PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS IN EDUCATION:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE EXPECTATIONS OF NIGERIAN VOLUNTARY
IMMIGRANTS TO THE UNITED STATES FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S SCHOOL
ACHIEVEMENT

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Chief Sapakin of Ikoti, Loro Gbenla of Ijesha Land, and Olufunmilayo Odanye Adeniji, for teaching me to care, to love and to become an Omoluabi. To my husband Albert, and my son, Samuel, thank you for your unconditional love and support.

To the ancestors, mo ju ba!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Many thanks to my sister Adefunke Mustapha and her husband Babatunde, my friends Wanza Heindrykx and Liese Olukoya and all the participants in my interviews whose love propelled me throughout this process. You, once again, followed the Nigerian code of ethics: “A Nigerian never turns down anyone who requires help.” E se pupo.
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CHAPTER 1. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

Educational expectations, parental involvement, and parenting styles represent specific value systems (which are principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life) that can be transmitted to the child and may be expected to influence the child’s educational attainment (Pearce, 2006). Regarding these values, when education is seen as a path to social mobility, more energy is devoted towards academic achievement and attainment (Ogbu, 1995; Pearce). Because many voluntary immigrant parents see education as a road to upward mobility it is important to study what they see as ways of achieving this for their children.

The purpose of this study is to investigate parental expectations of Nigerian voluntary immigrants (Ogbu, 1995) to the United States for their children’s education. Immigrant or voluntary minorities are people who have migrated essentially of their own volition to the United States or any other nation because they seek more economic mobility, or a better life in general, and/or political freedom (Ogbu). This study examines the relationship between three factors, (a) parental expectations, (b) sociocultural and historical experience, and (c) academic achievement or attainment (Jacobs & Harvey, 2005; Ogbu; Olneck, 1995; Pearce, 2006).

The majority of research on voluntary immigrants has been done on Asian Americans (Li, 2004). Minimal qualitative study has been conducted about African voluntary immigrants and none has been conducted focused on Nigerian immigrants who to date are the largest African group in the United States. This leads to a gap in our understanding of parental expectations of these new immigrants. A multilevel

Background

Parental expectations are various beliefs, assumptions, and aspirations that relate to, but are not limited to, the relationship of students to faculty, curriculum, discipline, culture, and acculturation and family composition as they contribute to children’s school achievement. These beliefs and assumptions usually motivate parents to encourage their children’s success in school (Carden, 2005; Li, 2004; Seginer, 1983). Research on immigrant families has shown that voluntary minority status increases parental expectation (Ogbo, 1995; Li). Studies by Patrikakou (1997) and Ethington (1991) suggest that parental expectations and student perceptions of parental attitude towards schooling were essential in raising students’ academic expectations, thereby raising their academic achievement level.

Luckner, Whaley and Englund (2004) found that parental expectations appear to be different from other definitions of parental involvement because parental expectations are beliefs, whereas, other measures of parental involvement center on actual behaviors, such as attending parent-teacher conferences or helping with homework. It is important to distinguish between these two types of constructs when looking into parental influences on academic achievement or attainment. This study examines both parental beliefs and attitude towards their children’s school achievement.

Li (2004) posits that parental expectation is pertinent in experiences and interest of everyone; interpersonal expectations play an essential role in everyone’s life and
parental expectations are universal. However, expectations may undergo some fundamental changes when people reside in a different culture from that in which they were born due to the influences of the host culture. In this study this phenomenon is explored.

Minority Status and Education

Historically in the United States, some immigrant groups fought against paternalistic methods of acculturation by going to parochial schools; parochial schools are very authoritarian and are based on religious tenets. Parochial schools are most likely closer to what the immigrant parents are used to in their home countries and therefore, they avoid public education until they are politically and perhaps psychologically strong enough to influence the school system itself (Olneck, 1995). Many European immigrants eventually assimilated into the American mainstream. However, involuntary immigrants such as African Americans and indigenous peoples are still having difficulty with the education system they see as repressive, discriminatory and prejudicial. Because of these tendencies, some reject the system, which they deem racist and which does not have their well being at heart. Therefore, they seek other means for social mobility (Ogbu, 1988).

Adapting to the American schooling system has not been easy for any immigrant. The journey is fraught with negative teacher attitudes, prejudice, ostracism and discrimination from their American peers. In spite of all the obstacles, many immigrant students have made the system work for them. With the aid of parents, their communities, and forward-thinking teachers, most are doing very well and in some cases are outperforming their American peers (Becher, 1984; Gibson, 1998).

Ogbu (1995) indicates that what goes on inside the academic environment and the
curriculum taught is of major importance to minority students. However, of equal
importance is what the students bring with them to school; this includes their
community's cultural model or understanding of social realities, and the educational
strategies their families and their communities use or do not use in seeking education.
Ogbu further explains cultural diversity and differential school success by theorizing that
the reason some minorities do well in schools has little to do with cultural similarity to
mainstream culture. Students do well in school in spite of language and cultural
differences with mainstream culture. He further notes that, types of minority status serve
as a prerequisite for understanding cultural diversity and learning. Under this
classification, there are three types of minority groups or minority status: autonomous
minorities are minorities only due to their small numbers; Ogbu’s examples include
Jewish and the Amish people who have faced long periods of prejudice, discrimination
and persecution in the U.S. and Europe. Many Jewish people are somewhat voluntary
immigrants while others are not. The Amish have chosen rural separatism. This study
does not include these groups, or the second group whom he termed, “Caste-Like or
Involuntary Minorities.” These are people who were brought to the United States and
other countries against their wills, such as African Americans through slavery and native
peoples who were conquered, colonized, or those forced to do labor, or those who are
refugees. This study focuses on a segment of voluntary minorities, Nigerians in the
United States. Ogbu defines these groups as people who moved to the United States
voluntarily, or to any other society, because they longed for better economic well being,
greater overall opportunities and/or greater political freedom. Their great expectations
influence how they see and respond to events, including schooling in their adopted
countries. Voluntary immigrants often experience initial problems in school due to cultural and language differences, as well as lack of understanding of the workings of the school system; however, they do not experience unending, disproportionate school failure.

Demographics/Culture

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country with more than 250 ethnic groups and over 135 million people. The largest of Nigerian groups are Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5% (Central Intelligence Agency, CIA.gov, 2007). The participants involved in this study are mostly from southern Nigeria. Their cultures are alike in most cases and they have much more in common than differences (Adeniji-Neill, 1985; Bascom, 1969; Uchendu, 1965). The similarities apply to such cultural traditions as marriage, religious beliefs and practices, foreign and kinship networks, parental expectations and motivation, to name a few. Nigerian immigrants in this study will sometimes be referred to as voluntary immigrants (Ogbu, 1999). Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, approximately one million Nigerians immigrated to the United States. As is the case with the population of Nigerian on the continent of Africa, Nigerian Americans are the single largest African immigrant group in the United States (U.S. Census, 2000).

Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) indicate that voluntary immigrants from Nigeria are hardworking and resilient. Many came to the United States with college degrees, and earn postgraduate degrees while in the United States. This is very fortunate for the host country, but many say it contributes to the brain drain in Nigeria. Various sources (Le, 2007; Rimer & Arenson, 2004; United States Census) state that Africans
also have the highest educational attainment rates of any immigrant group in the United States with even higher levels of completion than the Asian American "model minority."

In addition, educational success of the African immigrants goes beyond the first generation (Johnson, 2005).

In 1997, 19.4 percent of all adult African immigrants in the United States held a graduate degree, compared to 8.1 percent of adult Whites and 3.8 percent of adult Blacks in the United States, respectively (see Table 1). This information suggests that America has an equally large achievement gap between Whites and African voluntary immigrants as they have between White and Black Americans. "African Immigrants in the United States are the Nation's Most Highly Educated Group." (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, Winter, 1999-2000).

Although Table 1 may give an indication of social class of African voluntary immigrants, the findings in this study indicate that parental expectations is a significant factor in the school successes of Nigerian voluntary immigrants' children in the United States.
Table 1

*English Fluency and Education of U. S. Immigrants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>U.S. population</th>
<th>All immigrants</th>
<th>African immigrants</th>
<th>Asian Americans</th>
<th>Europe, Russia &amp; Canada</th>
<th>Latin, South America &amp; Caribbean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not fluent in English</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Income Levels*

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, income levels among Africans immigrants are typically higher among Black Americans. This can be attributed to the higher education levels. However, Africans still earn on average less than Asian and European Americans with similar or lower levels of education, suggesting ongoing discrimination (Hersh, cited in Wolf, 2007).

Most modern Nigerian immigrants came to the United States to pursue educational opportunities in both undergraduate and post-graduate institutions. Nearly all
of these immigrants came from the southern part of the country. They are mostly the Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups. Due to Nigeria's economic woes, many did not return to Nigeria after they completed their educational goals and began to raise their families as first generation American citizens. U.S. Census Bureau data show a 368% increase in the Nigerian population in the United States from 1990 to 2000, with a numerical increase from 35,300 to 165,481. Many live in standard metropolitan districts as illustrated in Table 2.
Table 2

*Metros with Largest African-born Population*

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC MD-VA-WV</td>
<td>32,248</td>
<td>80,281</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>148.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>31,532</td>
<td>73,851</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>134.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>8,919</td>
<td>34,302</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>248.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI</td>
<td>3,788</td>
<td>27,592</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>628.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Los Angeles Area</td>
<td>16,826</td>
<td>25,829</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston, MA-NH</td>
<td>11,989</td>
<td>24,231</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>102.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>9,882</td>
<td>22,683</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>129.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>8,738</td>
<td>19,438</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>122.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas, TX</td>
<td>7,373</td>
<td>19,134</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>159.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia, PA-NJ</td>
<td>5,098</td>
<td>16,344</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>220.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is estimated that the current population of African Immigrants is over 600,000. Many immigrants from Africa live in major cities as indicated above. Countries with the most immigrants to the U.S. are Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, Somalia, and South Africa. Some of them came from Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, and Cameroon. Many migrated here for a better economic and political life.

Scope of Study

Research Question

This study examines the relationship among three factors: (a) parental expectations, (b) sociocultural and historical experience, and (c) academic achievement or attainment (Jacob & Harvey, 2005; Ogbu, 1995; Olneck, 1995, 2000; Pearce, 2006). My overarching research question is

1. What are Nigerian voluntary immigrants’ parental expectations for their children’s education?

Related Questions

2. What role do sociocultural and historical contexts play in Nigerian parents’ expectations for their children’s educational success?

3. How do these expectations relate to parental personal experiences and beliefs from their “home country” and from their “host country,” the United States?

4. What do adult children think their immigrant parents want for their education?
A Qualitative Approach

This study is conducted using personal interviews, life history interviews, participant observation, field notes and journals. I focused on Nigerian immigrant parents to the United States whose children have gone or are going through the U.S. school system.

This research is a case study utilizing applied ethnographic methods, (H. Slaughter, personal communication, February 26, 2008). A folk theory of Nigerians emerging from their narratives will be proposed in Chapter 5 as a base for discussion. Wong and Rowley (2001) postulate that a well-designed single group study may provide more informative data than comparative studies to enhance our understanding of minority children’s schooling. Folk theories are significant because they largely reflect common knowledge in a particular culture, and function as guiding principles in everyday practice (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991; Li, 2004; Okagaki, 2001). Scientific and conceptual theories serve a definite function in that they are constructed, tested and refined by researchers, while a folk theory represents ordinary people’s world views that are shaped by their cultural and life experience (Li).

Several scholars (Cresswell, 2003; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Seidman, 2006) agree that the primary aim of qualitative research is an active learning process, a means of studying social and cultural phenomena. Burns and Grove (2001) state that the qualitative approach to research is based on a “world view” that is holistic and has the following beliefs:

1. There is no single reality.
2. Reality is based upon perceptions that are different for each person and change
over time, and

3. What we know has meaning only within a given situation or context.

Qualitative research is a means of gaining a deep understanding of a specific organization or event and a way of learning about a segment of the social world. In this process the researcher is a learner; the participants provide the rich and detailed data for this learning process. The qualitative research aims to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and broad patterns found among a group of participants.

This study employs an open-ended question interviewing method. Open-ended interviewing is a well-documented research method that allows the voices of the participants to be heard and helps uncover reality beneath the surface (Riessman, 1993). In qualitative program evaluation, open-ended responses to questions provide the evaluator with quotations, which are the main source of raw data. Patton (2002) notes that quotations reveal the respondents' levels of emotion, the way in which they have organized the world; their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions. An open-ended question encourages a full, meaningful answer using the participant's own knowledge and/or feelings. Open-ended questions also tend to be more objective and less leading (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Data Analysis

In this study taped in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim, field notes and journal entries were reviewed regularly (Creswell, 2003). I have analyzed data through descriptive analysis (Chenail, St. George, Wulff, Duffy, & Charles, 2008). The aim of descriptive research is to gather knowledge about the focus or object of study; but tries to avoid bringing about any changes in the focus or object. Descriptive analysis seeks
knowledge about a firmly defined question or questions. This knowledge consists mainly of describing the foci/objects. Descriptive analysis deals with perceptions not causes or implications. The results of this study were verified by returning transcribed interviews to participants via email or post. I also spent time with my participant families by visiting them at their homes and was involved in some families’ outings and recreation activities. Open-ended interview data provide important contextual background for my analysis. Data were also organized into categories under the research questions and connected themes.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to investigate Nigerian voluntary immigrant parents’ expectations for their children’s education. Most research on this subject has been done on Asian immigrants, a minimal amount on African immigrants, and none on Nigerian immigrants (Ogbu, 1995). Since Nigerians are the largest African immigrant group to the United States, this leaves a gap in our understanding of this subject. Much of the study builds on Ogbu’s work (1994, 1995, 1998) on how culture and sociocultural influences feature prominently in minority education. Contrary to popular belief, U.S. Census data reveal a higher level of education and fluency in English among African immigrants than any other groups. Educational levels among African immigrants are also notably higher than any other groups in the United States including White adults. These facts suggest a high level of students’ success in school.

Data has been gathered from interviews, life histories, participant observation, field notes and journals. An open-ended question interviewing method was utilized. This is a well-documented research method that allows the voice of the participant to be
heard and helps uncover reality beneath the surface (Riessman, 1993). The data were then analyzed through descriptive analysis (Chenail, St. George, Wulff, Duffy, & Charles, 2008).
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in tri-dimensional Base: (1) Theoretical framework, (2) Factors guiding Parental expectations and (3) Historical bases of education in Nigeria that include indigenous education (pre-colonial), colonial education and postcolonial education. These theories, factors and historical bases are: Parental Expectations Theory, Achievement Motivation Theory, Parent Involvement: Influencing Factors and Implications, Parent-Child Interaction, Parental Influence on Student’s Achievement, Cultural Capital Theory, Sociostructural Theory, Acculturation Theory, Minority Status, Culture and Identity Theory, Cultural Differences, Identity, and School Learning Theory, Indigenous Education in Africa (Nigeria), Colonial Education, The Origin of 19th Century Missions in Nigeria, The Nigerian Response, Post-Colonial Education in Nigeria, The New Nigerian Government’ Control of Education, and The Crisis of Knowledge Production. These theories and factors are reviewed in this chapter.

Parental Expectations Theory

Educational expectations, parental involvement, and parenting styles represent specific value systems that can be transmitted to the child and may be expected to influence the children’s educational attainment (Pearce, 2006). Regarding these values, when education is seen as a path to social mobility by parents, more energy is devoted towards academic achievement and attainment (Ogbu 1995; Pearce). Parental expectations are various beliefs, assumptions, and aspirations that relate to, but are not
limited to, the relationship of students to faculty, curriculum, and discipline, cultures, acculturations and family composition as they contribute to children’s school achievement. These beliefs and assumptions usually motivate parents to encourage their children’s success in school (Carden, 2005; Li, 2004; Seginer, 1983). Research on immigrant families has shown that voluntary minority status increases parental expectation (Ethington, 1991; Li; Ogbu, 1995). A study by Patrikakou (1997) suggests that parental expectations and student perceptions of parental attitude were essential in lifting students’ own academic expectations, thereby raising their academic achievement level.

Englund, et al. (2004), state that parental expectations appear to be different from other definitions of parental involvement because parental expectations are beliefs, whereas, other measures of parental involvement center on actual behaviors, such as attending parent-teacher conferences or helping with homework. However, since it is possible that parents’ beliefs influence their children’s behavior; it is important to recognize these two types of constructs when looking into parental influences on academic achievement or attainment.

Li (2004) posits that parental expectation is pertinent to the experiences and interests of everyone; interpersonal expectations play an essential role in everyone’s life and parental expectations are universal. However, expectations may undergo some fundamental changes when people reside in a different culture from that in which they were born due to the influences of the host culture.

Achievement Motivation Theory

Horowith and Naftalie (1997) in their study of Ethiopian children’s achievement
in Israel indicate that the elements in socialization that enable achievement motivation in Ethiopian immigrants include a high level of aspiration and the ability to postpone gratification and obedience. Some elements of socialization that hinder Ethiopian children’s progress at school include conformity restraints on individual creativity and external locus of control. McClelland (1963) defines the need for achievement as striving for success in comparison with some standard of excellence. This need has both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational aspects. Horowith and Naftalie note there are two kinds of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation, is internal, comes from within the self, one is compelled to act due to internal factors. Extrinsic motivation comes into play when a student is compelled to act due to external factors. This achievement motivation construct has been criticized for not properly identifying and isolating the specific environmental variables that generate achievement motivation. McClelland (1961) proposed a content theory of motivation based on Henry Murray's (1938) theory of personality, which describes a comprehensive model of human needs and motivational processes. McClelland (1961) also notes that the subjective importance of motivational needs varies from individual to individual and depends also on an individual's cultural background. He proposes that an individual's specific needs are acquired over time and are shaped by one's life experiences. The narratives of the life histories of the participants in this study, shed light into what motivates them and how this impacts their expectations for their children’s education.

Parent Involvement: Influencing Factors and Implications

Research supports the need for successful inclusion and involvement of parents in a variety of roles and areas, and recognizes the many advantages of having parents as
partners in the education of their children (Pena, 2000). According to recent research (Berger, 1995; Pena), the primary factors for children's educational success or failure are parent interest and support. Parent involvement has many positive benefits for students, the most important of which is enhanced student achievement (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Pena; Seefeldt, 1985; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1996). Henderson (1981, 1987) examined numerous studies in which parent involvement produced measurable gains in student academic achievement. Effective parent involvement correlates with students' school success (Henderson, 1988), as well as increased positive behavior and emotional development. Parents who become involved in their children's schooling tend to develop higher educational aspirations for them (Cai, Moyer, & Wang, 1997; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Henderson, 1988; Pena).

Several studies (Desimone, 1999; Kozol, 1991; Ogbu, 1978, 1987) postulate that parental aspirations and involvement alone cannot account for the student's success at school or employment. Research indicates that the U.S education system does not afford children from low income and racial-ethnic minority backgrounds the same educational opportunities, on average, as middle-income non-minority children. These inequalities generate job market disparities that affect an individual's earning potential and ability to become economically self-sufficient (Hernandez, 1994; Levy & Murnane, 1992; Sorenson, 1994; Willis, 1986).

Desimone's (1999) analysis of the parent and student surveys from the restricted-use panel data of the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, concluded that student perceptions of involvement mattered more for achievement than did parent perceptions across all races/ethnicities and income levels. Students' perceptions of
parent-child discussion and of household rules were much better predictors of achievement than were parent perceptions of similar constructs. She further notes, however, that studies have documented inconsistency between parents and children's perceptions of parent involvement.

Parent-Child Interaction

Cultural context affected the nature of the correlation between student achievement and discussion about school (Desimone, 1999). Research documents a strong relationship between achievement and parent-child communication and the parent-child relationship (Becher, 1984; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Lee, 1994; Muller, 1993; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). A comparison across models found that student-reported discussion was a significantly better predictor for Whites than for Asians, Blacks, or Hispanics and for middle-income students compared with low-income students. Advantaged and disadvantaged families also may differ in their style of communication, which may contribute to determining the effects of the discussion on the child's academic behavior and growth. Although having a dialogue about school has positive effects for all students, it is significantly less effective for the disadvantaged student (Desimone).

Prior research has documented a positive relationship between achievement and high parental expectations (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Desimone, 1999). An examination of the relationship according to student background showed that it was not significant for traditionally at-risk students. That finding could have resulted from conflicting factors in the environment, such as knowledge of job market ceilings, which decrease the willingness of children to internalize their parents' high expectations (Ogbu, 1988).
Parental Influence on Student’s Achievement

A study by Niebuhr (1995) examined relationships between several variables and student academic achievement. His findings suggest that the elements of both school climate and family environment have a strong effect on academic achievement. According to Hammer (2003) the home environment is as important as what goes on in the school. Important factors include parental involvement in their children's education. Parents and teachers have a crucial role to play to make sure that every child becomes a high achiever. Parental influence has been identified as an important factor affecting student achievement. Results indicate that parent education and encouragement are strongly related to improved student achievement (Wang, Wildman & Calhoun, 1996).

Phillips (1998) and Halawah (2006) found that parental education and socio economic status have an impact on student achievement. Students with parents who were both college-educated tended to achieve at the highest levels. Income and family size were moderately related to achievement (Ferguson, 1991). Peng and Wright (1994) concluded that home environment (including family income) and educational activities, had the greatest impact on students' academic achievements.

Several researchers (Epstein, 1995; Finn & Rock, 1997; Halle, Kurtz-Costes & Mahoney, 1997; Losh & Tavani, 2003; Moss & St. Laurent, 2001; Stevenson & Baker, 1987) show that the attitudes parents display towards their children have significant impact on their children's behavior relating to school achievement. Moreover, Stevenson and Lee (1990) indicate that parents, who believe that their children's performances are determined by their abilities, tend to participate less frequently in their children's school careers than those parents who believe their children's performance is determined by
effort. Miller (1995) discussed the role of parents as supporters of their children's academic success, and indicated that parental attributions towards their children's academic performances are established early in the children's school careers.

