school in the United States.

Duration: The length of the interview for the research study will be up to one hour.

Procedures: Your child will be asked questions about their experiences in school. The interview will be taped recorded and notes will be taken. If your child can't do a face to face interview, then the interview can be done over the phone asking the same questions. Your child's responses will be written down on a note pad.

Risks/Discomforts: There are no known risks to your child for taking part in this research study.

Benefits: There are no benefits to your child for taking part in this research study.

Confidentiality: What your child says will be kept private. I will keep everything about this research study in my office. Anything that has your child's name on it will be locked up. After this research study is over, I will destroy anything that has your child's name on it. This research study may be published, but I will not give your child's name.

Offer to Answer Questions: The University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board Social and Behavioral Sciences, reviews all non-medical research projects that involve human subjects to be sure the rights of participants is protected. If you have questions about your child's rights as a participant, you may contact Claudia R. Norman, Program Manager, and Institutional Review Board at (513) 558-5784.

Voluntary Participation: Your child does not have to take part in this research study. You may choose not to allow your child to take part in the research study. You may withdraw your permission AT ANY TIME. Even if you agree that your child may participate, if he/she does not want to, there will be no pressure to do so. Your child may stop taking part in the research study at any time with no questions asked. If you agree to take part in the research study and give your permission for your child to participate, your child will also be asked if he or she wants to take part in the research study and given an assent form to sign.

Agreement: I have read this paper and have received answers to my questions. I agree to allow my child to take part in this research study. I will receive a copy of this form for my records.

My child's name (Print) _____

_____ _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature Date

_____ _____

Principle Investigator Signature Date

APPENDIX D

CHILD ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Title of Research study: Transition Processes of Black African Adolescent Immigrants in Urban or Suburban Schools

What is the reason for this research study?
I need 12 students and 12 parents to help me find out how well Black African students adjust to their new schools. And I am looking at how parents take part in their child's adjustment. You will be asked questions about your school in the U.S. and schools in your native country.

How long will this take and what will happen?
The interview may last up to one hour. You will be asked questions about your school and your response will be taped recorded and written down. If you can't do a face-to-face interview, we can do it over the phone and I will record your responses on a note pad.

Will anything bad happen to me?
You will not be at risk or experience discomfort. But if you do feel any discomfort*, you have the right to stop answering questions or stop the interview.* If you do not want to answer a question during the interview, that is okay. If you want to stop at anytime during the interview, it is okay to stop.

Is this research study confidential?
Everything you say will be kept confident. I will keep everything about this research study in my office. Anything that has your name on it will be in a locked drawer. After this research study is over I will destroy everything that has your name on it. My research study may be published; your name will not be in the research study.

If you want to be interviewed, write or sign your name at the bottom of this paper. If your mom or dad says it is OK, I will then interview you.

Before you received this form, your parents have given the researcher permission for you to take part in this research study.

_____ _____

Child's Signature Date

FOR RESEARCH STUDY USE ONLY:

Parent name _____ Permission received _____

_____ _____

Principle Investigator Signature **Date**

APPENDIX E

ADULT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research study: Transition Processes of **Black** African Adolescent Immigrants in Urban or Suburban American schools

Introduction: You and your children will be asked to take part in the research study.

Purpose: To research study the experiences of **Black African** students in U.S. schools. **You** will be interviewed to see what **was your role in your** child's adjustment process **in U.S. schools.**

Duration: The length of the interview will be up to one hour.

Procedures: The questions that will be asked will be about your child's experiences in school.

Risks or Discomforts: You will not be at risk or experience discomfort. But if you do feel any discomfort, *you have the right to stop answering questions or stop the interview.* If you do not want to answer a question during the interview, that is okay. If you want to stop at anytime during the interview, it is okay to stop.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits for taking part in this research study.

Confidentiality: What you say will be kept private. Your name will be changed if the research study is published or presented. All materials from the interview will be kept in a locked file and destroyed at the end of the research study.

Offer to Answer Questions: If you have any questions about the research study you may call my Advisor Dr. Ted Zigler at (513) 556-5111, or **the Chair of the Institutional Review Board-Social and Behavioral Sciences** at (513)-558-5784.

Voluntary Participation: You **do not** have to take part in this research study. You may quit at any time. The interview will be stopped if there is any distress noted. You have the right to end the research study at any time.

Legal Rights: I have read this consent form. I willingly agree to take part in this research study. I will receive a copy of this consent form for my record.

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

_____ _____

Principle Investigator Signature **Date**

APPENDIX F

Interview Questions for Black African Adolescent Immigrant Students

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

2. Before you came to the United States, did you speak English? Expand on that and where did you learn English?

3. Do you feel that you have assimilated into the culture of your school? Would you please expand on that?

4. Do you feel that you have changed your clothing as part of your transition processes into the school? How did you change? If so, is this used as a symbol to fit into the culture of the school?

5. What types of comments have you heard from your fellow students regarding your ethnic or cultural background? Do you know why they are asking you this question? Do you believe they were asking you these question to gain knowledge about you and your country?

6. How did you adjust socially to the climate of your new school environment which may have been different from the one you were accustomed to in your native country? Can you expand on that?

7. Have you joined a particular school formed program or organization which has helped you to transition smoothly into the school environment? Do you belong in any group such as track and field, basketball, football, chess club, and others?

8. Does your school offer English as a Second Language classes, Limited English Proficient classes, or any to address your non speaking English?

9. Are you aware of any programs designed to help immigrant students such as yourself with a smooth transition into the school?

10. Have you attended more than one school? What are the differences and similarities?

11. If programs were available to foster a smooth transition would you actively participate? Why or why not? What should be the focus of the program?

12. Were you able to form close friendships and social relationships with fellow classmates in your new school? Tell me about your friends. Tell me more.

13. Do you have a mentor?

14. Do you eat the school lunch? What is a typical lunch for you?

15. Is there a program or programs in your school to help immigrant students adjust to the academic requirements?

16. Do your classmates see you as different or hear your foreign accent and immediately identify you as different culturally.

APPENDIX G

Interview Questions for Parents or Guardians of African Adolescent Immigrants (BAAI)

1 What is the name of the country you were born in?

2 Before you came to the United States, did you speak English? If yes or no can you expand on that?

3 Before coming to the United States, did you teach your child English or speak English in your household? If yes or no can you expand on that?

4 Before coming to the United States, did your child received any form of training in English, can give me an example or elaborate on that?

5 How was the school environment similar and difference from the school environment in your country

6 How did your child socially adjust to the school environment which may have been different to the one he or she was used to in their native country?

7 Do you feel that your child has to make major changes such as language, dress, and/or customs in order for them to fit into American youth culture so as to facilitate a smooth transition into the American culture?

8 Can you describe any program designed by your community to help you and your child with a smooth transition into the school?

9 Describe a particular school community or club organization which has helped you and your family to transition smoothly into the school environment and community?

10 Is there a program in your child's school or community to help with his/her adjustment to the school's academic requirements? Describe it and its impact.