Many researchers (Kohn, 1969; Majoribanks, 1979; Riggio, Watring, & Throckmorton, 1993; Robbins, Lese, & Herrick, 1993 Stevenson & Baker, 1987) note that the parental education level as well as parental involvement have been found to be significant predictors of children's academic success. Higher levels of degree attainment (i.e., high school, associates, bachelors, master's, doctoral) by parents lead to higher levels of academic performance among their children. Parental education levels and encouragements transmit certain beliefs concerning the importance of an education and success (Georgiou, 1999; Losh & Tavani, 2003; Riggio, Watring, & Throckmorton, 1993; Robbins, Lese, & Herrick, 1993). Parents' education levels may not always directly affect their children's performance; however, they do tend to play a strong indirect role in how the children are raised. According to Georgiou, parents with higher education degrees are typically more involved in their children's academic careers, thereby placing more emphasis on academics than those parents with lower education degrees who have less involvement in their children's education. However, there are other forces beyond parental control that impact children's education; Olneck (2000) observes that "the power of established cultural authorities (p.327)... makes them able to control the mechanism of state policy such as curriculum drafting, and the screening and selection of committees that are influential in the selection of textbooks and establishing standards. These in turn, do not often favor, or may totally ignore, the contributions to history, science and society made by people of color. There is evidence that schools tend to
reflect the social stratification that exists in the communities they serve. This is elaborated in the Cultural Capital Theory, articulated by Bourdieu (1977a).

Cultural Capital Theory

According to this theory, schools reproduce social stratification in order to bolster the dominant cultural group's social capital. Bourdieu (1997a) identifies relationships among culture, power and stratification as basic to all social organization:

... Different classes and class fractions are engaged in a specifically symbolic struggle to impose the definition of the social world most in conformity with their interests. The field of ideological positions reproduces in transfigured form the field of social positions. They may carry on this struggle either directly in the symbolic conflicts of everyday or indirectly through the struggle waged by the specialists in symbolic production, in which the object at stake is the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence—that is to say, the power to impose instruments of knowledge and expression of social reality, which are arbitrary. The field of symbolic production is a microcosm of the struggle between classes. It is by serving their own interests in the struggle internal to the field of production that those producers serve the interests of groups external to their field of production. (p.115)

Cultural Capital is defined by Rueda, Monzó, and Arzubiaga (2003) as "the wealth out of which more wealth comes." Although initially used by economists, sociologists have applied the concept of capital to other resources, namely social capital. Often the term social capital is used to refer to multiple sources of social resources as opposed to economic ones. Rueda, et al. further note, some authors have cited the
importance between different forms of capital, including human, cultural, and social
capital. In this more restrictive use, social capital refers to the networks of people who
can provide other forms of capital, including economic and cultural capital. In this sense
a person with an extensive network of friends, family, and other contacts may have
greater social capital than someone who is predominantly isolated with few people from
whom to gain access to information, assistance, or other resources. However the quality
of this network, that is the kinds of information and resources the network may have, also
has an important bearing on the extent to which the network is a source of capital. It may
be that a network provides important resources in a particular area or context but less so in others.

stipulate that racial discrimination and limited socioeconomic factors forced some ethnic
minority groups, especially African Americans, to maintain culturally different
approaches to opportunity structures. Therefore, the social environment and the majority
culture have set up a detrimental stage in which some individuals in American society
have fallen through the cracks (Fordham & Ogbu). This is the “symbolic struggle”
(Bourdieu, 1977a) engaged in between involuntary immigrants and the majority culture.
And since the majority, of course, is mainly interested in promoting their own interests or
social capital, it follows logic that those who do not wish to be “dominated,” or do not
wish to participate in what they see as acts of domination, will lose.

Pearce (2006) states, for many years, federal statistics have shown a persistent
educational achievement gap between White and Asian students (achieving higher) and
African American and Latino/a students (achieving lower). Attention has been focused
on standardized test scores and graduation rates. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Black-White gap in standardized scores narrowed by some 20%, while the 1990s saw this trend reverse and the gap again widen. Research on the achievement gap and racial inequality cited cultural and structural elements as factors. This discourse remains primarily focused on the persistent Black-White gap across the spectrum of achievement and attainment. Although Chinese Americans have been recognized as a minority group who have achieved and attained at a higher level, it is important to also note that African immigrants are currently out-performing Whites and all other immigrants to the United States. Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) indicate voluntary immigrants from Nigeria are hardworking and resilient. Various sources, (Le, 2007; Rimer & Arenson, 2004; United States Census, 2000) state that Africans have the highest educational attainment rates of any immigrant group in the United States including those of the Asian American model minority. Educational success of the African immigrants goes beyond the first generation (Johnson, 2005). By gaining a better understanding of the factors that aid some foreign-born Africans in realizing academic success, we can identify methods for ameliorating the situation among underachieving groups.

A great deal of qualitative research has explored achievement among Chinese Americans (e.g., Pearce, 2006; Siu & Feldman, 1995). However, while both structural and cultural explanations from this perspective inform our understanding of the context of Chinese American educational achievement, qualitative studies have not come down conclusively on either side of the structural-cultural debate. The general area of achievement has received considerable attention in the literature, with various studies focusing on achievement (Pearce; Pearce & Lin 2005; Portes & Zady, 1996),
achievement loss (Alspaugh, 1998; Alspaugh & Harting, 1995), and the achievement gap (Chen, C & Stevenson, 1995; Chen, X., 1996; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1991). Recent literature has also given considerable attention to school transitions (e.g., Alspaugh, 1998; Eccles, Wigfield, Midgley, Reuman, MacIver, & Fieldlaufer, 1993; Pearce). For many students, the transition from elementary to intermediate school, and from elementary or intermediate school, to high school presents distinct difficulties. Alspaugh has suggested that consistent student achievement losses in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies occur at specific transition points. Others have found evidence of decreased motivation (Pearce), lowered self-esteem (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998), and such adverse psychological effects as anxiety and distress (Alspaugh).

Alspaugh and Harting (1995) cite sociostructural factors as explaining achievement loss and dropout rates. Success of new minorities in the education field, although not conclusive, may be attributed to cultural and sociocultural factors. Parental expectations in students' educational success have also been explained through the frameworks of cultural capital theory and sociostructural theory (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Pearce).

Pearce (2006) notes that, America has changed in 50 years concerning structural changes that advance greater economic, educational and social parity among all members of our society. Groups like African Americans and Latino/a have made greater progress as students in all fields, especially in the field of education.

Sociostructural Theory

Since parental expectations are crucial to immigrant students' achievement this theory is crucial to explaining parental expectations of Nigerian immigrants. Steinberg
(1981) in his sociostructural theory indicates that children face structural conditions similar to those faced by their parents. Within this paradigm, one may conclude that sociocultural elements such as parental expectations, immigrant status, parent education, socioeconomic condition and family values will play important parts for better or for worse in students' educational achievement and attainment. Schwandt (1997) defines structuralism as "a way of thinking about the world and a methodology for investigating the world that is concerned with identifying and describing its underlying structures that cannot be observed but be inferred" (p.146). He further notes that what structure is varies according the discipline in which structure is discussed; structure could be economic, gender relations, kinship relations, culture, and self-regulation.

Cultural explanations of parental expectations used in this study assume that parental beliefs and values are crucial to immigrant students' educational achievement. Sociostructural factors are those elements that impede or support academic achievement and attainment and are largely beyond an individual's locus of control (Pearce, 2006). Culture defines people and their affiliation to groups, a break from culture represents a break from one's community and identity (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Kim, 2004; Pearce). Cultural factors may allow individuals to excel, or they may also serve as deterrents (Portes & Zady, 1996). Research has sighted cultural resources of hard work, frugality and entrepreneurship of non-English speaking immigrants from Europe as responsible for their successes (Sowell, 1981) and this could also be true of Nigerian immigrants in this study. Cultural explanations in this study seek to identify the elements in the immigrant culture that enable achievement. They must also identify less beneficial elements of the culture; this is not to apportion blame to the families in this study but to identify factors
that are both positive and negative that support parental expectations in students' education. The structural explanation to achievement and attainment focuses on conditions viewed as constraining behavior and limiting opportunity. Pearce (2006) asserts that socioeconomic status is a typical example of a sociostructural factor; and that these factors are largely beyond individual control. Steinberg (1981) indicates that the culture of poverty is insidious across generations, because children confront structural conditions similar to that of their parents. Further, Fordham and Ogbu (1996) and Kim (2004) state that we are defined by culture and group affiliation; and, that breaking from culture, even that of poverty, represents a break with our identity. Structural explanations revolve around constraints of ethnicity and race or the opposite (Pearce). However, research by Sowell (1981) has also identified cases in which these constraints appeared to have been overcome. Extraordinary cultural resources of immigrants who are "frugal, hard-working and entrepreneureal" (pp. 219-220) have been credited for immigrants' educational attainment and achievement.

Acculturation Theory

Steward (1977) coined the term Cultural Ecology. In his Theory of Culture Change: the Methodology of Multi-Linear Evolution he defines cultural ecology as the study of the adaptive processes by which the nature of society, and an unpredictable number of features of culture are affected by the basic adjustment through which man utilizes a given environment. However, Steward's ideas have been critiqued for their environmental determinism (Hornburg, 2007).

This research examines what Berry (1997) postulates as the transformation of culture and thought processes that affect the immigrants by the mere fact that they left
their original environment—a transformative process known as acculturation. Past research (Berry; Fordham, 1981; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1974, 1978, 1988) indicates that racial discrimination and low socioeconomic status forced some ethnic minority groups, especially African Americans, to maintain culturally different approaches to opportunity structures. Therefore, the social environment and the majority culture have set up a detrimental stage in which some individuals in American society have fallen through the cracks (Fordham & Ogbu). Many studies have drawn attention to successes of involuntary immigrants through the lens of culture and sociocultural structures. Waters (2000) studied the successes of West Indians in contrast to many African Americans; she found that the socio cultural reality of American race relations and economic disadvantages is similar within both communities among the working class and poor immigrants. She also found that the barriers the poor and working class immigrants faced soon dampened their enthusiasm and belief in education as the engine to success.

Although the study is inconclusive, Berry (1997) theorizes acculturation strategies have been shown to have substantial relationships with positive adaptation. He found that integration is usually the most successful; marginalization is the least; and assimilation and separation strategies are intermediate. Integration strategy incorporates many protective factors, such as willingness for mutual accommodation (i.e. the presence of mutual positive attitudes, and absence of prejudice and discrimination, involvement in two cultural communities, the immigrant community and the dominant culture community, having two social support systems; and being flexible in personality. In sharp contrast, marginalization involves rejection by the dominant society, combined
with own-culture loss or rejection; this means the presence of hostility and much reduced social support. Assimilation involves own culture shedding (even though it may be voluntary), and separation involves rejection of the dominant culture and perhaps reciprocation by them.

Minority Status, Culture and Identity Theory

Ogbu (1995) and Banks (2001) postulate that different types of cultural differences, as well as social or collective identities, characterize different types of minority groups. Voluntary minorities are influenced by primary cultural differences. Primary differences are those cultural characteristics, (such as child raising practices, language, religion, marriage ceremonies and ways of dressing), that existed before the immigrant minority came to the United States. More importantly, voluntary minorities appear to bring with them a sense of personal identity from their birth countries and they tend to retain this sense of self at least during the first generation. Further, Carter & Helm (1988) in their study of Canadian immigrants indicate that socioeconomic status variables did not predict racial identity attitudes. Since socioeconomic status has been assumed by both Black and White social scientists to be an important determiner of Black identity, one would expect to find significant relationships between racial identity attitudes and socioeconomic status, but this is not the case. Visible minority status, political participation, language use, and the proportion of friends who share the same ethnic identity have more impact on acculturation of immigrants. Walters, Phythian and Anisef (2007) report that identification of immigrants with the host country majority group varies according to the sociodemographic characteristics of individual immigrants, such as length of time since arrival, and racial minority status, as well as positive and
negative interactions with the majority group.

Burke (2004) outlines links between identities and social structure. He posits “identities are the sets of meanings people hold for themselves that define ‘what it means’ to be who they are as persons, as role occupants, and as group members.” These meanings constitute what is called an identity standard. The identity standard serves as a reference with which persons compare their perceptions of self-relevant meanings in the interactive situation. When the perceptions match the meanings in the standard, people are doing "just fine." Their identities are being confirmed or verified, and they will continue to act as they are; no changes are required. When, however, there is a disturbance that changes the interactive situation and thus the perceived situational meanings so that they no longer match the standards, people will act so as to counteract the disturbance and restore the match in meanings between perceptions and standard.

The voluntary immigrants' expectations influence how they see and respond to events including schooling; they suffer initial setbacks in school due to cultural and language differences as well as lack of understanding of the school system (Ogbu, 1995).

Cultural Differences, Identity, and School Learning Theory

Although voluntary minorities might suffer initial pitfalls due to language and culture in America especially because they may lack concepts necessary to learn math and science and may have different preferred teaching and learning styles, in a comparative study, Ogbu (1995) indicates that the relationship between the primary culture and white mainstream culture helps the voluntary immigrant minority children overcome initial problems, adjust socially and perform more successfully in academic programs.
Also, because voluntary minorities do not have to protect their collective identity against the mainstream culture, due to the fact that that was already developed in their host countries, they do not see school success as contrary to their self-worth and community identity or as threatening to their own culture, language and identities. They are more or less free to see learning as a way to succeed in society. Voluntary minorities, therefore, tend to adopt strategies of accommodation without assimilation (Gibson, 1988) or alternative strategies (Ogbu, 1987). With the outlook that education is a stepping-stone to self-betterment, voluntary minorities are able to cross cultural boundaries to reach relative success in school.

The theory on voluntary/involuntary immigrants has its foundation on Ogbu’s (1971-2003) corpus of works and his folk theory. However, this theory of voluntary/involuntary immigrants’ means of succeeding in education is not without critics, and rightfully so. For thirty years, dating from 1971, when he received his doctorate from Berkeley, John Ogbu articulated his theories of minority student success (and failure), and developed a large following stemming from his prolific writings and presentations. He studied and wrote upon the relative success and failure of what he termed “voluntary” and “involuntary” minorities.

It is should be noted that Ogbu’s work has come under scrutiny and challenged on a number of points. Foster (2005) questions Ogbu’s understanding of the complexities of the culture from which these students emerge, and that his theses are poorly researched and based on folkloric readings of cultural history in regards to African Americans. Forster further contends that Ogbu’s theories on voluntary and involuntary minority students fail to capture all the subtlety and complexities of their circumstances.
continues, that, “We should recognize the continuing usefulness of his (Ogbu’s) categorization of voluntary and involuntary minorities (but recognize them as ideal types given the fluid nature of identity, and recognizing, of course, that there may be instances where this scheme may not be applicable)” (p. 578). Foster, concludes, “… we should see his work as explaining some aspects of different minority students’ experiences, but not others, and see his work as one possible explanation of students’ attitudes and behaviors in different situations. With his work thus framed, it will be useful to educational researchers for years to come” (p. 578).

Up to this point I have discussed the effect of the host country’s impact on voluntary immigrants’ parental expectations. However, other factors that have equal impact on the immigrant are the sociocultural and historical factors from their country of origin, such as the formation and development of education, from the earliest indigenous beginnings to the pre- and post-Colonial formal systems, which have a direct bearing on this study’s basic research questions.

Indigenous Education in Africa (Nigeria)

Onwauchi (1972) states that, in all societies every child is endowed with an innate quality of mind and body. The child acquires education through the process of socialization and the cultural mode of behavior. He defines culture as “the sum total of the integrated learned behavior patterns characteristic of members of a society” (p. 241). Culture is the people’s way of life, their social organization, and economic patterns, including feelings shared by members of the community. Culture is learned, not biologically inherited. People are products and producers of their culture. It is through the pursuit of cultural norms and values that individuals give meaning to their lives.
Norms and values are socially standardized concepts of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. These differ from place to place. When two cultures meet, it is understandable that this will result in some changes to both cultures, however; the new cultural values born of the marriage of the two must be properly adjusted to existing cultural fabrics in the other to be fully beneficial.

The early 1800s brought the advent of the Western educational system to Nigerian culture. However, before exploring the resultant effects of Western education, I examine pre-Colonial indigenous education.

Several studies (Mbiti, 1990; Menkiti, 1984; Onwauchi, 1972; Tedla, 1992; Wiredu, 1977) indicate indigenous African learning is inseparable from the peoples’ daily lives. Indigenous education plays a vital role in the transmission of values that Africans consider essential in experiencing life in a holistic way. This is critical to the African’s way of life; therefore, indigenous education is not divorced from traditional African religious thought and values. Thus, for Africans, the educational institution is not separate from life. There is no distinction between formal, non-formal and informal education. The entire community is ever engaging in continuous learning and teaching. In this light the Western concept of education does not conform to African reality. In pre-Colonial Africa, learning begins shortly after birth. Among the Yoruba, there is a tradition of “naming the child.” On the seventh day following birth, a naming ceremony is performed for the child. This process is to introduce the child to the ancestors, family friends and community, and to educate the newborn of the traditions of its people. Indeed, learning for the Yoruba of present day Nigeria, as for all Africans, begins at birth (Adeniji-Neill, 2004).
Menkiti (1984) asserts,

In African thought persons become persons only after a process of incorporation. Without incorporation into this or that community, individuals are considered to be mere danglers to whom the description ‘person’ does not fully apply. For personhood is something which has to be achieved, and is not given simply because one is born of human seed. . . . Whereas Western conceptions of man go for what might be described as a minimal definition of the person - whoever has soul, or rationality, or will, or memory, is seen as entitled to the description ‘person’ - the African view reaches instead for what might be described as a maximal definition of the person. As far as African societies are concerned, personhood is something at which individuals could fail, at which they could be incompetent or ineffective, better or worse. Hence, the African emphasized the rituals of incorporation and the overarching necessity of learning the social rules by which the community lives, so that what was initially biologically given can come to attain social self-hood, i.e., become a person with all the inbuilt excellencies implied by the term. (p. 172)

Principles of Traditional Education Among the Yoruba people

The principles of Yoruba traditional education, according to Akinyemi (2003) and Awoniyi (1975), are based on the concept of Omoluabi (an ideal being). In other words, the product of Yoruba traditional education is to make an individual an Omoluabi. To be an Omoluabi is to be of good character in all its ramifications. To the Yoruba, good character includes respect for old age, loyalty to one’s parents and local traditions, honesty in public and private dealings, devotion to duty, readiness to assist the needy and
the infirm, sympathy, sociability, courage, an itching desire for work, and many other desirable qualities. In essence, the main idea of Yoruba traditional education has always been to foster good character in the individual and to make the child a useful member of the community. Therefore, traditional education embraces character-building as well as the development of physical aptitude, the acquisition of those moral qualities felt to be an integral part of manhood, and the acquisition of the knowledge and techniques needed by all men if they are to take an active part in social life in its various forms.

The way in which each human infant is transformed into the finished adult and into the complicated individual of her/his community is not a monopoly of any society. Education in Yoruba culture is a life-long process and the whole society is the school; hence the essence of the proverb oju merin ni bimo, Igba ni iwo (Translation: only two individuals represented by four eyes are involved in the conception and birth of a child, but everyone in the society, represented by one thousand eyes, participate in the child’s training.) Traditional education in Yoruba society begins in the womb (Adeoye 1979; Akinyemi, 2003).

As the child develops, all efforts are made to give the child an opportunity for all round development. From the first day, the child’s cries are interpreted with psychological precision. While the child being bathed, her/his parts of the body are stretched. S/he is thrown up and caught many times to develop her/his courage early. The mother–child relationship becomes a source of training (Akinyemi, 2003).

Another way of training a children’s mind is through oral game poetry in Yorubaland (Akinyemi, 2003; Oyesakin 1983), in game poetry, children memorize poetry associated with games for their physical development. The term game poetry has
been adopted for this class of poetry because most of the accompanying games have elements of competition and rules, which specify permissible interactions, and also specify methods of determining the losers and winners (Akinyemi). The child’s linguistic development is not left unattended to. Through reinforcement, examples and precepts, the child is gradually initiated into her/his linguistic community. Particular attention is paid to difficult Yoruba phonemes. For instance, tongue twisters are specially created to make the child sharp in her/his speech. It is often said in Yoruba that Omo ti yo o baje a sa mu, kekere ni yo o ti se enu samu samu (Translation: a child who is going to be sharp will be clear and precise in her/his speech from childhood.) Training of the child’s linguistic competence is not restricted to tongue twisters alone; rather, the child’s phonemic pronunciation is developed through recitation of long poetic lines in musical form. Apart from the development of the child’s linguistic competence, the excerpt above can also assist the child to build up a vocabulary of basic words in the Yoruba language. Such words are grouped into two: living and non-living things. By so doing, the child’s linguistic development is encouraged at the same time with her/his intelligence. Other means of indigenous education are through moonlight story telling and apprenticeship.

*The Culture of Moonlight Stories Among the Yoruba people*

The tradition of telling moonlight stories (alo apa gbe) in Yoruba society dates back to the ancient times. It is an art that has been passed on from one generation to the other. The major occupation of the Yoruba people has been more agrarian than anything else; hence, story telling filled in a traditional arts vacuum as a pastime for the people, especially in the evenings after a hard day’s work. A gathering of family members or
children from the neighborhood under bright moonlight made an audience during the storytelling session.

Karin Barber (1991, cited in Akinyemi, 2003) describes the culture of moonlight story as follows:

_Alo_ are the most communal, domestic and democratic of Yoruba verbal art forms. They used to be told within the compound in the evening after work, with all the household present. All were entitled to tell a tale if they wished, even the youngest, and all were expected to support the others’ performances by supplying a chorus to the songs. The moral values, which are the issue in these stories, are correspondingly, those which make for harmonious communal living, good neighbors, loyal friends, and faithful wives are contrasted with trickster, betrayers, and deceivers. The important point is not so much that the _alo_ are didactic, imparting values to the young . . . but that the ground and framework of every story is the values of the everyday, ordinary, human world. What is tested, experimented with and sometimes imaginatively abolished, is the morality of communal living, based on common decency, humanity and generosity. This is the scope and the field of the discourse of _alo_. (p. 170)

*Educational Values in Yoruba Moonlight Tales*

The essence of moonlight story sessions among the Yoruba people is to tell stories that can help to shape their children’s understanding of life and stories that can assist in building up a responsible individual and tell one how to “be” and “live”. The cardinal virtues of life that are vital for

the children’s future happiness are often adopted as themes for the moonlight
stories.

Education in the indigenous African society is an ongoing process of living life in traditional customs and values. Through traditional folklore, myths and history, elders teach children the moral and ethical codes of behavior and socialization processes. Several scholars (Mbiti, 1975; 1990; Onwauchi, 1972; Tedla, 1992) state, learning takes place everywhere- in the home, the fields, the gathering places, the marketplace, the forest, caves, or shrines, by the lake or riverside, at weddings, festivals, and funerals. Everyone is engaged in learning and teaching. This leads to a rich tradition of teaching and learning and the development and use of symbols, rituals, ceremonies, proverbs, riddles, wise sayings, memorizing, apprenticeship, storytelling, observation, practicing, singing, dramatizing, and sometimes writing. Examples of African scripts are: Meroetic script, Mourn script, Vai script, Bete script, the Akan script, and Yoruba glyphs. The subject matter taught encompasses all parts of the African physical and spiritual life (Tedla).

Apprenticeship

Pre-Colonial education or indigenous education, also involved both a formal and informal apprenticeship. Obidi (1995) defines apprenticeship as a form of on-the-job training in which young people learn by doing under supervision and guidance. Apprentices learn arts and crafts that range from the traditional skills of woodcarving and haircutting to the contemporary ones of dry cleaning and bread making. Apprenticeship allows people to receive specialized training directly related to their jobs; furthermore, it is a major category of non-formal education. "Non-formal education has been defined as any organized educational activity outside the established formal system whether
operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives” (International Council for Educational Development [ICED], 1973 cited in Obidi p. 371).

Apprenticeship in Africa in general and among the Yoruba of Nigeria in particular, is usually affiliated with specific families. It is customary that if a man is a farmer, his children will be farmers. If a man is a gold smith, or silver smith, or weapon maker, that would be the job that his children would aspire to. However, others are also allowed to join the trade after considerable negotiations and determination of worthiness (Obidi, 1995). Yoruba children learn a variety of crafts, trades and professions from craftsmen and professionals through the apprenticeship system. In some cases apprentices begin to learn from the knees of their mothers. Obidi in his study reported that training in crafts, especially in blacksmithing, begins very early. A 3-year old boy might go to the smithy or work shed with his father, but he is certainly too young to work. For both inherited crafts and those learned from other craftsmen, it appears that formal apprenticeship starts between 5 and 7 years of age, varying slightly from one community to another (Fadipe, 1991). Some boys, however, start their apprenticeship at a later age, probably at the age of 15 years, when they can withstand the rigors of the training and the intense heat in the smithy.

Of critical importance is the division among the smiths, which tends to reduce the number of things an apprentice is required to learn. Work in black metal (iron) is distinguished from work in white metal (silver and brass) and both were distinguished from the work of tinkers and gunsmiths (Lloyd, 1953, p. 32 cited in Obidi, 1995). In some towns like Ibadan and Oyo the three groups remain united within one organization.
and in others like Ife and Ado-Ekiti, they are divided into two or three organizations. The organization within a work shed or apprentice school is such that seniority and age are respected and given proper recognition (Onifade, 1985). In a school that normally has between six and twelve apprentices, there is a hierarchical structure in which the master occupies the apex, followed by the most senior apprentice or journeyman and so on down the ladder (Onifade, 1985). Learning traditions in pre-colonial Africa continues today in some indigenous African societies, such as among the Yoruba, and takes place in real time and through watching, participating and listening in the “field.” A woman who will become a midwife is attached to a midwife from the time she can walk and successfully run errands during birthing. An apprentice to the medicine man is attached to the household as soon he or she can speak and understand. However, a different way of learning namely, colonial education began in Africa in early 19th Century.

Colonial Education

Onwauchi (1972) posits cultural variations and conditions of diversity have existed in Africa from time immemorial and that it was within these variations that the great African civilization of Egypt existed and the powerful kingdoms of Africa rose and fell. It was within the continent of Africa that the Great Pharaohs of Egypt lived in decadent splendor throughout the Dark Ages of Europe.

The empires of Mali, Ghana, Songhay, and several kingdoms including the Yoruba kingdom thrived from 300 CE to 1900 CE (Clark, 1991). Around the 12th century, the University of Timbuktu had an attendance of 25,000 students in a city, which had a population of 100,000 people. The students came from all corners of the African continent in search of excellence in knowledge and trade. The territorial boundaries of
Africa and its peoples also contributed some of the key elements that enabled the
development of our present Western Civilization. Paradoxically, Africa still maintains
some of the most traditional and “primitive” cultures (Onwauchi, 1972).

The impact of Western education in Africa has created many challenges,
opportunities and changes. Among these are the problems of cultural adaptation and the
incorporation of Western laws and customs into existing tribal ones. There are also the
problems of modern urbanization that have brought about a radically transformed
continent. A people deprived of cultural teachings to which they were traditionally
bound has been created as a result of the collision between Colonial, indigenous, and
post-Colonial education (Adeyinka, 1975; Adesina, 1972; Akinyemi, 2003; Onwauchu,
1972; Taiwo, 1993).

The Origin of 19th Century Missions in Nigeria

Colonial education in Nigeria has attracted considerable attention from educators
(Adeyinka, 1975; Bassey, 1991; Davis & Kalu-Nwiwa, 2001; Marah, 1987; Taiwo,
1993). Bassey states that the evangelical revival movements in Europe during the late
18th century spurred missionary fervor to try again the largely unsuccessful
evangelization that had been undertaken in the Nigerian interior earlier. John Wesley,
whose efforts roused the protestant awakening, which swept across Europe and America
in the 19th century, spearheaded the European evangelical movement. This awakening
demanded renewed commitment on the part of missionaries to secure new converts. A
group of Victorian Englishmen known as the Clapham Sect was responsible for the
formation of one of the first Protestant missionary societies to venture into Nigeria.
Prominent members of the Clapham Sect included William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp,
and Zachary Macaulay. In 1799 these men and others formed the Church Missionary Society (CMS) as an evangelical arm of the Church of England. Other missionary groups represented in Nigeria were the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS), the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Baptists from the (American) Southern Baptist Convention, and the Society of African Missions (the Catholic Mission) from France. Among the agendas of these missionary societies, besides proselytizing and gaining converts, was the education of Nigerians.

Christian missions pioneered western style education in Nigeria (Adesina, 1972; Adeyinka, 1975; Bassey, 1991; Davis, 1946; Davis & Kalu-Nwiiwu, 2001). The British government supported the missions with aid and oversight. The missions’ main goal was to teach the people to read the Bible and to be converted to Christianity, as well as to prepare them to serve the British Empire’s economic interests. And, because they needed the aid of Africans to gain converts and to further their work, they began to establish schools. Although many of the missionaries were European, some of the most influential of them were Nigerians trained in England. The first African Anglican Bishop was a Nigerian, Samuel Ajayi Crowther. He was a pioneer in the establishment of the Anglican Church and its educational institutions in Nigeria. Another pioneer figure was Dr. Henry Carr, also a Nigerian, who was the Director of Education for the British Colony, Nigeria. He was instrumental in the development of policies of elementary, secondary, and higher education. There are considerable differences in the types and character of education available in different parts of Nigeria. These are due to the extent to which different parts of the country accepted the incursion of missionaries and the British takeover of the people. For example, the Church of Scotland began work in Eastern Nigeria in 1846 and
was relatively successful. On the other hand, Northern Nigeria, that is predominantly Muslim, resisted Western education in favor of Islamic schools (Bassey; Davis). As illustrated by a quote from a Roman Catholic missionary cited in Bassey (1991):

For a man of social status to accept Christianity in this country is to expose himself to poverty for the rest of his life; it is to renounce, as the Lord asks of the Religious only, his fortune, his future and even his family. (p. 38)

Therefore, the missionaries focused their energies on the young, with a promise that their cooperation would garner good living and social status in the new Nigeria, created by the Europeans (Bassey, 1991).

The Nigerian Response

Bassey (1991) stated that the work of the missionaries in southern Nigeria in the 19th century was not easy sailing, for while a few Nigerians and their rulers supported the missionary enterprise, others rejected missionary intrusion in any form. On the whole, support or lack of support for missionary work was greatly influenced by internal developments in southern Nigeria. The progress of missionaries in establishing schools was not swift at first but was slow progress indeed as shown in Table 3 below. However, over time they became the powerhouse that commanded nearly all education in Nigeria until the 1970's. As the various factions of the European Christian religion rivaled each other, schools began to mushroom especially in the South. “Education” became the monopoly of the Christian missions.
Post-Colonial Education in Nigeria

A parallel educational system to the missions existed in Nigeria since 1950 (Adesina, 1972; Adeyinka, 1975). Although the education of Nigerians was relegated to the missions (1914-1960), the British government regulated and controlled all educational institutions in the Colony. The governor appointed all members of the board of education and approved or disapproved the opening of schools, as well as closing them if needed. The British also established a few token schools operated and funded by the Colonial government.

Nigeria gained independence from Britain on October 1, 1960. As can be expected, the new political autonomy signified a break with the past, and promised to
herald new beginnings. The new beginnings included wrestling control of the school system from the missions, and so the new Federal Government of Nigeria began creating a new educational system parallel to the mission schools (Adesina, 1972; Adeyinka, 1975). In 1957, universal free primary education was introduced in the Eastern Region of Nigeria, which the missionaries opposed vehemently under the guise of defending parental rights to school choice. The missions argued that it was the duty of government to assist the church with educating the masses, and anything short of this was “manifest blasphemy” and “fatal” to a civil society (Adesina, 1972). The missions eventually put an end to free primary education in Eastern Nigeria.

*The New Nigerian Government’ Control of Education*

The new government was determined to flex its muscles and weaken the hold over education held by the missions. The extent of mission control is illustrated below in Table 4. In 1961, one year after Nigerian independence, Christian missions controlled nearly 80 percent of the pupils, teachers and institutions at all levels of the Nigerian educational system (Adesina, 1972; Onwauchi, 1972).
Table 4

Post Independence Enrollment in Nigerian Schools, 1961

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Levels</th>
<th>Controlled by Christian Missions</th>
<th>Controlled by Government and Other Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>2,181,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>86,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>12,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>131,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>4,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>21,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several scholars (Adesina, 1972; Adeyinka, 1975; Marah, 1987) state the argument for the government takeover bid stemmed from the feeling that the present system was inadequate and could be improved greatly under government control. The nationalists contended that government takeover would enable control of curriculum, teacher quality, and centralization of instructional resources, that it would minimize inequalities and enable leadership and educational innovation. Another reason for the takeover bid was that parents and government actually were financing more than 95 percent of the then current system of education but had no control over it. The political reasons for the takeover were that socialist ideals were gaining favor in Africa at the time. The Nigerian government believed that the welfare of the individual was the responsibility of the state and because of this, education of the masses could not be entrusted to foreigners, like the missionaries. Another reason was that missionaries took sides during the Biafran-Nigerian Civil War that occurred shortly after independence. Christian missions were also accused of using their authority to promote foreign ideology that threatened the new government's legitimacy and destroy Nigerian culture.

The Crisis of Knowledge Production

Many scholars (Adesina, 1972; Adeyinka, 1975; Marah, 1987; Onwauchi, 1972; Taiwo, 1993) contend that the indigenous Mode Of Knowledge Production (MOKP) was irreparably altered by the collision with Islam, slavery and the slave trade, Christianity, Colonialism and Capitalism. Only a few indigenous MOKP, like the Yoruba Ifa divination system, survived the onslaught. The Ifa corpus is a complex system of specialized knowledge, reserved exclusively for those who seriously seek to acquire it.
Very little of the indigenous Hausa culture to the north survived Islamization; the common unifying myths, metaphors, and unifying common meaning of the past had simply dissolved in the face of overwhelming foreign challenges (Taiwo, 1993).

African scholars further contend that people who have lost their anchor to their past and are not given adequate means to properly grasp the invading culture suffer the consequences of underdevelopment and inadequate MOKP. This crisis of knowledge results in underdevelopment in Africa and elsewhere in the world where colonialism has taken hold (Adesina, 1972; Adeyinka, 1975; Bassey, 1991; Marah, 1987; Onwauchi, 1972; Taiwo; Tedla, 1992; Wiredu, 1997). The Majority of Nigerian people have not realized the hope that western knowledge will provide cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977a). Cultural capital refers to having the knowledge and experience that results in behaviors and practices aligned to the values of those who are in a position to legitimize them. Parents who understand the knowledge and behavior rewarded in schools may pass these onto their children and become advocates for their children's rights, for example, demanding placement in programs to which they are entitled and preparation that enhances college opportunities (Rueda, Monzó, & Arzubiaga, 2003). Rueda et al., further note that, “a common perception about academic success is that it is a function of ability. But ability to do what?” (p. 2). An important aspect of schooling is that it sorts individual students based on their ability to conform to a prescribed set of practices and knowledge which fall beyond the realm of academic content specifically taught. This cultural capital, often determines their access to academic content and achievement.

Taiwo (1993) argues that many Nigerians and observers of Nigerian education contend that the Nigerian MOKP is not underdeveloped, pointing to the 21 Federal and
ten State universities and the plethora of Nigerian writers, including Wole Soyinka who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986. Taiwo concludes, however, that these are tenuous, even questionable, arguments, masking the underlying ills of the system, citing crumbling infrastructure in the libraries and inadequate science laboratories, low pay, pressure to publish with faculty in pursuit of tenure who write hasty and shoddy articles to gain their tenure and neglect long-term research because it does not promise big gains at the end, and last but not least, an overwhelming bureaucracy and ineptitude.

Taiwo’s list of problems that have beleaguered the Nigerian higher education scene also beset the secondary grammar schools (Adeyinka 1975). Many do not have science laboratories, and are plagued with crumbling infrastructures, and inadequately equipped libraries. The schools have highly competent and intelligent teachers, but, because of poor pay and poor support systems, many see academics as a stepping-stone to more lucrative careers.

Summary

As a prelude to this study, I have conducted a comprehensive review of the literature on all the relevant aspects of the subject that I have been able to identify. These start with the motivation of school children for achievement in school and the types of motivation. These are followed by parent involvement in the educational process, parent-child interaction and parental influence in childrens’ achievements in school. I have more references under this subject than the others, including the educational and income levels attained by parents. Next, I have explored the Cultural Capital Theory which leads to my assumption for the purpose of this study, that socioeconomic status, family
composition, immigrant status, and parent education all influence students' educational attainment or success (Pearce, 2006).

The research on acculturation provides further insight into the enabling, and disabling, factors that bear on the attitudinal adjustment of voluntary Nigerian immigrants to the United States and their resultant expectations for their children's education. Berry's study (1997) on immigrants, acculturation and adaptation is cited as a source relevant to the research questions that frame this study.

This chapter goes into some detail describing the formation and development of education in Africa, and Nigeria in particular. Indigenous education provides for the schooling of the very young in forms that occur through everyday life, from festivals and weddings, to birthing ceremonies, game poetry and story telling by moonlight. Furthermore, children are taught trades through apprenticeships.

In the 19th century, missionaries introduced formal education and mission schools became dominant in Nigerian society with over 2,000,000 students in attendance (some 80% of the total) in 1961, one year after the country's attainment of independence. The Nigerian response in the post-Colonial period was to take back the education of its children through the formation of Federal Government Schools, which offered free high quality education in their own right.

The chapter concludes with reference to what a variety of African scholars term the Mode of Knowledge Production (MOKP) which was irreparably altered by the collision with Islam, the slave trade, Christianity, Colonialism and Capitalism.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction to Methodology and Methods

Creswell (2003) defines methodology as a strategy or plan of action that links method to outcome. Methods are techniques and procedures that researchers propose to use, for example, questionnaire, interview, focus group and so on. Harding (1987 cited in Lather 1992, p.87) distinguishes between methods and methodology as follows: Methods refer to techniques for gathering empirical evidence; while methodology is the theory of knowledge and the interpretive framework that guides a particular research project. In this chapter I address my interpretive framework or methodology, my methods rationale for the research design, and description of the research process, including sampling, data collection and data analysis.

Research Paradigm

Creswell (1998) indicates in the past twenty years, research approaches have ballooned to a point at which researchers have many choices. Therefore, a general framework has to be adopted to provide direction for all facets of the proposed study. Guided by a sociocultural interpretive framework, the proposed study aims to investigate my four questions with qualitative inquiry methods. A sociocultural framework calls for attention to culture, history and society. According to Creswell and Patton (2002), qualitative inquiry takes place in the real world, uses one or more methods (narrative, case study, grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology), focuses on context, is emergent rather than tightly prefigured, and is fundamentally interpretive. The qualitative researcher with a sociocultural framework sees the world holistically,
systematically reflects on who s/he is and is sensitive to personal biography. S/he adopts and uses one or more strategies of inquiry as a guide for the procedures. Qualitative research is inductive, moving "from the particular to more general statements to theory" (Rossman & Rallis 2003). Qualitative inquiry has its foundations in traditions of Aristotle and Plato; all inquiry proceeds through a complex, nonlinear process of induction, deduction, reflection, inspiration, and hard thinking (Rossman & Rallis 2003). Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive; it does not attempt to control and predict; the focus is on descriptions, analysis and interpretation (Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis). This study reflects this interpretive paradigm.

Much of the literature I reviewed concerning parental expectations e.g. (Berry, 1997; Cai, et al.; 1997; Carden, 2005; Desimone, 1999; Ethington, 1991; Georgiou, 1999; Gibson, 1995; Li, 2002) and the knowledge gleaned from my pilot study have increased my understanding regarding expectations of Nigerian voluntary immigrant parents.

Purpose/Rationale

The purpose of this study is to investigate parental expectations of Nigerian voluntary immigrants to the United States for their children's education. Immigrant or voluntary minorities are people who have migrated essentially voluntarily to the United States or any other nation because they have wanted more economic mobility, or better life in general, and/or political freedom (Ogbu, 1972-2003). This research examines the relationship between three factors: (a) parental expectations, (b) sociocultural and historical experience, and (c) academic achievement or attainment.
Minimum qualitative research has been conducted about African voluntary immigrants in general; however, none has been conducted focused specifically on Nigerian immigrants who to date are the largest African group in the United States. This leads to a gap in our understanding of parental expectations of these new immigrants.

An important rationale for this study is that the results hold promise of contributing to a body of knowledge about voluntary immigrants and seek answers to questions that may prove of value to others--policy makers, administrators, teachers and parents--in recognizing and addressing the issues of diversity and multiculturalism in the classroom. This study contributes to research that has examined how culture and sociocultural influences feature prominently in minority education.

Research Question

1. What are Nigerian voluntary immigrants parental expectations for their children’s education?

2. What role do sociocultural and historical contexts play in Nigerian parents’ expectations for their children’s educational success?

3. How do these expectations relate to parental personal experiences and beliefs from their “home country” and from their “host country,” the United States?

4. What do adult children think their immigrant parents want for their education?

Research Design

Li (2001) notes that the objective of an inquiry determines the methodology of a study; the research design must fit the purpose of the investigation and the requirement of
the research questions. The purpose of the proposed study is to investigate parental expectations of Nigerian voluntary immigrants for their children’s education and also to come to an understanding of the children’s perceptions and interpretations of their parents’ expectations for them. Hence this research will be qualitative in nature. Burns and Grove (2001) state that the qualitative approach to research is based on a “worldview” which is holistic and holds the following beliefs: (a) there is no single reality, (b) reality is based upon perceptions that are different for each person and change over time, and (c) what we know has meaning only within a given situation or context.

Qualitative inquiry is a means of gaining a deep understanding of a specific organization or event and a way of learning about a segment of the social world. In this process the researcher is a learner; the participants provide the detailed and rich data for this learning process. This research is a case study utilizing applied ethnographic methods, H. Slaughter (personal communication, February 26, 2008).

*Case Study*

Stake (1995 cited in Cresswell, 2003, p.15) defines case studies as a method in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, or one or more individuals. “The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedure.” Several studies (Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Yin, 1984) posit case study research brings us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.
Researchers have used the case study research method for many years across a variety of disciplines. Yin (p.23) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Case studies typically examine the interplay of all variables in order to provide as complete an understanding of an event or situation as possible. This type of comprehensive understanding is arrived at through a process known as thick description, which involves an in-depth description of the entity being evaluated, the circumstances under which it is used, the characteristics of the people involved in it, and the nature of the community in which it is located. Thick description also involves interpreting the meaning of demographic and descriptive data such as cultural norms and mores, community values, ingrained attitudes, and motives (Patton; Rossman & Rallis; Rudestam & Newton, 1992; Seidman, 2006).

Applied Ethnographic Method

According to Patton (2002), ethnography seeks to understand the culture of people and places; it requires sustained engagement of the researcher as well as the use of multiple techniques. Ethnography asks the questions, how do people's beliefs and values guide their actions and their understanding of those actions, and how do the actions of one group affect the beliefs and actions of other, often marginalized groups? Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) refer to ethnography thusly:

We see the term as referring primarily to a particular method or set of methods. In its most characteristic form it involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's lives for an extended period of time, watching what
happens, listening to what is said, asking questions - in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research. (p. 1)

Johnson (2000, p. 111) defines ethnography as "a descriptive account of social life and culture in a particular social system based on detailed observations of what people actually do." Other definitions include the study of in tact cultural groups in a natural setting over a period of time by collecting observational data (Creswell, 1998, 2002). Patton (2002) asserts that culture is central to ethnography. *Ethno* is the Greek word for "a people" or cultural group, and the study of ethnos describes the study of the way of life of human beings and the "the cultural basis of their people-hood" (Vidich & Lyman 2000, p. 38 in Patton). The notion of tacit knowledge is deeply embedded in cultural beliefs; the way of perceiving the world is rarely discussed by the culture but must be inferred by the researcher (Garson, 2008).

The guiding principle of ethnographic inquiry is that interaction between peoples produces culture. Culture is the collection of behavior patterns and beliefs that constitutes "standards for deciding what is, standards for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it, standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for deciding how to go about doing it" (Goodenough, 1971, pp. 21-22 cited in Patton, 2002). Ethnographic methodologies vary and some ethnographers advocate use of structured observation schedules by which one may code observed behaviors or cultural artifacts for purposes of later statistical analysis. *Macro-ethnography* is the study of broadly defined cultural groupings, such as "the English" or "New Yorkers." This methodology is relevant because the British Colonizer coined the term, "Nigeria."
Nigeria is Africa’s most populated country, with estimated population of 135 million (CIA.gov, 2007). It is also Africa’s most diverse ethnically with 250 ethnic groups and estimated 510 living languages. The major languages spoken in Nigeria are Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. Many Nigerians speak more than one language (Blench, 1998).

Several authors (Adeniji-Neill, 1985; Bascom, 1969; Uchendu, 1965) indicate that the cultures are more homogenous and have much more in common than differences. The similarities apply to such cultural traditions as marriage, religious beliefs and practices, foreign and kinship network, parental expectations and motivation, to name a few. Micro-ethnography is the study of narrowly defined cultural groupings, such as "local government GIS specialists" or "members of Congress." This ethnographic method is not suitable for the proposed research. Etic perspective is the ethnographic research approach to the way non-members (outsiders) perceive and interpret behavior and phenomena associated with a given culture (Garson, 2008); this is also not suitable for this proposed research. This study will be from an Emic perspective, the ethnographic research approach that deals with the way members of a given culture perceive their world. The emic perspective is usually the main focus of ethnography. Given the nature of the proposed study the investigative approach will be a case study using applied ethnographic methods from emic perspective, (H. Slaughter personal communication, February 26, 2008).

Data Collection Method

To garner thick descriptions of Nigerian voluntary immigrants expectations for their children, and their children’s articulation or internalization of such expectations, multiple data collection methods were used, including open-ended interviews,
researcher's journal and participant observation. Data from multiple sources, parents, and adult children were collected. Seidman (2006) describes interviewing as a basic mode of inquiry. Noting that recounting narratives of experience has been a major way throughout recorded history that people have made sense of their experiences. Open-ended interviewing allows the voices of the participants to be heard and helps uncover reality beneath the surface (Riessman, 1993). An open-ended question encourages a full, meaningful answer using the subject's own knowledge and/or feelings. Open-ended questions also tend to be more objective and less leading. Patton (1987) and (Seidman, 2006) note that open-ended interviews "reveal the respondents' levels of emotion, the way in which they have organized the world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions."

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), the strength of a qualitative study that aims to explore or describe a setting, a process, a social group or a pattern of interaction will rest with its validity. In a study in which a researcher claims the findings will be useful to others in similar situations, with similar research questions, validity and reliability can be enhanced through triangulation (Merriam, 1998). Researchers can use triangulation to ensure dependable and reliable research results. Merriam further states that researcher should illustrate the existing assumptions and theory behind the current study with a description of participants, procedure and the context from which the data were extracted. Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Salzman, 2002, p. 137) identify the issue of trustworthiness in qualitative research. They suggest activities to enhance the credibility of research such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation (of sources, methods, theories, investigators), negative case analysis,
referential adequacy, and member checking.

In this study interviewing was an activity co-constructed by the participants and the researcher because no analysis of human action is complete unless it attends to people's own notions of what they are doing (Li, 2002). Since people's worldview is shaped by the totality of their experiences which include culture, class, politics and their environment, we can only have an understanding of Nigerian voluntary immigrants expectations by accessing not only "the individual identity and its systems of meaning but also the teller's culture and social world" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p.9 cited in Li). "Every word that people use in telling their story is a microcosm of their consciousness." (Vygotsky1987 cited in Seidman, 2006, p. 7). Individual consciousness produces intricate social and educational issues, because these issues are abstractions based on the concrete experience of people. The peoples' stories give access to their culture (Seidman).

Researcher's Role

I am a Nigerian by birth and a voluntary immigrant to the United States, a member of the community of people that I seek to study. One of my main reasons for embarking on this research which includes contributing something new to a body of knowledge about voluntary immigrants is that, like many of them, I came to America to get an education and, also like them, I received my degree, married and settled here. And like my participants, I have also raised a child in America and have supported him through the school system from kindergarten to college. I have been faced with having to go to my son's classroom to explain my culture and my child to the teacher. For example, it was necessary to explain why at times he wouldn't look directly at the teacher
while she is speaking (because in my culture direct eye contact with an adult is deemed rude) or why he was not volunteering answers to questions. (Many times I had to explain that even though he is not speaking in class, he may actually be listening and he may just be waiting to be called on.) Another instance, burned into my memory, occurred when our son was in a private grade school, when his father and I were summoned into the head of school’s office one day, and his teacher was present. We were told he did not grasp a concept in mathematics, and because of this they would like to have an instructional aide accompany him to classes. I asked them if he had been taught the concept that he did not grasp? They said, “no.” Then I said, “How was he supposed to know what he was not taught?” Nevertheless, they insisted that we pay for an aide to accompany him to classes. My son began to complain that he could not hear what the teacher was saying because the aide would speak in his ears at the same time. I went back to the school at this time and demanded that the aide be removed from my child’s side. Not long after that a national achievement test was given to all students in the school and my son scored in the 99 percentile. I have never doubted his high intelligence. However, I began to suspect that the only reason my son who was new to the school may have been targeted to have an instructional aide accompany him to classes was not because he wasn’t bright, but because he was the only Black child at the school. His teacher and the head of school had assumed that because of this, he must not be well prepared for school, not giving him a chance to prove himself. Without our active involvement in our child’s education, being vigilant and knowing what we needed from the school and communicating it effectively to the teachers and administrators, our son could have been stigmatized or traumatized for life. Overall, my participants’
experiences in America may or may not mirror mine. However, to get an understanding of how and what we as voluntary immigrants are doing about the education of our children, and how we can inform our host culture of what we expect for our children, I chose to conduct this qualitative case study with Nigerian parents and their adult children.

Participants

Cresswell (1998) states, "the purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision point in a qualitative study" (p.118). Patton (2002) notes poor sampling may threaten the trustworthiness of the findings; he also suggests that purposeful selection of participants allows the sample to be information rich. The participants consisted of eight Nigerian voluntary immigrant families and their adult children residing in New York, Vermont and Michigan: (N = 20, Men = 7, Women = 13, including 5 adult children).

The main criterion for participants in this study is that the Nigerian parents be voluntary immigrants and have adult children who have gone through the United States' educational system. The method of selection of the subjects was by "network" sampling, where one participant leads to another. This method has its strengths and weaknesses. It is not a random sampling technique, and therefore attempts to test hypotheses with statistical measures, and to generalize the findings to a larger population, cannot be done with scientific validity. It is not suitable for statistical analysis, and therefore survey-type questions are inappropriate. The network sampling technique is suitable for interviewing in-depth, observations, case histories, and for life history interviews as used in this study. The method is naturally limited to a small number of subjects.

For each interview it is important to gain complete confidence with the subjects. They must be relaxed and feel uninhibited. It is not possible for the researcher to 'take
on a total stranger and obtain this relationship. Therefore, in the selection of the sample, (see Table 5) the first subjects to be chosen were extended family of the researcher. Through them, others were identified. Each participant was asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A).

**Protection of Human Subjects**

Prior to contacting participants and collecting data for this research, I obtained permission from the University of Hawai‘i Committee on Human Studies, Institutional Review Board (see Appendix B).

At the start of each interview I reviewed the consent form with each participant and made it clear that participation was solely voluntary. I provided my contact numbers as well as the contact number of the University of Hawai‘i Committee on Human Studies should they have any question or complaint. I also promised the participants anonymity (see Appendix C).
### Table 5

**Participants’ demographic data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter codes</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Length of time in the United States (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BM (F)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Education includes post secondary school certifications (F) Baccalaureate Teaching Certification and other job specific certifications (M)</td>
<td>Production supervisor (F) Teacher/Social Worker (M)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM (M)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Daughters</td>
<td>19^ (in college), 13 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Son</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE (F)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td><em>PhD. ^</em> PhD</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Widowed)</td>
<td>32^</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bio Engineer</td>
<td>All children born in U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Daughters</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>*MD</td>
<td>Medical Doctor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Son</td>
<td></td>
<td>BA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB (M)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Separated)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Daughter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BO (M)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>*B.A.</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O (F)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>*RN, *MS</td>
<td>Anesthetist</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Daughters</td>
<td>33^, 29, 18^</td>
<td>*BA, MA</td>
<td>^Asian languages/Business</td>
<td>All children born in U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or (18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EO (29)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MU (Single parent)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>*RN</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Daughters</td>
<td>38,36,26</td>
<td></td>
<td>All are pharmacists</td>
<td>All children born in the U.S. except the last daughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Son</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Consulting Engineer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Daughters</td>
<td>23, 22, 19</td>
<td>(All are in college)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Son</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 (continued). Participants’ demographic data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter codes</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Length of time in the United States (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OA (F)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>*PhD</td>
<td>Criminologist</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO (M)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>*BA</td>
<td>Counselor/Social Worker</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Daughters</td>
<td>19, 17, 14</td>
<td>(^ In college.)</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>All children born in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>*MD</td>
<td>Medical Doctor</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 sons</td>
<td>18, 20, 21</td>
<td>(All are in college)</td>
<td>All children born in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M = Mother  F = Father  *= degree or certification obtained in the United States  ^ = Adult child interviewed

Interviewing Process

Many of the participants were interviewed in their homes, others in office locations. The interviews were purposeful (Patton, 2000). The information obtained in the interviews was grouped, analyzed and interpreted as it relates to the research questions; other questions emerged during this process. Because of this, it was possible to obtain a fairly consistent picture of the feelings, attitudes, knowledge and beliefs of the participants (Adeniji-Neill, 1985; Langness, 1965). It is often difficult to obtain the true feelings of the subjects on such sensitive matters as “family business,” when they may tend to hide their real emotions and attitudes behind a "screen of defenses.” On account of this, I made a special effort to establish rapport with my participants; this was essential to help overcome most defenses. The selection of the subjects, the approach to them, and the interview environment and technique were designed to help strengthen rapport in this study. Hence, the researcher visited and established a friendly relationship with each

There were three interviews, for each parent participant: life history interview, interviews on parental expectations and exit interview or participant co-evaluation of data. There is one interview for the adult children. No interview was longer than 90 minutes (see Appendix D for a list of the interview questions).

*Interview #1: Life History*

This interview sought to establish a context from which to consider the participants’ expectations about their children’s school achievement. In keeping with the phenomenological belief that our perceptions and experiences are mediated by our past environment and lived experiences, the first interview focused on the life history of the participants. Through the participants’ life histories we can look at their goals for themselves, for their family and what they value and how these values manifest themselves in their lives and the lives of adult children. During the in-depth interviews participants were asked about their own experiences, their own parents’ expectations for them, childhood experiences, school experiences and personal goals. This provided the background on how the parents themselves formed the values that now influence the expectations for their children (Figure 1).
Interview #2: Parental Expectations of the Participants

In this interview the participants and I discuss their expectations for their children’s academic achievement. This interview yielded the bulk of the information for this study.

Interview #3: Exit Interview/Participant Co-Evaluation of Data

The exit interview was conducted in person, by email and by mail and I gave participants copies of the transcripts from their interviews. Further, I asked them to
provide additions and/or corrections to our previous interviews and to discuss key concepts that had been uncovered in the course of those interviews.

Interviews With Adult Children

These were conducted after the interviews with parents, and usually on the same day. I began with: “I have some questions about your parents’ expectations for you and your school achievement. Please feel free to talk about anything. This is not meant to judge; rather it is a way to confirm and support your parents’ role in helping you to achieve academic success. No names will be attached to the responses.”

Data Analysis Procedures

Data from interviews, life histories, field notes, the focus group and participant observations were recorded using the participants’ own voices, and were transcribed verbatim. I continuously reviewed the data, my field notes and journal entries to provide me with as solid an insight into the study as possible (Creswell 2003). I analyzed my data through descriptive analysis (Creswell, pp.195-196). These data provided an important contextual background for my analysis. Because of the small number of participants I did not use any qualitative computer software to assist with the data analysis. To best illustrate the rich meaning of the data collected, and to allow the participants to speak for themselves, in-depth analysis beyond the function of computer programs was required. All data were coded and analyzed by the researcher.

Timeline

The interviews were ongoing. The pilot study interviews were conducted between May and November of 2007. Data were analyzed and written concurrently. I
incorporated the pilot data into the main body of data in this dissertation. The second wave of data was collected between December and March of 2008. Data were analyzed, coded and written concurrently. (This study has been going on for 11 months).

Research Limitations

In qualitative study, the researcher is an instrument of data collection (Rossman, & Rallis, 2003; Patton, 2002). This can be a great asset as well as a limitation. The choice of data collection strategies may lessen the likelihood that this research can be generalized to all Nigerian groups, let alone Africans as a whole. Thus, this research is exploratory and will lead to additional questions and directions of study to fully explore the topic.

Other possible limitations may result from the fact that I share my subjects’ role as an immigrant Nigerian and mother of a student in American schools. This lays open the study methodology to a possible bias, but at the same time provides me with a better understanding of the culture, mores and attitudes of my subjects. Also, the method of data collection, the network sampling technique, and the open-ended interviews may lessen the likelihood that the findings can be generalized to all Nigerian groups or the entire African population.

Practical Implications

The United States of America is a nation of immigrants. In order to better understand our diverse and multicultural population, especially the newcomers, it is incumbent on us to know the “others” through their own eyes. Only through research can we find out why people behave in certain ways, what they value, what is important to
them, and how they see reality (Li, 2004). This study will help educators understand their students’ parents’ expectations and holds the promise of strengthening communication between school and home.

Summary

In summary, this research is guided by a sociocultural approach and interpretive paradigm. The study utilizes a qualitative case study method that includes gathering data from personal interviews of Nigerian immigrant parents about their expectations for their children’s education, interviews from their adult children about their internalization of these expectations. The participants were identified through a network sampling technique whereby one subject leads to the next. Eight families participated, (N = 20). The first interview served to establish the context from which to measure the participants’ expectations for their children, and focused on the life history of the parents. The second interview was based on a series of open-ended questions to obtain a cross-section of the parents’ expectations. The third served as an exit interview where the participants were asked to review the transcripts of the first two interviews for possible additions and corrections, and importantly, to discuss with me the key concepts uncovered in the previous interviews.
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

In this chapter, profiles and themes are developed from individual participants' interviews and grouped into categories under the research questions. Furthermore, individual profiles were marked and examined for thematic connections. Seidman (1998) states that the power of the profile is that it is presented in the words of the participant. At times to make transitions between passages, my own words are added. The interviews that yielded these data were recorded and transcribed verbatim. No personal addition or deletion to the narratives given by the participants was made. However, selections from the data were made to ensure relevancy to the research questions. Some comments that appeared irrelevant or redundant were omitted. The results section is organized under the four research questions posed at the onset of this study. Participants' life history and the voices and insights from adult children are used to enhance the validity of the findings. Emerging themes are summarized in lists and highlighted in Tables 6-10. Eight families consisting of 20 people participated in this study. Participants' demographic data are described in Table 5, pp.63-65. Throughout Chapter 5, parents in this study are referred to as "parents or parent participants," while the adult children, are referred to as "adult children or adult children participants". The overarching research question is:

1. What are Nigerian voluntary immigrants' parental expectations for their children's education?

Related Questions are:

2. What role do sociocultural and historical contexts play in Nigerian parents' expectations for their children's educational success?

3. How do these expectations relate to parental personal experiences and beliefs
from their “home country” and from their “host country,” the United States?

4. What do adult children think their immigrant parents want for their education?

It is through participants’ life histories that we can look at their goals for themselves, for their family and what they value, and how these values manifest themselves in their lives. During the in-depth interviews participants were asked about their parents’ expectations, their childhood and school experiences and their personal goals. This provided the background on how the parents themselves formed the values that now influence their expectations for their children. The relationships of the participants’ life histories to their subsequent wishes and goals for their children’s education are also illustrated (See Chapter 3, Figure 1).

Applied ethnographic data analysis is a research approach to discovering and investigating social and cultural patterns and meaning in communities, institutions, and other social settings. In this investigative approach, peoples’ perspectives form the foundation for building local (folk) theories that can be tested, linked to literature and adapted for future use (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999). In order to bring this approach to life and hear the voices of the participants, I incorporate in the findings selected quotes from the interviews. The names of the participants are represented with initials in order to provide anonymity. I did not use pseudonyms because I find it difficult to keep track of 20 pseudonyms. And in order to respect a Nigerian cultural norm that revere names as something sacred and imbued with meanings that control the bearers’ destiny, I desist from giving my participants new names and choose to use their initials instead.
In this section the participants’ responses are aligned as closely as possible to the research questions, followed by lists of emerging themes and in some cases for the purpose of further illumination tables of emerging themes showed comparison between thoughts of the participants.

Research Question 1

*What are Nigerian voluntary immigrants’ parental expectations for their children’s education?*

The topics that are explored by the participants under research question 1 are:

- Satisfaction with children's success at school
- Conveying expectations to children
- Parental minority status and educational success
- Support: Parents and school community
- Defining achievement for children at the age of 30

Themes that emerged from the narratives are in bullets and or tables appearing at the end of the section serving as summary.

This section touches on participants’ experiences as they impact their parental expectations for their children's education and answers the first research question. Participants cited many cultural impacts including the fact that they themselves have to work hard and the children see them as role models. These parents expect hard work, and they enforce it when it comes to their children’s schoolwork and success. Parents interviewed stated education is the key to success. They describe a need to seek perfection or particular career paths for their children, but they insist that their children have to work hard in any endeavors that they choose. They each expressed the desire for
a better life for their children than that which they themselves had. They wanted the
"American Dream" for their children with some key choices left to the child. The only
stipulation was, whatever they choose to do they must do well. BM who with his wife
and family have been in the U.S. for six years, now owns his own home, has a child in
college. He and his wife both work very hard at three full-time jobs. He expressed
expectations for his children as follows:

BM: It is all about education, education and education!!! Education is the key to
success. I would like them to do better than what I have achieved educationally
today. I would like them to get white-collar jobs. Good paying jobs. I would like
them to be lawyers and doctors or simply have good paying jobs.

His wife, AM, concentrated more on the process and the role of schools in helping
children achieve their educational goals:

I expect the school to get them ready for college. Encourage them to study more
and know what to do. Teachers should not discourage them by saying that they
can’t do the work. I expect them to treat all kids the same no matter how
different. I want them to be directed. I want them to treat the children as college
material. A counselor at my son’s school told a kid that he wasn’t college
material. His parents came to confront the counselor. Today the boy has
graduated from a local college and is earning a good living from a prominent local
business.

SB, a single mother, and BE, a widower, expressed their expectations as
follows:

SB: My expectation was and is that she should go as high as possible with
whatever she chooses to do. I would like her to be self-sufficient and not have to
depend on her husband financially.

BE: When I talk about my children, my wife Elizabeth was a key instrument in
this. When we started working with our children, there were no plans.
Everything was spontaneous. We wanted to give them so much but we had very
little.

Even though "BE" had said his wife and he had no plans, as the interview
progressed it was apparent that their plans began to enfold. They had successfully raised
four girls—a medical doctor, two PhDs, and the last with a Master’s degree; all had attended, or were still attending, Ivy League colleges. What is evident in these data is that the parents felt they were doing nothing out of the ordinary to push their children into achieving, and yet their actions and their involvement at home and school appear to have communicated their wishes to the children; based on their reports of what their children accomplished.

For the question of what the participants’ personal expectations are for their own children’s education, hard work is the common thread in participants’ answers. Also important in responses are the following messages: be self-sufficient, participate in everything, make us proud, give back, get good grades and see knowledge as power.

AM: He doesn’t have to be a doctor or a lawyer. He just has to do things that will give him comfort in life. He needs to be recognized in a profession so that he can be self-sufficient. If he is a teacher, he should be recognized in the society as a teacher. I want my children to have no regrets or say, “I wish I had done this in school.” That is my expectation, nothing more.

BE: In 1986, we moved to the suburb. Moving to the suburb made a lot of difference. The downtown environment would have been a losing battle. The school district here made a lot of difference. ‘E’, now a doctor of biological engineering, was in a Catholic school from grades 1-3. The sisters used to send us numerous complaints. When we moved to the suburb, within two weeks the school district sent us a letter requesting that we enroll her into a gifted program. We so much wanted to send the children to another Catholic school when we came to the suburb, but the tuition was prohibitive and we were offered little assistance. So we decided to go with the public schools. They registered them. When ‘E’ graduated from the public school, she won 17 awards. When ‘I’ graduated, she won 12 awards. When ‘A’ graduated, she also won numerous awards. Our last daughter also did very well. She won awards throughout her high school years. She nominated her 5th grade teacher, [Mrs.], for the Teacher of the Year Award. The school district made a lot of difference. We are respected within this community. Our children have made us proud.

SO: Our expectation in Yoruba culture is for our children to live a better life than us. We want them to be successful, independent and self-sufficient. To attain an education and to find a good wife or good husband, to have good children, live a good life and to be able to remember home, where we come from.
One of my greatest fears is that my children may not remember Africa in a positive way. In 1996, I had an opportunity to work for the UN; I was in charge of HIV in Africa. I took my family home for two years. They did not have a good experience because they caught malaria and typhoid, not to mention other discomforts. In fact, we were robbed; they took our car and other possessions.

My prayer for them is to have a successful life, and that they occasionally remember where their father came from. I do not expect them to go and live in Nigeria. But at least when they eat and there is extra, they should remember that there may be some people in Nigeria that are in need of their generosity, and maybe give through the Nigerian mission.

Many Jewish people in America don’t live in Israel, but when there are Jewish issues they take them up; so I hope when my children grow up, when they hear anything about Africa, they will help to address it. I hope all of our children will help Africa. We are in a predicament. I came here as one of those ‘oil boomers.’ This is the term used to describe those of us who left Nigeria in the late 60’s and early 70’s when Nigeria oil money was so good. I benefited from that generation.

MU: My expectations were for them to become somebody in this world. I wanted them to take their education seriously because I am also educated. . . . I had a merit scholarship throughout my schooling. So did my baby daughter; she was a merit scholar through pharmacy school; she didn’t have to take loans. So when it came to expectations for my children, I did not tell them what I wanted them to do; I wanted them to choose for themselves.

My hard work and the Nigerian experience of hardship have influenced my children. It was a good thing that I relocated them to Nigeria for a period of time. They really got a taste of Nigeria tradition and ways of life.

I talk to my children from time to time. I speak to them about men. I tell them if they are educated and self-sufficient they will get more respect from their prospective husband. And I tell my boy, ‘You are the only man in the family; you can’t let the ladies rule you.’ In my culture, it is the man that is the head of the house.

SN: When they were applying to the university, I made sure they didn’t send anything out until I looked at it. I approved their essays. I looked at their logic. I told them to review their essays three or four times until I was pleased with the presentation. I will tell you, all my children had scholarships to attend their colleges.

I was very much involved in their education. I didn’t leave everything to them. We talked and I helped them, but I didn’t tell them what they should major in. My eldest daughter started with a major in Psychology at UMI; suddenly she
changed to Marketing without telling me, but she informed her mother. Then she changed to Organizational Studies. I think all of them have a feeling that they cannot match their dad, and so they want to rebel. They don't seem to take courses that will task their mind. Now the girl is finishing her master’s in Special Education. Even with a degree in Organizational Studies, she still got a job. I assume they know the system. I was just worried as a father.

My second child wanted to do medicine. She went to UPENN and did her pre-med in Biology. She was elected president of the Women’s Biological Society.

SN: I want them to have a first degree, and then they can go on from there to take care of themselves. I want them to be independent financially and have a good home too, and be happy with their lives--be well educated, happy, and then get married. I have only one son; the first two are girls. So that is where we are.

SA: Our expectations for our three girls: first of all, during family meetings and conversations, they always tell us what they want to do in the future. We will be talking and they will come up with: ‘we want to be a dancer,’ and we will say, ‘that’s great;’ or one will say, ‘I want to be a lawyer,’ and we will say, ‘that’s great.’ Whatever they choose is fine, but we will say they must know what they need to get there. We say, ‘Okay, you want to be a dancer, but what does it require?’ What does it take to get there? That’s the guidance we give them. The one that says she wants to be a lawyer, she has been saying that since she was in fifth grade. She has been saying that was her goal. So we have been saying, ‘If you want to be a lawyer, how do you get there? What classes do you have to take? What clubs do you have to join?’

We don’t expect them to be a doctor or engineer; it’s what they want to be in the future, because it’s their life.

I asked her husband, “OA”, for his take on the above response:

OA: Pretty much, I think I take from my dad’s standpoint. Let the child grow and lead the child on the right path. Hopefully, they will not stray as they grow up. As she said, we model what being a good person is. We went to school. The mom went to school to be a computer analyst. So, they need to go to school and get good grades. If they have an education in whatever, it is a steppingstone to a good life. So, they know they have to go to school. I can’t think of one time they haven’t gone to school. Sometimes they have a cold, and we say, ‘Why don’t you stay home today?’ But, they will be mad. They love schooling because they have seen us.

OA: They like school (maybe because they saw us grow up like that), and they know they have to go to school and behave. They are not going to cuss the teacher out and call the teacher names; they are not going to associate with the bad group in school. We attend all of their school programs, and encourage them
to participate in as much as they can in school--extra-curricular--., which really has paid off for them.

The oldest is very quiet; since she was age nine, she said she wanted to be a lawyer and she has done everything along that line. Besides my being on the faculty and I do academic advising, but I don’t have to tell her. She does research on her own, and says she wants to do international politics. All I said is what does that take, and she says she is going to do a lot of foreign languages and she is going to do a lot of international law. Now she is talking about business school and doing an MBA and I say, ‘does that mean you’re going to change?’ She says ‘no,’ she just wants it to fall back on.

The American school system is good because the kid can do it: the research is there, the computer is there, and the opportunity is there.

So, they are good students on their own--we don’t have to tell them to do their homework. They just do it as soon as they get in, even before they do anything else. Except, if there is something that is a challenge, they will take a break and watch TV, which we will allow, but they will finish it up later. You can attest to their ability because the school never calls. Our oldest is an ‘A’ student, the middle one is ‘B’ average, and the youngest one we still have to figure out. She is just all over the place: sometimes she brings back an A+. Especially in the last two years, she has aspired to move up. She wants to be in the entertainment industry, as she has always liked dance. We put her in dancing school when she was three and she never quit. The oldest we put in dancing and she quit, but this one never quits. Now she has been talking about what she wants to do for a living. The other two say that daddy will never have to send her to college. We tell her she can go to a performing arts school. She has already made the connections and knows the two best schools--in New York City and Philadelphia. She is good at it. Even when she was in the sick bed, she was still able to perform in ‘High School Musical’ with a production company from New York.

So our expectation of them is simply letting them know that knowledge is power and they have to get good grades.

This will get them scholarships and when you tell kids those things, and they can see it happening, it will be good for them. Now, the oldest one has a full scholarship because her grades were very good. We tell them: ‘You have to bring your report card home and show it and discuss it.’ If something is not clear, they know we will call the teacher to verify.

JO: My husband and I have similar upbringing and expectations. We have the same expectations for our children’s education as our parents had for us. We have similar upbringing and expectations. In this country you are pretty much on your own. We worked while we were still in school. We had kids while we were still going to school. But we made sure that they were well taken care of. We
make clear to them what our expectations are. My kids are self-motivated. We had them enrolled in every academic activity—you name it, we enrolled them. I also participated in parents groups at their schools. I made my expectations known to the teachers. I went to all their parent-teacher conferences. We were fully involved in their learning and their school. We volunteered to help at the children schools when they needed us. It was difficult because we were going to school as well as working. But there is no other alternative, because we wanted to let our children know that were interested in their schooling. We didn’t want our children running all over the place.

BO: The mind set of Mr. O and I are very close. In order to raise children, you have to have core values. Our core values are to be good human beings and to be considerate; these beat any education for us.

When I talk to my children’s school, the first thing I ask is, ‘Has she been a good citizen?’ Not her grades. Anyone can make grades.

Be the best human being that you can be. Be considerate of others and yourself. Involve yourself in the community. Schooling is only a part of it. We tell our children, ‘When you walk away from the school, how do you want people to remember you?’ Even when they were very young, this was our constant refrain. Anybody can have the grades, but at the end of the day, when you walk away, how do you want people to remember you?

Let’s take ‘E’, for example. She went to Japan to study and her Japanese host parents are still a part of her life. She is in touch with them often. They are amazed at this, so our expectations are, ‘Do what you love, and everything else will come.’

BO: Defining achievement for our children is very simple for us. If they have done the best that they can; then, they have succeeded. We know what the best is. It is not about grades A, B, or C. It is about what they learn in the process. Lifelong learning is the issue, not grades. We ask them, ‘What have you learned in the process of getting this grade?’ For example, my daughter, “E” graduated with honors in Japanese language. That didn’t impress me much until I saw her interact with Japanese people and speak well to them. Even her host parents turned to speak to us in Japanese forgetting that we were not Japanese; but because “E” was so accomplished they’d forgotten that she wasn’t Japanese. That impressed me.

The achievement has to be the ability to be a life long learner.

BM: The children understand my expectations. My eldest goes beyond the expected. If I tell her to work for an hour, she works for three hours. This discipline has enabled her to do well in college.
**SB:** I let her know that education is the key to success in life. If she is educated she will get a higher position in life and be respected. If she knows what she is doing, no one can manipulate her. As they say, “knowledge is power.” She understands my expectations now. All the advice I was giving her was not for nothing. It was a fight between us for her to sit still and work on her homework. Now she does her work without been prompted. At times I want her to go out some place with me but she will decline because she has work to do.

**SN:** I define achievement by their GPA. That’s just one way of measurement. However, I also tell them that they have to be a well-rounded human being. You must be polite. You must respect yourself.

Degrees can afford you material things, but human relationships are very crucial. Character and learning is a critical key. That character involves being a good Christian. They all go to church whether I am present or not.

This is the type of achievement that I want for them. I want them to be morally sound.

**SB:** When she has a profession that provides her with enough financial support then she has succeeded.

**AM:** I am not expecting the children to be millionaires. But I expect them to achieve the basic things in life. I want them to have a good job. I want them to stand out in a field they have chosen and be acknowledged. I expect them to be able to pay their bills and not have to run to us to ask for money after they have graduated from college.

**BM:** I define achievement as improvement in their grades. I want them to earn A’s if they can. If they earn B’s I encourage them to do better.

*Satisfaction with Children’s Success at School*

All participants mentioned at one time or the other that they are satisfied with their children’s educational successes.

**BE:** Of course, I am satisfied; they have done very well. I am afraid of the danger of being too satisfied. At this stage of their lives, I don’t want to tell them what they may be doing wrong. I want to be their friend and yet be a parent. I don’t want to be too satisfied. Generally they have done well, maybe by implication. At the moment, my baby daughter is my biggest concern. People might say, ‘Don’t worry about her; she is 25 years old.’ Okay, among them, the other three, she is the one that gives us the most concern. When she gets upset, she shuts everyone out.
OA: Extremely satisfied. They have done very well.

SA: Very satisfied! Even I am amazed with the 14-year-old. Last week she came home and was telling us her science teacher nominated her for an award. Of 500, she was the only one chosen. Out of 14 teachers, she always makes sure she gets her work done. If she misses class for an appointment, the teacher tells us she always makes sure she gets the assignment she missed. Even when she was in the hospital, she would call her friends and get what she missed in class. She hates to miss and will even spend her lunchtime making up any work. She came home and told me the teacher gave her an award at a ceremony. She came home and she got ‘A’s all around.

SA: I think the environment does matter. If you live in a house, the government knows you have school-age children in the house. That one influence is that you know your kids have to be in school. The extra-curricular activities help though; this is free. The opportunity for all this also helps. In Nigeria, these were never there.

SN: Life in the US is a bit difficult. However, I think I am more involved in their lives, like taking them out, going out to play and exercise; my parents never did that with us. I don’t miss PTA meetings. I travel along with them. We drive across the country to see friends and family. These are things I never did with my parents. Except when my dad played soccer in nearby towns; I carried his water flask and accompanied him. That was the only outing I did with him.

BM: The children see me work hard. And they know it is all about hard work. And I make it known to them that with good education they will be better off than I am today.

BE: It was the opportunity that we have here that is paramount to their [my children’s] success. We could not have done this if the opportunity was not there. The facility was available for the children’s growth here. When they were younger, if my wife was not able to take them to a school function, I did. Everything here was centrally located and made things easier for us. It wasn’t easy, but we made sure we were present in all aspects of our children’s lives. And, one other thing, that I gave myself credit for was driving them to wherever their education demanded them to go. I drove to Washington, DC one year, to Georgetown to do a summer program and many times to upstate New York. We were always on the road. When one of the girls went to school in Stanford, California, I would go there to see her. We supported our children.

AM: My son thinks he can play sports and make money, but I say he should work hard at school anyway and make money from an honest day’s job with an honest day’s pay rather than from a pie-in-the-sky.
**Conveying expectations to children**

Expectations are beliefs that are informed by culture and tradition. How they are conveyed to children is important. In this study the parents model the behavior that they want their children to emulate. They also verbalize their hopes and aspirations for the children as often as possible. They support their children’s endeavors, sometimes at great length; furthermore, they provide the children with the environment that nurtures and supports them.

**OA:** They can see for themselves. Like she says [his wife], there is a lot more opportunity here, and the opportunity is free. When everything that is free, there is a lot of responsibility. With the Americans, I don’t think they see that for all the freedom, there is responsibility. This is an easy something for you to get. Go get it and be responsible for it. You have to go get it; they are not going to hand it over to you. I am in criminal justice, and I hear a lot of Americans say, ‘This is my right!’ I don’t think this is their right without a responsibility. Even with welfare, they don’t hand it out anymore. You have to do certain things. That is what occurs over the years, when people sit back and things are handed out to them.

We tell our kids, whatever you want to achieve is possible, if you put the effort into it.

So, we make sure they take the opportunities to get involved; they get involved in music, involved in sports. At the same time, we respect their opinion about it. Like our oldest, she doesn’t care for sport--baseball, cheerleading. She is just studious, so we respect that. After a while, she picked what she wanted; she would rather join a school club, like an academic or debate club. But the middle one wanted cheerleading and social involvement. So, the school structure makes it easy for them. All we have to do is give them the guidance.

We explain to them that knowledge is power, that if you have an education, and a profession, you can be self-sufficient financially. Being self-sufficient financially is what life is all about.

They ask us, ‘what does a lawyer make, what does a doctor make?’ I tell them, ‘I don’t know. You go look it on the Internet.’ So they go to the computer and do their research. They have the computer right there in the school. The one that is fourteen has been doing this all along. She uses the computer better than I do. She uses it for homework and for book research and library reference, things we would not have known.
JO: Our kids are all different in their abilities. Our oldest had to study hard to do well, and she did. She was always studying and she was involved in sports. My second daughter is gifted academically; even when she plays around she does well. So we have to devise more ways to keep her occupied. She has had numerous extra-curricular activities. She was in track, she was in choir, and she went to Europe.

As time went on things were easier, because the two older daughters helped me with their siblings. The older ones already had their driver’s licenses, which was most helpful. Even then they all knew what the expectations were—they should do well in their schoolwork or they will be afraid to walk in here [jokingly].

BO: We ask the children what their expectations are for themselves. However, we give them guidelines, that whatever they expect for themselves must be appropriate, not too low and not too high. Fortunately for our kids they always set their expectations very high. We at times ask them, ‘Don’t you think you are doing too much?’ They usually say ‘No.’ Then we tell them: ‘we have your back. We will support you in your endeavors.’

Expectations are what we work with. For example, when ‘E’ was in China and going to school, there were problems in China reported by our media. I wanted her to come home. I spoke to her about it. She was adamant that she was safe and her host parents were taking good care of her. Mr. ‘OA’ further calmed me that we have raised her to make good decisions, and this is the time to allow her to make her own decision. We always tell them, freedom begets responsibility, and so for whatever the decisions they make, they will be responsible for the consequences. We tell them the buck stops with them. We want to know what they want to do, and they must give us the plan. Without a plan, there is no process. We are not rigid; things can change; but the children must give us plan of action regarding their studies.

SB: I have discussions with my daughter about my expectations for her life as often as the chance presents itself. Her first four years of schooling were difficult for her. My expectations of her schooling were also difficult for her to understand. But, as time goes on she has taken to my advice. My advice was that she concentrates on her schoolwork. Do her homework assignments and try to take good notes in class.

AM: I tell my children about my work situation, and about growing up in Nigeria. I also give them examples of people I know who have done well in life through education. I let them know that I admire those who have succeeded against all odds.

BM: I have daily conversations with them about education. I tell them they have to study hard to make the grade. Success doesn’t come without hard work.
SB: I am very satisfied with her achievement to date. She does her work and she is doing well in school.

AM: Well, they still need help and encouragement. They are doing well so far. But that is never good enough for a parent. Every parent wants them to be above average. I don't mind average but I want it to be earned honestly. I don't want them to slack off just to get average grades. I want them to work hard and rise above the average.

*Parental Minority Status and Educational Success*

I asked the participants how being a minority affected their children and these are the responses given:

**MU:** Being a minority did not influence my children at all. I have told them to hold their heads above water. I have told them to be proud of themselves and their heritage. I have told them to rely on themselves. I have told them they are black Americans as well as Nigerians. They are Nigerians and should not let anyone put them down.

**BM:** It is very important for them to do well because we are a long way from home. We cannot come all these miles to fail. Failure is not an option.

**SB:** There are hurdles. I explain to her that she has to do more than 100%. I tell her to respect other people and be confident with what she is doing. In that way you will certainly be recognized. I told her to be honest, and to deal with people with honesty.

**BE:** When you consider the year that I came to the United States, I was told about the revolt or the riot - - the minority riot - - caused by lack of programs for minorities. So they rioted to call attention to these inequalities. That was only a few years before my arrival. They laid the foundation for adult education and other programs from which I benefited from. People who participated in these programs including the teachers were very committed. I remember all the faculty names till now. They enabled me to achieve my goals by showing me the way. They believed that I could go to college. They encouraged me to apply. At every stage we benefit from the work of people before us. My children also benefited from the work of those who passed through before them. It is up to the children to do a good job so that they can be recognized and reap the benefit. I think the benefit is there.

I think that our minority status probably had something to do with our success, except that it is one thing that I would not like to articulate. I don't want to spend time on it, because I want to emphasize the positive side of my coming from
nothing to achieving the things that I have achieved. I don’t want to get sidetracked into complaining about this and that. But there are lots of things I can complain about. At one school I went to the department was not very helpful to me. They didn’t think they were doing anything wrong. I was in broadcast journalism; they would send out students to gain experiences, but when I asked to be given such opportunity they were not forthcoming. I don’t want to spend all my energy dealing with issues like this, because in spite of everything, I have come out okay. If anything, it is in the “state system” - - my job that I have suffered prejudice the most. But, again, there are lots of Africans with PhDs that still didn’t get the opportunity that I got.

Support: Parents and School Community

AM: About two months ago, my son was behind on his homework, and the teacher told me that if he did not catch up he would probably fail the class. So I asked the teacher if he and I and my son’s counselor could meet for a conference on how to help my son catch up. I knew it was my son’s fault and I was embarrassed but I still have to look out for his best interests. I was embarrassed to go into the school because I feel people who see parents come in during school hours know that one’s child must be in trouble. I felt embarrassed, but I went anyway. When I met with the teacher, I made her understand that I was not there to put blame on her and that I supported her a hundred percent. I asked her to collaborate with me and to help me get my son to succeed in her class. The teacher volunteered to coach him after class when needed and ensure that he catch up. I didn’t leave the matter at that; I made frequent calls to the teacher to inquire about my son’s progress and I made sure that my son knew that I was in frequent conversation with his teacher. The teacher and I became friends. I didn’t leave the matter at that; I made frequent calls to the teacher to inquire about my son’s progress and I made sure that my son knew that I was in frequent conversation with his teacher. The teacher and I became friends. I sucked up. When I see the teachers in the community, I speak to them. I form relationships with my children’s teachers. They often tell me, “I wish some other parents were like you; we are at times hesitant to call our students’ parents because we are afraid of what they will say. Their kids are always right.”

I know when my kids are right and when they are not. Because their successes are of utmost importance to me I can’t be blaming their teachers; they have to do the right thing in the classroom. I won’t apportion blames. I make all my children know that they are kids and they need their teachers’ guidance towards the right direction. It has worked for us so far.

OA: You know how here in America, they [the school systems] are broken into school districts? Part of our homework when they were young was to look into schools. We moved here for one of the best school districts in the area and that was a tough financial decision. But, that goes back to that cultural influence that you want your kids to do well and you do your research knowing that there are all kinds of different school systems in this country. You are in the field and you know what we are talking about—there is first class education and there is low
class education. Despite being middle-income parents, we moved to an upper class neighborhood for the good schools and it paid off.

The oldest one that graduated from that school got into a $45,000 per year school for free. You can’t beat that. When we got into that area in 1994, when she was four, our mortgage went up 100%. We went from a big house in the city to a smaller house in the suburbs. We miss that house, but the benefit is this is a good school. She doesn’t come home crying. They have top-class education and activities. She reaped that reward when we moved here two years ago. Even though the districts are side-by-side, this one is better. It is because the school is smaller: the class sizes are smaller. Based on that, I would think that the place is smaller and more contained. The younger two are there.

**SO:** Between the children and us there is a cultural lag. We have to tread lightly or we will lose them. We have to try to accommodate them some because this culture is different from the one we were raised in. For example, one of my friends, *Omo e kan dide nle lojo kan ikeru oni ohun nkuro nitoro Baba ohun ti le ju.* [Translation: His daughter decided he was too strict, and left home.].

*Omo* [Translation: she was] 17 or 18 years in the last year of high school. *Baba sun sun sun. Sugbon o pada wa ile.* [Translation: Her dad cried and cried--she returned home after a year or so.] She later went to U of M. That will show you our cultural differences with our children. If we don’t manage things very well they will see us as too strict or too mean. These generations are so different from us. I don’t know what we can do. But some of us are successful in managing them.

One of the things we did to engrain some of our culture in our children was to send them to Yoruba school here in Michigan. They learned that when they greet me they have to bow as a sign of respect. When they wake up in the morning they must greet me. They cannot just walk through me.

**OA:** We try to be positive. We encourage them in going to school and when they get back they have to do their homework.

**SA:** I remember when they were in elementary school, it was that, ‘I could do it.’ We all sat down and did the homework before dinner and it was done. But when they were in middle school, it was: ‘Mommy. We already did it. You don’t know how to do it--that’s a different math.’ They have the background that their homework comes first. We attend every parent-teacher meeting. We never miss any. If I, or he, have to come home early, we are there with the teachers. They know us by name.

**OA:** Even when we travel, they have books. They pack their clothing; they pack their books. When they are in the car, they are also reading a book. I know she does a good job with them because she has a background as a teacher. I work
with them and do a good job, too. We tell them the Nigerian story about home. They have been home 4 or 5 times, and they know they have a lot of successful people back home.

SA: The parents being there. The parents have to be there and have to ask them: ‘what did you do today? What did the teacher expect from you today?’ The parents have to be there in school. They have to know what’s going on in classes, even get the curriculum and look through it and know they have the right information.

OA: Parental involvement is extremely important. I am talking about active involvement, like she said [his wife]. You know what classes they are taking, what the teachers are doing, you attend [children’s school functions] the school, you call them [the school,] you check the grades if one of them has not been posted on line, you will know. Also, children need guidance, as far as behavior.

So, as you monitor their academic success, you have to monitor their behavior and whom they are socializing with. It could be good kids, but they might be doing drugs or smoking or drinking or something like that--maybe after school. So, you have to monitor your kids and who they are with, during school and after school.

This is very important--being morally there for them.

It could be expensive, but you don’t want your child being the only one who stands out. In fashion [clothing], you want to make them a little bit comfortable. You can’t deny them what they want to wear. Some Nigerian parents say their kids can’t wear this or that; but you don’t want to fight the kids. You work with them when they go to school. You don’t want your kids sneaking around, carrying the thing with them in their bag until they leave home. We have cultural conflict, so morally and financially you have to support the children. My friend has a kid, but doesn’t give him anything. Don’t deprive them; you have to give them some pocket money. Back home we don’t have that. This kind of support is also very important for the kids, and we support that.

JO: Before we moved out here we investigated schools. We did not have money to send them to private schools so we had to have good public schools to send them to. Where we were going to buy a house was determined by the school system. The neighborhood school where we bought our home has good academics as well as extracurricular activities. They were exposed to different curriculum, so that by the time they were ready for college, they had ideas of what they wanted to study in college. So they have also good choices of college. However, my husband loves the University of Michigan, his alma mater. All the children went to the University of Michigan. They lived here, they had choices and their high school prepared them well for college entrance. They were individually accepted to three or more colleges, so they had choices. We also
looked at where they were offered scholarships. My eldest did not have a scholarship so she went to U of M. She studied business. My second daughter was very athletic; she also went to U of M. She had an athletic scholarship. She ran track for four years. My third daughter ran track for two years and also had a full academic scholarship. My son also went to U of M. They made the decision by themselves, but I won’t say that their dad had nothing to do with their final choice. One of the girls wanted to go to UCLA, but she was finally convinced to go to U of M.

BE: We worked very hard. Elizabeth especially insisted that the children had to read X numbers of books per week. She also enrolled them in after-school programs. We worked together to do for them what needed to be done. Credit also goes to the school. You would not believe the amount of work the children used to bring home. Their mom made sure all their work was done. I did not have to go looking for them anywhere; when they came home from school they simply did their homework. We expected this from them.

AM: I encourage my children to take challenging classes that will help them get in colleges. I encourage them to take honors and AP courses when available; even if they get B's in challenging classes I recon it is better than A's in 'basket weaving.' I make them take courses like chemistry, Biology, World History, AP and honors classes. I seek out dedicated and committed teachers for them. My younger daughter did not want to leave her friends in a class for a more challenging class that one of her teacher's had suggested. I made a bargain with her, that if she attended the challenging class for a week and did not like it I would let her return to her previous class, no questions asked. Well at the end of the week she was raving about her new class and that was that.

I try to make them happy at home so that they can do well at school. Even if I am sad, I put on a happy face for their sakes. I want nothing to stand in the way of their educational success. I applaud their successes and help them solve problems when they are not doing as well as they should.

SB: She is self-motivated. She sees how I struggle. She also sees that I am financially independent.

AM: I help them meet my expectations by helping them get to school on time, and I am supportive of their educational endeavors. I get in contact with teachers often to build relationships with them in order to boost the academic achievements of the children.

I encourage the children to separate their personal feelings from their educational ones. If they don’t like a teacher that’s okay; but they still must do well in the subject being taught. I also encourage them to associate with good friends; they should only make friends with those who are interested in doing well at school, not otherwise. They must work with their teachers and be sure to ask questions in
class. If they don’t ask questions, teachers may think they are not involved or listening. The Nigerian culture encourages children not to speak till spoken to; it is very different here. If you are not speaking, people think it is because you have nothing to say and that you are disinterested or worse.

Parents in this study say factors for success of their children and their family includes keeping stressors low.

SB: To help her succeed I have to be a good mother. I have to show her my love and let her know that she is important to my life. I have to give her security. I also provide her with good nutrition. Whatever problems she has at school or with anyone she can discuss them with me. She does not have to feel alone. She knows that she has my support.

BM: We give them time to relax and reflect on all the lessons that they are learning. We also tell them that the friends they make should be friends that are smarter than they are so that they can learn from and emulate their smart friends. I let them have their own space and privacy; I allow them to make decisions by themselves so that they can see consequences of good and bad decisions.

SO: I am very involved in their education. I go to PT meetings. I personally got involved when they were taking college entrance exams like the ACT and the SAT. In fact, for my last-born, I just paid $500 to help him with tutoring; he plays sports and he has to have a certain GPA. I am willing to go an extra mile. I believe in investing in education.

My only worry is that these kids are not as dedicated as they could be. They don’t know the value of hard work. They are not self-motivated to study on their own. I tell my children that what you are going to get from school is directly proportional to the amount of time you study.

I don’t think my kids understand that they need to work hard at school. I used to ask the kids for their homework, they tell me that they have done it in class. I tell them, ‘classes are for lecturing, you must bring homework assignments and I need to see you do them.’ They must study at least for an hour after school. I want this evidence because at home [Nigeria], parents have to see you study; they want to see the evidence that you are learning. I remember, when I was home, my mother at times would want to send us on errand, but my father would ask her not to bother us because we were reading. I never see my kids study and that disturbs me. They are into MTV, cell phones and all these lifestyles. But the potential is there and the environment is more conducive, and they don’t have to work while at school like I had to. I give my son a $250 monthly allowance. When I went to school nobody gave me allowances. I am trying to tell him, ‘Do you realize, I am paying you to go to college?’ He says, ‘Daddy, you are not paying me; I have a scholarship.’ I say ‘I am, because I buy your plane tickets; buy your cloths, pay
for your meals, etc. Every time you call home there is always something that you want.'

SN: Well raising children here is tough because there are a lot of bad influences, like excessive watching of television. For a long time while the children were growing up I did not have cable in my house. I just had basic TV. My wife supported me in that aspect. Since I can’t be monitoring the children 24 hours while they are home, there are many unsavory channels on cable and I wanted to minimize bad influences on my children so I refused to get cable television. We also make it our business to know who our children’s friends are. Because, in Nigeria, that is the way we were parented. Parents make it their business to make sure you are in good company.

JO: We made clear to them what our expectations were.

My kids are self-motivated. We had them enrolled in any academic activity; you name it we enrolled them. I also participated in parents groups at their schools. I made my expectations known to the teachers. I went to all their parent-teacher conferences. We were fully involved in their learning and their school. We volunteered to help at the children’s schools when they needed us. It was difficult because we were going to school as well as working. But there is no other alternative, because we wanted to let our children know that we were interested in their schooling. We didn’t want our children running all over the place.

We are also involved in church. We have kept the kids occupied. We have been busy.

Defining Achievement for Your Children at the Age of 30

Many of the adult children of the participants were already 30, and others have much younger children, I asked them to look at the future, say at age 30, and tell me how far would they want the children to be in their educational and life related achievements.

MU: So, now I have three pharmacists and one nurse practitioner. The Lord has been miraculous! I am very grateful. With the help of good friends and God my children and I have done well. I worked for the State of Michigan and retired last year. Now, one of the girls is going to marry a pharmacist, so I’ll have five pharmacists in my family.

We need to pray for all our children. I have worked so hard for mine. And now they are doing well and are on their own, but they come every weekend to see me.

I am very satisfied with my children’s progress. They are not gone; they are always around me. As you leave here, within some minutes my son will come
and visit. To raise successful children, never use negative words on them. Be supportive in words and action.

SN: This is a tough one. As I mentioned earlier there are so many opportunities in this country, so by the age of 30, I would like them to be established in whatever careers they chose. At 30, I expect the girls to have some serious relationships leading to marriage, for when it starts to get later than that the pressure will start mounting, and they may want to settle for whoever comes along. I don't want them to do that.

SA: At the age of 30, I want them to be settled as professionals, married, with their own children. I was married at age 25. At 30, I had my second child.

OA: Well, it's in the will. They should have at least their advance degrees--on the average of an MA or MS. They are young, and they have no children, so they can get that at a minimum education. If they marry and have kids, it's okay. That is part of the will: if they marry and have kids, they get more out of the will; if they don't marry and have kids, it's different.

The most important thing for them is just to be happy, to be a professional. If they don't want to have kids, that's okay. If they don't want to, they don't have to. Once they have their professional careers, they can do whatever they want. By age 30, they should be all done with school. I got married at 29; their mom got married at 25.

JO: My two girls and son have excelled extremely; they are extraordinary. And as I said we have motivated them and they are self-motivated. They know what we did and what we did for ourselves; all of them have excelled, very much. The oldest one went to college, finished, got her degree from George Washington University. And since then they have been traveling all over the world; they want to have the exposure. My oldest and her younger sister have traveled to Europe; they have been everywhere on their own, backpacking. They have no fear, and that scares me sometimes; they want to do things; they like diversity, they want to be exposed to different things. My second one went to Europe with the choir when she was in college, and now she is a lawyer. My third one is an extremely smart kid, and graduated with honors. She has been working for four years as a program manager and is moving up. She has decided to go back to school - to Harvard. She is getting an MBA, and this is her last semester; she will graduate in April. My son was the one I was a little worried about, because he is the only boy and he knew he had a lot of shoes to fill. So I felt sorry for him, but I made sure he was involved. He has a lot of friends.

I never shout at my kids. I let them go out there and do their thing. But they succeeded, they went to U of M and graduated, and now my boy is a mechanical engineer. What else can you ask for?
**BO**: My oldest daughter dropped out, but then went back to school, and she is now a fashion designer. Looking back, I think she made the right decisions. My expectations for her were not fulfilled, but she has achieved what she expected for herself. She will tell you today what she is doing is very successful. What we expected of her when she was studying did not work out because she was not interested. On a scale of 1 to 10, she is 8 as to where she is going to be, so I am happy that she is happy. How do you rate children; it's not for your own ego, it's for them, and you cannot do it for them.

With my youngest one, what my thing now is, because sometimes people can be too talented for their own good. She is an amazing photographer, so what happens now, she wants to do architecture and engineering. We sit down and re-evaluate everything. We consider our children’s mental health as important. We don’t want to push them to the brink. We tell them that we would rather have you whole than broken down. So we want them to let us know when they want to take a break or when they changed their mind. Our daughter, “E,” went to college at 16. We told her not to take summer school, because we want to travel in the summer. We travel quite a bit. We go to museums, parks and go to new places. Sometimes we are the only black people in some of the places we visit. We expose our children to other cultures and peoples.

**BM**: At the age of 30, I expect them to have achieved all their educational goals and have good job. I want them to have a job of their interest. It could be having their own businesses or working for other people. I expect them to be making a good living and be self-sufficient.

**SB**: I think she will be a respectful woman. My hope is, she would have reached her educational goals and probably be married to a good man. I see her having one or two kids by age 30.

**BE**: First of all I didn't know what I expected them to be, but I think they made up their own minds what they wanted to be. Starting with my first daughter, she aimed very high. She wanted to work for the National Institute of Health. And the university where she received her PhD prepared her well. Long before she graduated, they had her present her research in key places. She got feedback. She also made connections and got many job offers. But her advisor counseled her to do a post-doctorate program.

In answering this question, I can see them achieving what they set out to do. They are well on their way. I think they are getting there. My only fear is whether it is too quick. They may be too young for all these successes.

**AM**: My children are going to do well in the future. Looking at the way they are now; I thought as teenagers they will be acting out but they don’t. My son is very reserved. If he is upset, he just goes to his room until things calm down. I feel the Nigerian culture is still with them. They will be okay if they continue to work.
hard on their education. They have proved to be strong and courageous given the fact that they moved to a new country and have made many good friends and are doing well in their education. I believe they will do better in life here than they would have had we stayed in Nigeria.

The following are themes that emanate from participants’ expectations for their children from the above narratives and they serve as a summary for this section:

- Expectation in Yoruba culture is for children to live a better life than parents.
- Education is the best way to upward mobility.
- We expect them to be the best human being that they can be.
- We expect them to involve themselves in the community.
- Be good citizens.
- To attain an education, to find a good wife or good husband, to have children, live a good life and to be able to come home.
- At the age of 30, I expect them to have achieved all their educational goals.
- The expectations are that they should become somebody in this world.
- If they (girls) are educated and self-sufficient they will get more respect from their prospective husbands.
- The children should be independent financially, have a good home and be happy with their lives--be well educated, happy and then get married.
- When children state their dreams, they must know what it will take to get there.
- They don’t have to be a doctor or a lawyer, but they have to engage in professions that will give them comfort in life.
- We make sacrifices and we expect them to do the same.
- We expect our children to work hard.
- Education is a stepping-stone to a good life.
- We model what being a good person is, and we want them to do the same.

- We made our expectations known to the teachers.

Table 6 below further illuminates the themes that emerge from the narratives on how parents define and convey achievement as well as how they go about helping their children meet their expectations:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents defining achievement</th>
<th>Parents conveying expectations</th>
<th>Parents helping children meet expectations</th>
<th>Parents noting factors that help children succeed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life-long learning is the issue, not grades.</td>
<td>There is a lot more opportunity than back in Nigeria, and the opportunity is free.</td>
<td>Between the children and us there is a cultural lag. We have to tread lightly or we will lose them.</td>
<td>The parents have to be there and ask them, “What did you do today?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their achievement is the ability to be a life-long learner.</td>
<td>So we make sure the children take the opportunities to get involved (in extra curricula activities).</td>
<td>We have to accommodate them, because this culture (U.S.) is different.</td>
<td>You have to monitor their behavior and whom they are socializing with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I define achievement through their GPA. But I also tell them they have to be well-rounded human beings. Degrees can afford you material things, but human relationships are crucial.</td>
<td>So the school structure (in America) makes it easy for them. All we have to do is give them guidance.</td>
<td>We worked to engrain some of our culture in our children.</td>
<td>This is very important – being morally there for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character is a critical key; it involves being a good Christian.</td>
<td>The two older daughters helped me with their siblings.</td>
<td>We all sat down and did the homework before dinner, and it was done.</td>
<td>We have cultural conflict, so morally and financially you have to support them. This kind of support is also very important for the kid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The value of hard work.</td>
<td>We ask the children what their expectations are for themselves.</td>
<td>We attend every parent-teacher meeting. (The teachers) know us by name.</td>
<td>We worked very hard. We insisted the children read X number of books per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I define achievement as improvement in their grades.</td>
<td>Fortunately, for our kids they always set their expectations. And we say, “Don’t you think you are doing too much?”</td>
<td>They have been home four or five times, and they know they have a lot of successful people back home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 2

What role do sociocultural, sociostructural and historical contexts play in Nigerian parents’ expectations for their children’s educational success?

The topics that are discussed by participants under research question 2 are:

- Parental Beliefs and Life History (Nigeria)
- Participants’ parents’ level of education
- Participants’ parents’ goals for their education
- Participants’ Personal Goals
- Participants’ View of Parents’ Influence, Support and Motivation
- Effort, Sacrifice and Achievement by Participants’ Families
- The Importance of Education: Views of Participants’ Parents, Families and Friends
- Participants’ Schooling in Nigeria
- Participants’ Careers in Nigeria
- Parental Beliefs and Life Experiences (Nigeria)
- Parental Beliefs and Life Experiences (U.S.)
- Coming to America

Themes that emerged from the narratives are in bullets and/or tables appearing at the end of the section serving as summary.

Parental Beliefs and Life History (Nigeria)

As I work through the data, I came to the understanding that a “culture of education” runs through the participants’ households; the themes emerging from these narratives will be summed up at the end of the section. The reflection of participants on
the role that sociocultural and historical factors play on their expectations were voiced as follows:

SO: I grew up in Nigeria some 55 years ago. I came from a [polygamous] family like most of our communities at home. My parents were influential to my education; they were not only guiding me but also, dictating to me as to the importance of education and how important it was to our lives. There were 17 children in the family; my mother had six.

My parents always said that education was the best legacy they could leave their children.

My father had a college education, and my mother had secondary school education, and at that time it was almost like being a university graduate, so it became very important. My father was exposed to education by living with someone who was educated; our education system consisted of you living with someone who was educated, and that was the way my parents got their education. And then when they came back home, it became very important that we should be educated....

In Nigeria we believe that those who are successful educationally are those who are disciplined. Of course we now know that is not particularly true. Educational success depends on genetics and environment. On the other hand, in those days I never saw a student who studied and failed. If they did not make distinction, they at least passed.

Effort has a lot to do with educational achievement.

OA: For the Yorubas it is very common that the average Yoruba wants to educate their children at all costs—even if they are poor. We always hear that in the North that is not usually the case. In the East, it is quite similar because they also believe in education. So, growing up in a Yoruba household, it is very important that you go to school and get your education.

Also, the time we were growing up, you only have free education at the primary school level—which means government school. Anything above the primary school, the parents must be willing to pay tuition. I found it interesting that a lot of Yoruba family, my parents for example, would do anything they have to do to cover the school fee. I’m second of three boys and second oldest of six. My parents’ goal was that we all get as much education as we can. After the public primary school, then we go to secondary school where we have to pay.

My brother is three years older, so it is like double jeopardy for my parents because we are so close. So, it is like we have to come up with two tuitions because we have two kids. I remember one of my father’s friends—he is deceased
now—said, ‘Why is he killing himself, sending two kids to school at the same
time? Is he crazy? Why not let the younger one go and learn mechanics,’ which
is me! I thank my Dad for that, because he was angry with the friend. By the
way, I was supposed to be the better student anyway. My dad said something like
that to the man, that his younger son was the better student to make the man back
off.

JO: I grew up in a two-parent home. My mother actually had twelve live births
but there were ten of us left. My dad was a minister who came to United States in
the 40’s and studies at a Seminary. My mother was a schoolteacher. We grew up
in a strict Christian home. Education was most important to my parents.

They had high expectations for us. My father’s start in life was working for
missionaries and he got a formal education. He wanted his children to have a
better education than he had. They taught us that education was our key to
success. They were very involved in our education as far back as elementary
school. My dad was also a teacher. They were always helping us with
homework. They made sure we were fully engaged and no running on the street.
Of course, there was not much running around the street in those days. Everyone
in town was your parent.

In a nutshell, I have a circle of family members for whom education and family
mean a lot.

OA: Back to the motivation—it goes back to the upbringing. I wouldn’t say your
‘cultural upbringing’, as anything you do in your household is your culture.

My dad gave us the best education he could afford. When the opportunity wasn’t
even there, someone struggled to give it to you. My dad could have been one of
those who said he shouldn’t kill himself and let them go learn a trade.

But, instead my dad would sell the last clothes off his back for education.

The income was not that great, but my dad believed in education. He was
deprieved of learning; he was struggling to finish secondary school—did home
study, did home school, accounting and all that. He worked his way out of the
railway station to account clerk at the university, to almost a bursar. My Mom’s
situation was almost like that because she also had to struggle, but she had to drop
out after primary school. They couldn’t pay. She couldn’t do home school, and I
think she never forgave her dad for that until he man died. So I thank my parents
for doing their best to send us to school. After secondary school is competition,
to get to the university and you must pay. They still struggled, and my brother
ended up going to Lagos to re-take his school cert. at one of the prominent
schools. I think it was Methodist Boys’ School—o get a good score so he could
get into the university.
BM: Based on my parents’ involvement in my life, I learned to be self-sufficient. This helped a lot in every step of my life.

SB: My mother died when I was six years old. In Nigeria, it is considered the duty of a woman to bring up the kids. Since my mother was not there, I had to go to my grandma. My grandmother was not healthy enough to take care of me so I had to take care of myself. After she died I was sent to live with my aunt. I was ten years old. Instead of playing the role of a mother, she was playing the role of a master and I was the servant. My father was supporting us monetarily. He provided money for our welfare and schooling, but my aunty would not allow me to go to school. She believed that a woman should not be educated. However, she allowed her own female children to go to school. I just stayed at home. It was a horrible thing for me to stay at home while the other children were attending school. It was kept a secret from my father. He thought I was in school. My aunt threatened that bad things would happen to me if I mentioned my situation to my father. I had to lie. I finally started schooling at the age of twelve. I sold water and wood to raise the money for my first school fees and buy some materials for my classes. It took me some months to raise the money. I just bought a plastic bag and an exercise (notebook) book and showed up at school. I told them I wanted to start. I had enough money to pay for the year but not the next year, my father came to know of the situation and he was very bitter. He took over my educational expenses after that.

Of all the participants, BE, who later earned a PhD, in education did not receive a formal education till his twenties. He had been raised as a fisherman and a farmer since the early age of six.

BE: Because I was fishing with my dad. Back in those days everyone in the Eastern region went fishing or to the farm. At an early age I used to fish with my father, then when I come back I would go farming with my mother. How I grew up was just work, work, and work. Now-a-days we call it child labor. At about the age of ten, I became a major part of my father’s fishing business and my mother’s farming.

Even while I was laboring for my father and mother, my older brother who was going to school would tutor me at home. I used to also mix with other kids who were going to school. I never saw myself as different from the children who go to school; I was all over the place trying to learn. I was trying to compete with them. I would read at church.

I was self-motivated. My parents did not help me at all. They did not see me as a person to be educated. I love my parents. I gave them my last 10 pounds when I left Nigeria. In the letter that accompanied the money I told parents to share the
money equally, otherwise my father would take the whole thing. I came to America penniless; but I gave my last ten pounds to my parents.

Participants' Parents Level of Education

Only one participant's parent had a college education. While others gained various levels of Western education, they were still able to support their children's higher educational goals.

**SO:** My father had a college education, and my mother had secondary school education, and at that time it was almost like being a university graduate, so it became very important. My father was exposed to education by living with someone who was educated; our education system consisted of you living with someone who was educated, and that was the way my parents got their education. And then when they came back home, it became very important that we should be educated.

**MU:** My parents were illiterate. My father could read a little bit, maybe standard 3, but he died young, so I didn't actually know him very well. My mother was a big trader—a very prosperous woman. My mother was very smart, very strict and very hard working. She trained me. She did not say, 'Be this or be that.' I wanted to be a policewoman and later a nurse. The choices were mine to make. More importantly, what made me choose nursing was because of her accident.

**SN:** My father had a Standard Six education; he was the head of the family and introduced us to western education, as we say. My mother was a housewife. Her job was to take care of the home, cook and wash our clothes; and my father, every Sunday he used to take all the clothes that my mother washed and iron them. He used a charcoal iron. I have never done that for my kids. We would go to church; he didn't go.

But my father was very, very forceful about education. He made sure we had at least the minimum education, which was high school. That was our goal. Well, when we got there and we saw what the world was like, then the whole thing got modified. It started stretching his financial resources. He didn't realize I wanted to go to a boarding school.

**OA:** My dad believed in education. He was deprived of learning; he was struggling to finish secondary school—did home study, did home school, accounting and all that. He worked his way out of the railway station to account clerk at the university, to almost a bursar. My Mom's situation was almost like that because she also had to struggle, but she had to drop out after primary school. They couldn't pay. She couldn't do home school, and I think she never forgave
her Dad for that until he man died. So I thank my parents for doing their best to send us to school.

**Parent Participants' Own Parents' Goals for their Education**

Most apparent was that most participants' parents with the exception of only one wanted them to choose the direction of their own education. They were unequivocal about their determination in dealing with their children.

**OA:** My parents' goal was that we all get as much education as we can. After the public primary school, then we go to secondary school where we have to pay.

**BM:** Based on my parents' involvement in my life, I learned to be self-sufficient. This helped a lot in every step of my life.

**SB:** My father never had any goal for me. He just wanted me to achieve my own goal and he promised to support me financially. He wanted me to succeed in whatever I wanted to be.

**BO:** In our culture, they say, 'don't educate women;' my father said: 'I will educate them so that they will marry well.'

My father had about 20 children. There was one thing that was so important: my father had a love for education. So when I was growing up he said he wanted his girls to marry well. When you wanted anything from him you had to write him a letter, and he would look through it, make corrections, and send it back. Consequently for me, I became a very responsible person.

You must be a success at whatever you do. You don't have to be a doctor or lawyer, but you must be a success. That's how I was raised, and fortunately, that was the way my husband felt. We told our children to study whatever you want to study, but you must study something. Know what you are doing. That is what I brought from my parents. My mother wasn't educated at all; she couldn't even read. But she was always after us. When I came home from schools, she would ask, 'What's your homework?' I could be scribbling anything, but so long as I was sitting down doing something is what she demanded. We couldn't go out to play or do anything without first doing that.

**OA:** To be honest with you, my dad is a very laid back and easy-going person. I don't know if he had a defined goal other than to get your education and do whatever you want and live well. He never pushed us into a doctor, lawyer, and engineer—I never asked him that. I know that some of his friends' would spank their children if they get a 'B' or 'C'. He would ask if they were crazy—what they would do if their kid got an 'F'! My dad said you encourage them to do better.
My dad never compared our grades. He just said to go and come back and do well. When we did well, we got a compliment. That was better than a gift. When we did very well, he would brag about it. Even the youngest did very well.

My mom was the disciplinarian. She would say, if we did not do well in say math, maybe you need to go back to the school and get an extra lesson, or go back and speak to your teacher. My dad would get us what we needed to go to school. My mom would worry about how we got there; she is the one who would make sure you had your shoes and books. And she is the one who would hear if we misbehaved and get us if we did. So, books, uniform, pen, paper, attending the school program; Mom is the one who does all of that.

**JO:** I think I have met my parents’ goals for me pretty much. I mean they wanted me get an education and raise a family. I think I have done my best to meet their goals and my own goals.

**BO:** Oh yes, of course. It came from my father, and what my mother did for me: ‘just observe and be quiet. Don’t tell people what you are made of; let your life show it.’ That’s how my mother is.

**SA:** She wanted me to be somebody—to be myself and help myself and help others. That’s what she always said. She always wanted me to be a professional. She said, ‘you have to be a professional and help yourself. Nobody will do it for you.’ She was a professional. She was a registered nurse at the University Teaching Hospital. She would also treat the children in the neighborhood.

And, also to marry so I could have children.

**BM:** My parents wanted me to be independent, self sufficient and easy going. They don’t want me to rely on others. They want me to believe in myself.

I have not only met those goals (my parents’ goals) but I have surpassed them.

*Participants’ Personal Goals*

All participants were motivated to become a success in their educational endeavors. They expressed interest in having professions that were recognized and that contributed to the community. They wanted to afford a good life for themselves, their children, siblings and extended family.

**SB:** My personal goal was to become a teacher; but that was not realized. I was admitted to a Nigerian college of education but I left for overseas before that
could be realized. When I got overseas, my Nigerian certificate was not recognized so I had to go to professional schools.

My aim was to have a profession, and I think I have met that goal even though it was a different profession than I envisioned as a child.

I didn’t want to be just a housewife. I wanted to make my own money. I wanted to be able to take care of myself. That was the motivation.

Participants’ View of Parents’ Influence, Support and Motivation

BM: Self-sufficiency and belief in myself are those two pillars of success given to me by my parents, and they have served me well.

SB: My dad wanted me to go as high (in education) as he could pay. He believed education was a path to success; for him it didn’t matter if I was a woman or a man—all he wanted for me was for me to do well and be independent. He wanted me to be successful in whatever I chose to do with my education.

SA: All my family was educated. I had uncles and cousins that were in England and they always came home to see us. It was my motivation that one-day I would be educated and be there, too. I had an aunt that would come from England and bring me clothes. She was my motivation. It was a good experience. My grandmother was a very strong woman and would get my uncles to send me to school—to give me anything I needed—books, shoes, uniforms. She made sure the oldest of her children, my uncle, would pay for my fees; the second would pay for my books, the third for the uniforms. I was always in school; I never lacked for anything. My grandmother was there and made sure I had all this as I was her ‘last baby.’ Education was a great thing to me. I went to United Missionary College in Oke-Odo.

JO: They had high expectations for us. My father’s start in life was working for missionaries and he got a formal education. He wanted his children to have a better education than he had. They taught us that education was our key to success. They were very involved in our education as far back as elementary school. My dad was also a teacher. They were always helping us with homework. They made sure we were fully engaged and not running in the street. Of course, there was not much running around the street in those days. Everyone in town was your parent.

In a nutshell, I have a circle of family members for whom education and family mean a lot.

SO: My parents’ goal for me was to be successful. I have an older brother who has a Ph.D. My father was the one who first told me that I had to be a medical doctor. I didn’t know the difference between a doctor of philosophy and a
medical doctor at the time. So my father said I had to be a doctor. Perhaps it was because he had to explain to people all the time that my brother was not a medical doctor. So, he looked at me, and said, 'You, "S", you are going to study medicine.' At this time I was staying with an uncle who was a high school principal. I had to work for him in the evening and go to school in the morning.

He believed in me. In spite of the fact that the school was on vacation, my father took me to the school and paid for the year’s tuition and board. He wanted me to know that if you do well and work hard you will be rewarded. That was the reason I studied medicine. I thought if it is that important to my dad, there must be something to it. I was just talking to my son today about that.

My mother was very strict, but dad was much more approachable. We could lie down on his bed, put on his Agbada (a Nigerian male outfit) and play. But if my mother found us in her room, she would get upset and scold us. She was the disciplinarian

Effort, Sacrifice and Achievement by Participants’ Families

"BE," lamented that he had no parental support for his education. After listening to his story, it became apparent that his parents had very little money to send all their children to school, so they put what they had on the oldest brother and made BE and the other younger ones work with them on the farm and in fishing, for the father was a fisherman. In order to fulfill what in Nigeria is the obligation of every older brother or sister who has succeeded, 'BE’s older brother was later responsible for sending him to Lagos (the capital city of Nigeria at the time), to learn photography. Many years later, BE ended up in the United States, with the help of friends, and through hard work and persistence earned a PhD in Education.

BE: I have no idea where the motivation came from. Although I had no opportunity to go to school at an earlier age, I still kept my eyes on the goal. I wanted to succeed. I knew things would happen, so when I saw an opportunity I took it. I kept my eyes on the goal. My major break came when my older brother who had left our village for Lagos, to work for the first Nigerian Prime Minister, sent for me. I thought when I got to Lagos my brother would enroll me in school, but he didn’t. He wanted me to apprentice as either a carpenter or a photographer. I chose photography. He enrolled me in a photography studio.
In a situation where all schooling beyond primary school (through U.S. grade 6) must be funded directly by families who mostly have limited resources and many children, parents sometimes have to choose which of the children they can afford to educate (usually the oldest male unless they think he lacks the aptitude), and then rely on the older educated siblings who have established themselves to help the younger ones.

SO: After a while I wanted to move to my school boarding house. My father who was a poor man by Lagos standards had to find 20-27 pounds [sterling] for my boarding school. So, my father made a deal with me. I was in form 2 [9th grade], he said ‘if you take Chemistry, Biology and Physics and you pass, I will go and borrow the money so that you can go to boarding house.’ I didn’t know what chemistry was, but I knew that the only way to get out of my uncle’s house where I did menial jobs and got abused by his wife was to pass those science courses. I used to go to upper school students and ask them what is Chemistry and Physics? They explained things to me so I was determined to pass them when I had the chance to take them. So in the 10th grade I took the courses; I obtained help from everyone I could and passed them. I got A in Biology, B in Chemistry and A in Physics. I returned home and gave my father the diploma with my results; do you know my father had the money ready?

SO: Effort has a lot to do with educational achievement

BO: You must be a success at whatever you do. You don’t have to be a doctor or lawyer, but you must be a success. That’s how I was raised.

My mother wasn’t educated at all; she couldn’t even read. But she was always after us. When I came home from school, she would ask, “What’s your homework?” We couldn’t go out to play or do anything without first doing that.

SO: But the irony of it was that I was in the third year of medical school when my father died. Won jere omo. [He was not rewarded for his efforts]. Because of this, I tell my son that he is not going to school for me; he has to do it for himself because the man who sacrificed for me to get to where I am never gained a dollar from it. I remember the only thing I ever gave my father was a trophy. You know how these are common here. When I was in my first or second year of medical school and went home, I brought him a trophy because I knew he liked things like that. Mi ti e mo bi mo ti ri e, boya enikan ndanu ni- mo ti ghagbe.[I don’t know where I got it from]. He was very happy. I tell my children, all this education that I am asking you to obtain is just for you, Igba kan ni e o ri mi, igba kan ni e ni ri mi mo. [You see me now, but one day I will not be around]. Kids are so young; they think we their parents will be around forever. I tell them, I am
now 55, if I am lucky I have twenty or twenty-five years left. They think their mother and me will be here forever.

OA: My mom was the disciplinarian. If we did not do well in, say math, she would say, ‘maybe you need to go back to the school and get an extra lesson,’ or, ‘go back and speak to your teacher.’ My dad would get us what we needed to go to school. My mom would worry about how we got there; she is the one who would make sure you had your shoes and books. And she is the one who would hear if we misbehaved and get us if we did. So, books, uniform, pen, paper, attending the school program--mom is the one who does all of that.

*The Importance of Education: Views of Participants’ Parents, Families and Friends*

The participants’ parents held the belief that a Western education would lead to a better life.

SO: My parents always said that education was the best legacy they could leave their children.

Our education system consisted of you living with someone who was educated, and that was the way my parents got their education. And then when they came back home, it became very important that we should be educated.

That was the benchmark of the house. You are the favorite child of the house if you are academically bright. You are the favorite son of your mother if you study and did well in your exams, especially for those of us who came from polygamous homes. My father had three wives so it depended on the day we brought our report home that we knew who was a good mother or who was a bad mother. So how you do at school becomes a reflection of your mother in our household.

OA: My brother is three years older, so it is like double jeopardy for my parents because we are so close. So, it is like we have to come up with two tuitions because we have two kids. I remember one of my father’s friends--he is deceased--said, ‘Why is he killing himself, sending two kids to school at the same time? Is he crazy? Why not let the younger one go and learn mechanics,’ which is me! I thank my Dad for that, because he was angry with the friend. By the way, I was supposed to be the better student anyway. My dad said something like that to the man, that his younger son was the better student to make the man back off.

But, instead my dad would sell the last clothes off his back for education.
The income was not that great, but my dad believed in education. He was deprived of learning; he was struggling to finish secondary school—did homework, did home study, accounting and all that. He worked his way out of the railway station to account clerk at the university, to almost a bursar. My Mom’s situation was almost like that because she also had to struggle, but she had to drop out after primary school. They couldn’t pay. She couldn’t do home school, and I think she never forgave her Dad for that until he died. So I thank my parents for doing their best to send us to school. After secondary school is competition, to get to the university and you must pay. They still struggled, and my brother ended up going to Lagos to re-take his school cert. at one of the prominent schools. I think it was Methodist Boys’ School—to get a good score so he could get into the university.

BO: Yes, this was a condition for me to marry my husband. Like my father, he insisted that I go to college. “I must go to college.”

The African adage, “It takes a village to raise a child,” does not stop at raising children. The community as a whole recognizes the potential of the individual and community members make it their business to encourage its realization for it is an African belief that when a member of the community succeeds, they all succeed.

SO: My oldest brother is a professor of English at San Diego State. My late senior sister was an elementary school principal in Lagos. I have another brother who has a master’s degree in theatre and myself; I am an MD. I have a junior brother who is an architect and another brother who is a businessman in London, England. So we follow the footsteps of our brothers. As for me, my parents had a big influence on my values, and I had some people to look up to in my family and in my community who were successful. For example, when an uncle came to visit and he arrived in a big car, my parents would tell us that he got the car and his wealth because he went to university.

SN: After two years I came back to Ibadan. Some of my colleagues had gone ahead and they were already in the university. On the farm, a friend of mine came along and said, ‘what are you doing here?’ He saw me walking there, and he got mad. He said, ‘I’m disappointed. You are carrying boots and going to the farm, when your friends are looking for you at the university.’ That impressed me, and when I got home that night I thought I could save some money to make the deposit, so I went to sit for the exam at the University of Ibadan, and they took me. I went to my dad and asked him for some money, and he said, ‘you worked for three years and you don’t have any money?’ So I went to my older brother, and he helped me to stay in the university; then I got a scholarship, and I finished the University of Ibadan in 1976. At that time it was one of the best universities in the world. Then I went into military training [national service] for one year.
OA: (On helping younger brothers). This would be especially for the two oldest boys, and hopefully they could help the others. It was right, because even though I saved money to come over, I did have an older brother over here to pioneer and help make it happen. It wouldn’t have been as quick and easy if I applied and did it on my own. You have that responsibility, as the oldest. After I got here, I was able to help the other ones at home. One of the three girls, the youngest--we were able to bring her here also. She went to a college of pharmacy, and she did better than all of us. She makes more than the two of us who brought her. I am tired, and my older brother is tired, so she has now stepped in to send the others money and help them back home. I wasn’t ashamed now to tell her; she can go ahead and help them.

Participants’ Schooling in Nigeria

Here the influence of Colonial and post-Colonial education and mission schools is evident.

SB: Well, I was in boarding school in Nigeria. It was a Catholic school run by nuns. It was very strict with many rules and regulations. It was an all girls’ school. We did a lot of sports. The first thing in the morning was to assemble and pray. We played sports three days a week with other schools. We had inter­colligate sports. My school was about 60 miles away from home.

BM: Okay, from what I remembered I started schooling at a Catholic school at the age of six. I can remember Father McDougal; he was extremely nice. Education was hard to attain at the time, but the father made things easy for us. I grew up in a family of five boys and one girl. My first year in school was great. I enjoyed it. But we had to move because the war began. There were riots and we moved from the North to the eastern part of Nigeria. The East was a different culture from the North. That was hard.

I went to two high schools. Once again I went to a high school in the middle of Nigeria. After one year I was withdrawn from that school because it was too hard to get to due to transportation problems. It took two days to transport one self to that boarding school. I went to another boarding school in the Northern part of Nigeria where the culture is easy because it was where we lived. It was my culture; it was the culture I grew up with.

Teachers demand respect. I gave respect to every one of them. They all liked me; they were second parents to me.

SO: My first memory of school is going to Sunday (church) school. At home in the village, we woke up early in the morning, and prayed and had to recite something from the Bible; for example, mo gbe oju mi si ori oke, ni ibo ni
Iranlowo mi o wa ti wa? [Translation: I lift up my eyes to the hills where does my help come from? Psalm 121, verse 1.]

SO: Yes, it was a Mission school. It was the Baptist Day School. My secondary school was a Methodist School. At home, religion had a lot to do with how we cultivated our values and culture.

I went to the modern school, where you go after high school. After three years, I went to teacher training college and got my high school teacher’s diploma in Ibadan. So, I was teaching at a high school in a village in Oyo State. We actually met and started dating while I was in teacher training college. I knew his brother was at Lagos, and had been in England and that his family had education. My family supported that. My cousin was there for vacation, and we had in mind that one day we’ll be there.

MU: When I went to high school, the principal of my school in my testimonial said ‘this is a bright student, with a prosperous future.’ That was what he predicted for me. The fact is, I was very smart. I was beating all the boys in all subjects. I had a merit scholarship throughout my schooling.

I was eight years old when I started school. I learned faster than others because I was more grown up. I finished elementary school in 1960--the year that Nigeria gained its independence. After elementary school, I went to a Baptist high school and graduated in 1965. I wanted to become a police lady and went for the selection. However, at about that time my mother had an accident while on a motorcycle. She sustained a head injury and was rushed to the missionary hospital at Eko. I went to the hospital to be by her side and helped the nurses as much as they would let me, giving her the bedpan and things like that. I started watching the nurses and they captivated my interest. Luckily, one of the student nurses gave me an application form so I could apply to nursing school. I passed the entrance examination and I was selected. At the same time the result of the police exam arrived and I passed; so now I had two options. I decided I was going to do nursing instead of the police lady, so I went to the school of nursing and completed it successfully. And in 1968 I became a registered nurse of the Republic of Nigeria. In 1969, I started working in the mission hospital.

OA: My dad worked in Ibadan. So, I went to the government school there for the government officials. It was a private elementary school for the staff. It was like for middle and upper class. All of the expatriates--white professors from England and such--their children went there. When we got to high school, we went to the school for the upper class, where the expatriates went.

After secondary school is competition, to get to the university and you must pay. They still struggled, and my brother ended up going to Lagos to re-take his school cert. at one of the prominent schools. I think it was Methodist Boys’ School--to get a good score so he could get into the university.
I went to a 'crash' teacher training college right after high school. Then I decided to become a teacher, and did an international correspondence school with an institute in Manchester, England. I did that from home; I got my diploma and worked for a construction company. I worked in their human resources and that was very nice. It was a lot of money back then. It was an Italian company, and they gave you bonuses and we got a car.

SA: I went to the "modern school," where you go after high school. After three years, I went to a teachers' training college and got my high school teacher's diploma in Ibadan. So, I was teaching at a high school in a village in Oyo State.

SA: My high school experience was good, but different from here. When I got here, I started to teach, but it was a different program entirely. I had to study different things: I had to study social studies, history, and geography.

OA: (Responding to SA) I don't think they have a modern school education in Nigeria any more, where a rigid structure was hard and challenging for teacher training purposes. The idea was that it was more rigid than a regular secondary school, because it was for someone who wanted to go on to become a teacher. It was supposed to be beneath high school. It was for those who wanted to be a teacher or in a vocational area.

"BO" responded to the questions: What kind of a school did you attend? Was it a mission school?

BO: No, thank God for that; my sisters went to a mission school. I went to a government school, for my elementary school. Then for high school, I went to a private school. A guy who went to Columbia funded the private school; he was deputy governor of our district. So his philosophy of education was the same as my father's, and what he exposed us to was unlike anything you would find in Nigeria at the time. We had music, athletics, and the things you will find in American schools today.

BE: I started training as a photographer's apprentice under Mr. Olowu. About three years later, Mr. Olowu gave me a certificate of completion. After that I went to work for another photographer as a journeyman; it was not quite a year. I earned three pounds a month. By this time, my brother with whom I had resided and who had supported me turned me out for no apparent reason; so I had to find a place of my own. So I moved into the interior part of Lagos, Abule-Oja. My rent was one to two pound a month.
Participants' Careers in Nigeria

BE: I started taking pictures on my own with a small hand camera. Within a year I was able to open my own photographic studio on Herbert McCauley Street. I ran the studio from 1965 till 1969 when I left the country.

When I opened my photographic studio, many Yorubas who had gone overseas would come and take photos. I also go to the ship docks to take photos of people leaving the country and their relatives. I missed my Yoruba clients. I made friends from all over the place including diplomats. I helped people who are leaving the country with their passport pictures. I went to the embassy with them and help them with the visa process. I was so young. I remember the numbers of motorcycle accident I had in Lagos. There were three total. One of these accidents landed me in the hospital- I received so many stitches. A cousin of mine had only one accident and he was dead. I was once robbed in my studio. The thieves stabbed me. I survived.

When I used to fish with my father, we had many accidents and not to count the storms. I don’t know how I survived them.

MU: So now I had two options. And I decided to do nursing instead of becoming a police lady. So I went to the School of Nursing and completed it successfully. And in 1968 I became a Registered Nurse of the Republic of Nigeria. I started work in the mission hospital.

SA: After I had taken a “crash” teacher training program I was already an elementary school teacher at 21-22 years. Then I took a correspondence course from an Institute in Manchester, England and got a job in human resources with an Italian construction company. I got a car, and life was good. But you still want to learn, because you have your parents and educated people around you.

OA: After three years, I went to teacher training college and got my high school teacher’s diploma in Ibadan. So, I was teaching at a high school in a village in Oyo State. So as of age of 19-20, after one year of the crash teacher-training program, I was already an elementary school teacher at 21-22 years. Then, after one year of the correspondence school, I was working for the company. I got a car, and life was good. But, you still want to learn because you have your parents and people you want to be like. You have educated people around you, so you want to get as much education as you can. The education is not always there because you have the Nigerian challenges. You want to get accepted into the university.

BM: I attended professional school. I trained to work in the airline industry. All my life I worked as an airlines travel agent.
Parental Beliefs and Life Experiences (Nigeria)

Immigrants’ expectations are influenced by personal beliefs and life experiences from Nigeria or other country of origin. The participants were asked how experiences from their country of origin helped to form their expectations.

SO: My expectations for their education are culturally induced. It is part of our expectations in Nigeria that our children live better life than us. We want for them a more peaceful life and a more result-oriented life.

SN: I have tried to interpose the way that I grew up into my children. Initially when they were growing up they couldn’t look at my face [I wasn’t available], so they had to look to their mother for everything. They were born in England, and they had these Western ideas. They would talk back to me and I couldn’t accept that.

OA: When you’re from a Yoruba family, like my wife said, on her side, she had this growing up with many of them studying abroad. On my father’s side we have a medical doctor, and a lawyer on my mother’s side. So growing up you want to have that education or better, and you want to have it for your kids, too. You hear people say: ‘Mr. so-and-so’s son or daughter has this education.’ Even here in Albany, we have a family that gets on your nerves because they are always bragging about the kids. Even in the U. S. here, some of them bring that Nigerian mentality: that you have to go to a good school. Our oldest wanted to go to Emory in Atlanta or George Washington or NYU. And all of them accepted her, except that the university of Pittsburg is the only one that gave her a 100% academic scholarship. As her father, I find that U. of Pittsburg is just as good. I find that it is a private school, whereby many people think it is a public school. When that school accepted her, it became a nightmare because people say, ‘Oh, George Washington is good!’ I said that Pittsburg is good, too. If they are going to take her, I prefer that, because it won’t take from my pocket like the two other schools. Now she doesn’t want to come home. But, it was a struggle to get her to go there. They were the first to accept her—in January—but she didn’t want to take it until April. We told her you better accept it, but she waited for the other schools to make an offer. . . . And we are not talking about a sport scholarship; it’s an academic scholarship. I told her she has to be proud of herself.

It goes back to our culture, too. The Nigerian kids born in America have a conflict of cultures. They have an American mind set and they have a Nigerian mind set.
"OA" touched on another Nigerian trait: tenacity, the ability to put in one's all and focus on the task at hand rather than be divided and be all over the place. One should simply focus and finish a task because procrastination to many Nigerians is not an endearing trait. They think that is laziness and an Omoluabi is not lazy.

OA continues, I don't consider myself an 'A' student, but I study and I love school. I study and make sure I get a good grade. I don't sweat over it. She (the wife) knows some of my friends from my PhD. They were there at 9:00 AM and still there at 9:00 at night. Even my brother in Hawaii, at my graduation, said he wasn't going to give an excuse—he just said, 'I don't know how you did it!' I did my course work in almost two years. My friend who did the same program, started two years before me, and we graduated together. I know my daughter sometimes thinks we are hard on her, but we just want her to do well.

AM's father died when she was ten years old; furthermore, her mother had left the family about five years earlier. She grew up in her older brother's polygamous house. Although the older brother was very attentive to her needs, there were other responsibilities weighing on him, which made it impossible to see to the details of AM's education.

AM: Because I felt unsupported by my own family, I now feel empowered to totally support my children's education, and I am determined to be there for them. I let them know that the only way to not be at the bottom of society is to succeed in school, because it is not easy to climb out of the bottom. An impetus for me is that if they have any problem at school, I am not afraid to go to bat for them. I want to know that at the end of the day, that I have done my best for them.

SB: In Nigeria, children take their parents' advice and try to live up to that. Of course, in our current environment this is not so. We are faced with a lot of obstacles. My expectations are that a child should listen to a parent's advice because parents have more knowledge and experience. This is the Nigerian culture. I grew up with this culture; now here, this is an obstacle.

BM: I have tried to make them understand that if you go to school, you will make more money. If you don't, you will work harder for less money.

BE: I think the strength of the family is very important. Knowledge of the family history or background is very important. And then, performing arts--they were able not only to learn the Nigerian culture through the arts but they were given the
opportunity to teach others. This gave them a sense of pride about our culture and also gave them self-esteem.

**Parental Beliefs and Life Experiences (U.S.)**

**Coming to America**

**BE:** My port of entry was Washington, DC; I had to face the truth. They found out that I had not had any schooling. I received numerous advices; some said: ‘Why don’t you do a business course and go back?’ Others advised me to go to a ‘night school’ and do a GED. I got registered at the very bottom and started classes. It was serious study. It was encouraging to see other adults there, and the teachers were very positive. When I did well they let the class know about it. I was encouraged. In about two years I graduated.

The next question is where do I go from here? I took the SAT, and started college. I was paying my way. I was working in hotels, cleaning rooms, etc. In 1975, I had a bachelor’s degree from The American University in Washington, DC.

It was in 1975 that I married Elizabeth. She lived in Albany, New York, so I moved in with her. She was in graduate school. I had been admitted to universities in DC, but I chose to move to Albany instead. At this time I also operated my own taxicab. I was a ‘jack of all trades.’ But I survived. In 1972, I sponsored my younger brother to the United States. He is now a lawyer. He passed the bar about a year ago. I started graduate school in 1976; in 1981 I received my Doctorate in Education.

**MU:** In 1971 my husband decided to come to the United States of America; we nurses at the school had the opportunity of coming to this country because they had a drastic shortage of nurses. This is when I had my second baby. In America nurses have to work hard, so to get the experience, and prepare myself, I went to Lagos and took a job in the government hospital. In 1972 I got my papers and crossed over. My oldest child was two years and the younger eight months. I had to be registered, and take the exams. I had to do everything all over again; that’s what it takes here in America. So I passed my Board in 1977, and became qualified to work as a registered nurse in the United States.

**OA:** I came in 1983, and with my background I was going to remain in business. When I came here it was very challenging to get into that kind of study area. I got here in December, so I didn’t wait until September to start. Before I left home, we talked about it. My brother said I could get into a college, so I applied and got into a community college, to study criminal justice. It was to start in January, so I got a student visa and came. When I got here, I spent December watching a lot of television. There was a lot of crime on the news, and that’s how I got myself in tune with the criminal justice system here. So, I thought I might stick with this
field. It is an interesting field of study; it has a lot of things in it. I did my Bachelors in Criminal Justice and Communication. Then I worked for the state government. The experience went toward the master's degree.

With the master's degree experience came the doctorate program opportunity, and my experience told me that you don't turn down opportunity. My final semester came this fellowship and I applied and it came through and I took it... They didn't think I could do it--a full-time job, a doctoral program and a family. I just put in the effort, and I think I can do it.

So the first two years was a challenge, because you are not there for the family. With her helping at home with the kids, it worked out well. In May, it will be ten years since I finished--an interesting journey.

SN: After returning to the south [Nigeria], I got an invitation to go abroad. I was admitted to the Imperial College in London. The EEC [European Economic Commission] gave me a fellowship for a PhD program in Hydrology.

The following themes emerged from the participants' life history. These are reminiscences of their own parents' expectations for them. These 'lived' stories may have served as the foundations that have influenced the participants' own expectations for their children's education:

- Parents are influential in education.
- Education is the best legacy to leave children.
- Educated parents want to educate their children.
- How well one does in school becomes a reflection of good parenting by one's mother.
- Those who are successful in education are disciplined.
- Wealth and good life stem from good education.
- Hard work and personal choices in career are important for meeting expectations.
- At least a minimum education is required.
- Education is of highest importance.
• Encouragement for further education not only comes from family but from friends and community members.

• Seek higher education outside of home country.

• Achievement must exceed expectations.

In Table 7 are themes that emerged from participants' discussion of their beliefs that are culturally induced. This table briefly shows how Nigerian and American cultures influence parental expectations.
### Culturally Induced Parental Personal Beliefs (Nigeria and United States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental personal beliefs (Nigeria)</th>
<th>Parental personal beliefs (USA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My expectations for my children’s education are culturally induced.</td>
<td>The environment does matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It goes back to our culture, too. The Nigerian kids born in America have a conflict of cultures.</td>
<td>The children see me work hard. And they know it is all about hard work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have an American mind set and they have a Nigerian mind set.</td>
<td>With a good education, they will be better off than I am today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know my daughter thinks we are a little hard on her, but we just want her to do well.</td>
<td>We could not have done this (in America) if the opportunity was not there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I came to America penniless; but I gave my last ten pounds to my parents.</td>
<td>We supported our children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I let them know that the only way to not be at the bottom of society is to succeed in school,</td>
<td>Because of my experience of having to start over (when I came to America), I insist they do well in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because it is not easy to climb out of the bottom.</td>
<td>I keep reminding our children that they are here in America now and they are lucky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child should listen to a parent’s advice because parents have more knowledge and experience.</td>
<td>I don’t know how we communicated it, but they knew we expected them to do their best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is the Nigerian culture. I grew up in this culture. Now here, this is an obstacle.</td>
<td>I am afraid of the danger of being too satisfied.</td>
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</table>
Research Question 3

*How do these expectations relate to parental personal experiences and beliefs from their “home country” and from their “host country,” the United States?*

The topics explored by participants under research question 3 are:

- Advantages of “Home Country” (Nigeria) Cultural Implications
- Disadvantages of “Home Country” (Nigeria) Cultural Implications
- Advantages of “Host Country” (U.S.) Cultural Implications
- Disadvantages of “Host Country” (U.S.) Cultural Implications

Themes that emerged from the narratives are in bullets and or tables appearing at the end of the section serving as summary.

*Advantages of “Home Country” (Nigeria) Cultural Implications*

**MU:** When I moved the children back to Nigeria, the school system was still very good. So my children went through the Federal Government College system. All their tuition was free. The Nigerian education system was so advanced that when the children made the transition to the American system they excelled. All the children except the last-born finished their high school or more in Nigeria. But my last-born completed JS 3 [10th grade] in Nigeria and transferred to a high school here.

**SN:** The advantage is we try as much as possible to monitor what our children are doing. I didn’t allow them to go to bed until they had completed their homework assignments. I also didn’t let them go to bed very late. I insisted that by 10 - 10:30 pm they must wrap up whatever they were doing and get some rest. This is the thing I gained from my parents; they don’t allow us to work late. Now as adults it has become a habit for them; they go to bed early and rise early.

Another aspect of it is that education is not only academics. When I am working in the yard, I expect my children to help out. Initially the girls wanted to just stay inside and cook with their mother, but I insisted they rake and bag leaves with me.

I think the training that I gave my children motivated them to do well at school. They see me to be very hard working. You can’t tell the kids to work hard if you are lazy. I think what really inspired them is when they saw me write a lot for the public media, and the Internet became a common place for kids to surf. They go
to the Internet looking for my articles weekly. When I didn’t write in a week, they asked me ‘when are you going to write the next one?’ Now my son writes articles in college. He wants to emulate me. I model for them what I ask them to do.

OA: It makes you well grounded in all aspects of your life. It keeps them well grounded. This one that just went back to Nigeria; she didn’t speak the language. She listened very well, and now she speaks it when she goes to school. Now she has a lot of Nigerian friends. She is into computers and she will check out some of the joke--there are American/Nigerian jokes. Like one boy she knows who will joke about jollof rice and eba [Translation: cassava meal.] You know, he is just trying to be funny. So, you keep them very grounded. We talk to them a lot.

JO: If you were raised that way, you don’t loose it. If you have a cup of water you will feed everyone. We weren’t rich but we were able to manage. Even without much money, you can survive. That was the training we had from home [Nigeria], so were able to use it to our advantage. The way we were raised at home was the way I raised my children. We live in a fairly affluent neighborhood, and when the children came home and asked for things we couldn’t afford, we let them know, and they needed to be satisfied with what we were providing them. I tell them that I will give them the best that I can, but when I cannot give them things they should be satisfied with what they have. The Nigerian culture helps with this; and our Christian faith also helps. We tell them everybody is not rich; there are people who are worse off than you. This is something from my upbringing that helps me to survive.

BO: Look at my ethnic group. We are minorities in Nigeria. Granted I came from a relatively wealthy family, a long line of business people; my parents traded in Benin, Lagos and other major cities. My husband’s family was not as well to do. When it was time to marry him, my father said: ‘you have to look at people’s potential.’ When my husband’s family came to pay my bride price, they were so impressed with our wealth and all the buildings that my father owned. And my father knew that my husband’s family was poor. Father asked me, ‘Do you really want to marry this man?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ And he said, ‘good, because he has great potential.’ He went to America and made something good out of himself.’ Today, I tell my children, ‘We look at human potential as opposed to what they do not have.’

One thing about Nigerians is, they think the world revolves around them. We feel we are the greatest. It is this self-confidence that helped us make it in America. If you already believe in yourself, the rest is minor detail.

People say Nigerians are too confident, and it borders on arrogance. When my children went to a private elementary school here owned by an African American, the only comments of the teachers were that the children were too self-confident. They were never rude to anyone. I told the teachers, ‘the best thing that you can
give to your child is self-confidence. As long as they are not stepping on other people, they are okay.'

One thing I always tell teachers, if my child is rude or disruptive let me know. But if she feels she can accomplish a task without help, please allow her to try. My older daughter had a way of correcting other children’s spoken English in school, as she has seen her father do to them at home. When we were made aware of this, we spoke to her that she shouldn’t do that unless she was asked to help. We told her it is easier for people to appreciate help when the helper is polite.

AM: Advantages are the fact that we are school oriented people and we believe that without education one would get nowhere in life. We have been able to inculcate this into the children. I make references to people who have succeeded through education so that they can have role models. With a degree they will get an above average job. Our parents used to sing: 'To ba mon iwe re, bata re adun ko, ko, ka! To ba mon iwe re bata re awo poro lale!' [Translation: If you do well in school you will be able to afford good shoes that sound like you are tap dancing when you walk; but if you do not focus and don’t do well in school, you may only afford flip-flop slippers.] I expect them to fully respect their teachers and do as the teachers say.

The tradition of not challenging what adults say also has a flip side. And the tradition that we passed on to them that they must not speak to adults until spoken to also have disadvantages. When our eldest daughter began school at a local high school, she was following this tradition, and one of the teachers thought that she was not speaking because she could not speak English. To the teacher that meant she was not capable of doing science work. We met with the teacher, and other teachers who spoke up for our daughter, and told the science teacher that our daughter is fluent in English, and she is a very good student in other classes. We let the teacher know that our daughter was only showing respect and deference by not being vociferous in class. Later I told my daughter to speak up in class because she is in a new culture, and the rules are not the same. Here they think being respectful equals being stupid. I told my daughter, ‘When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do.’ I encountered the same issue while I was taking classes from a local community college. Others would ask irrelevant questions and delay what I saw was the class purpose. Because I was quiet and contemplating, the teacher would say: ‘AM, are you with us? Do you understand what we are doing?’ I would tell her, ‘I am perfectly fine, carry on.’ It is too late for me to change my classroom demeanor, I can’t be expected to be shouting out answers and jumping up irresponsibly in the classroom. If you do this in my country, the teacher will punish you, and your grades might suffer.

SB: The advantages of my cultural heritage, is that I have taught and am still teaching her that she has to respect herself and other people. I also tell her to protect herself from bad people. I tell her to work hard. We live in a world where
anything can happen. I tell her to be prepared. I have told her to show respect to her fellow human beings, so in that way she will be respected in return. She must work hard, of course, and try to be a good human being.

**BE:** I think the strength of the family is very important. Knowledge of the family history or background is very important. And then, performing arts; they were able not only to learn the Nigerian culture through the arts but they were given the opportunity to teach others. This gave them a sense of pride about the Nigerian culture and also gave them self-esteem.

**BM:** The advantages of Nigeria are that your child is everybody’s child. Your neighbors give you feedback. You know what your children are doing. In America everyone minds his or her own business. Our heritage serves them well here. We have the heritage of self-discipline and respect.

*Disadvantages of “Home Country” (Nigeria) Cultural Implications*

**BM:** On the other hand, the disadvantages of our Nigerian heritage are ‘fear’ and ‘respect.’ And many people in America see these as a lack of self-confidence.

**BE:** The negative part of our culture is the attitude of our people towards superstition. No one ever die from natural causes in Nigeria. They blame witchcraft for every tragedy or misfortune. I don’t think my children understand this.

**MU:** You know, as time has passed by, Nigeria has become corrupt. There are bad people as well as good people. There are innocent people too. When the media talk about the ‘419’, some Nigerian people that want to defraud others, this affects my children and all of our children. But I am very outspoken. I encourage the kids to be outspoken as well. They should let people know that there are bad people everywhere including America. Fraud happens here in America too. I tell the kids, ‘we are good people; so, we don’t have anything to fear!’

**OA:** One of the disadvantages is the discipline as in corporal punishment—not discipline to hurt them. I have a lot of psychologists and psychiatrists that I work with and we have differences in some of the American expectations and excusing the kids’ behavior. Back home, if you screw up or do something wrong, you get consequences. But, your consequences fit your crime.

Some of the discipline we grew up with would be considered abuse in America. That really bothers me. We cannot do that, because when you live in this culture, you have to adjust. When they do something that makes you want to inflict corporal punishment, you have to look at that. You live in a society where you are and restrict yourself and find another way. That’s one of the disadvantages because kids like to play. Back home, kids are very sensitive. Back home, they use reverse psychology—you want to prove them wrong when they call you
stupid. When they call you ‘stupid’, you stop doing stupid stuff. You don’t want them to think you are stupid. In America, when you call them stupid, they will act stupid! I know they are doing stupid things, but I will not say it. The older one will argue with that. I remember that if I count all the times my Mom called me stupid when I was growing up, then I would be the most stupid person on the planet! The motivation to change behavior is to do otherwise.

I am in criminal justice. I see the Nigerian kids who are in trouble. It is because their parents backed off, they only know corporal punishment. They don’t know any other way to discipline, so they just back off. So their kids end up in the juvenile criminal justice system and are locked up. At home, I had an uncle who comes home every six months. He is an officer in the military. When he comes to see us, he always knows what you have been doing wrong. He will ask me what I have been doing, and if he heard of something and I don’t tell him the right thing, he will say: ‘Aren’t you the one that…?’ That is part of the family unity: they know everything you have been doing, good, bad or indifferent. And if you were warned, watch out! But, now I hear the Nigerian kids are worse now at home. I watched a Nigerian movie and they used the bloody ‘F’ word.

**JO:** Initially, the kids didn’t feel bad about not being able to speak our language. Now, I hear, ‘Ma, you didn’t teach me. My parents didn’t teach me,’ they say. I tried, you know. We are in a community here; we are not like other ethnic groups. There are not enough of us, and even when you take them to parties or social gatherings [of Nigerians,] the kids, all of them, are speaking English, you know. And we parents, we are speaking English. In a diverse country, English is our common language, and in Nigeria, in the past, pidgin English was our common language. So that is a big disadvantage.

Because of the strict upbringing that we have, we resist adopting everything from the Western culture. But Nigeria now is all the same, even though we say, ’no, we don’t do that over there. I will not have my kids do this.’ But the kids were born here let them get that exposure and what they do here. I teach them the Nigerian culture, so they know both ways. Some of our people don’t do that; they want to shelter their kids from what’s going on out there. And then when the kids are on their own and they start doing whatever, you know, there is a problem. So you allow the kids to be exposed to the [American] culture, but make sure you teach them your own culture as well.

**BO:** We are black people in America as well as Nigerians. We tell our children that when you go out there; represent Black people very well as well as Nigerians. We know that Nigerians have a bad reputation, so we say tell people your parents are Nigerians but don’t say we are Jamaicans. We have nothing to hide. Like every people under the sun, there are good and bad people. Nigerians are not all bad people. (‘E’ chimes in: ‘We are African Americans, not Nigerian Americans.’)
My issue with some Nigerian parents here is that they expect the children to behave like Nigerians. But these children are born and raised in America, how can they behave like Nigerians?

SB: The same tradition of giving respect is a disadvantage. Some see that as a sign of weakness and try to take advantage of you. This is something one has to use carefully. You can respect people but you still have to be at alert so that you are not taken advantage of. In my country children tend to be independent after a certain age they do everything on their own- I try to use it in this country it doesn’t work.

Advantages of “Host Country” (U.S.) Cultural Implications

MU: America, God bless America any day! Even though there may be racism, America provides opportunities. My children are smart, but America gave them the opportunity to gain the advantages that they now have.

As a single mother of four, there was no way I could have afforded to provide them all with university education on my own. America provided them means to borrow money for their education. Of course, they are paying back now, but America is a great land of opportunity. My youngest did not have to pay for higher education; she got a merit scholarship all the way. She is so smart. America is a great country. God bless America and bless all of us within it any day!

SN: The American educational system has a lot of advantages. It is practical. You just don’t memorize stuff. You are exposed to means and ways of thinking. In Nigeria when I was going to school, everything was rote learning. Everything came from the book. There were no labs to practice what you see in the text. The first time I used a neutron probe was in England. While in Nigeria I only saw them in the book and drew them; there was no chance to practice with the real thing.

The school system here not only taught my children within the classroom, they also gave them the opportunity to visit other countries like Germany, France and England. This is experiential learning.

OA: We didn’t raise kids back home and we didn’t know what it was like for our parents to raise us. The school piece is okay, but the behavior piece here is a problem. Like, my wife had to stop teaching because the kids here are very unruly in school, unlike back home. But, as far as the academic challenges, the learning, and the school itself and the curriculum is great. If you are going to school here, it is very challenging and yet easy. Back home, it is very challenging and tough. When you are doing your school certificate [high school final exam,] you are competing against all the students at the same level in the entire country.
If your teacher is testing you at the end of the year, it is for the whole year. However, here nothing goes beyond the end of the semester.

**BM**: One of the reasons we came to America is to give the children good education. And we are set at meeting this goal among others.

**AM**: I think the children are actually doing well here. The quality of education that they are getting here in public school cannot easily be bought in Nigeria. One would have had to enroll them in a private school in Nigeria and that would have cost a bundle. Here in a public school, if a child is ready to learn, s/he can do well. My expectations for my children’s education have changed for the better since I came to America. I actually see a better future for them. There are obstacles here too but they are not insurmountable.

**BM**: The advantages of the school here is that they have smaller classes and they get a lot of help with faculty and staff. They also have good transportation and students get to know each other well.

**AM**: The children have been able to take up the challenge in a positive way. Unlike in Nigeria, after-school activities abound for the children here. I do not have to provide for them extra tutoring; they get help from the teachers and coaches and other well-meaning adults in the community. These are things only rich people who send their children to boarding school in Nigeria can provide for their children. Here it is for everyone. Here they have activities that enable the children to make friends, have life in and out of the schools.

**OA**: American culture has many opportunities. You work hard and you reap what you sow.

**BO**: Anything is possible here; the opportunities are so great. You can do anything that you fully believe in. This is one place where you always can reinvent yourself. But I have been thinking it is similar to Nigeria, because in Nigeria you can be a minority and still do well. These are the only two places on earth that I can think of that your minority status is not always an impediment. In all other places there is hierarchy you have to climb.

The advantage of living in America is you can be what you want to be, you can learn what you want to learn, and you can be with whom you want to be with.

*Disadvantages of “Host Country” (U.S.) Cultural Implications*

**AM**: The disadvantages are the excessive freedom the children have. They show very little reverence. They also play video games for too long and watch television too much. They don’t know the disadvantages of lacking resources. They use computers for everything, even for submitting work to teachers. If there is a power shortage for five minutes they can’t entertain themselves. In Nigeria
there were constant power shortages and you had to make do. Everything here is attached to electronics.

SB: The disadvantage is that kids are not cautioned when they are doing bad things. They can be rude and nobody cautions them. In Nigeria a rude child cannot get away with rudeness; an adult would definitely caution the child and the child is likely to be punished.

BM: The disadvantage of American cultural heritage is that the child is given too much power. Too much say, even in the classroom.

More often than not when an immigrant come to the United States from Nigeria their education certificate is not respected here, so they are forced to take jobs that are well below their qualifications in order to get by. Many return to school or contemplate returning to school under great hardship.

AM: I applied for an outreach job not so long ago; they wanted a bachelor’s degree or equivalent. I have the equivalent and extensive relevant experience from my present job. But they gave the job to another person. I know this because the person was a fellow co-worker at my present place of employment and my neighbor. She came to give me the good news about her new job, and it turned out to be the job that I had interviewed for and hoped to get. They thought she would do a better job than me because she is an American and she could relate to the clients better. But I trained her when she worked for the company I am working for now. She was let go from the company that we both worked for because she was unable to do the job well. But she was hired at another place for a better job just because she is considered more American than me, the new immigrant.

With the absence of a community that shares this same cultural background and outlook on raising children, others find raising children here very difficult. They find that they have to fight hard to keep a semblance of child raising practices with which they were brought up. They constantly have to walk the fine line and juggle two cultures so that they don’t lose their children.

SN: The disadvantage that I see of the American system is this idea of kids wearing their own clothes to school and not uniforms. It influences the children a lot to see other children wearing expensive things and they want them too. I think
both in private schools and public schools the children should wear uniforms that take away the problem of children comparing what they wear with other people.

Another disadvantage - there is no respect. And it is difficult to raise children otherwise here. I have to take extra effort to control them; otherwise they would have been very rude. Some children here call their father and mother by their first name. I can't accept that. One day I was walking in our college corridor when a student was shouting my first name. I turned and asked her: 'Is that how you address your father, by his first name?' She said, 'yes.' I said to her, 'I am not your father; if you must address me call me by my appellation; this is a college environment.'

OA: The cultural conflict. The discipline part, the excessive freedom, the exposure to music, fashion, television, can really influence children negatively. The peer pressure, and government legislations. I think the government has gone too much into family life.

JO: I don’t necessarily think it is the culture. I think of what we went through sometimes here, it is our African accent that has proven to be a disadvantage. When you speak, people ask you where are you from, and it's like 'Oh, Lord, I'm leaving.' You can’t blame people, but I have lived in this country so long, I am beginning to see both sides. Yes, I really do have an accent, and before I would think why are you asking me where I am from? But then I started working in this society and become a part of it and I realize I do have an accent, and I am different. But with the kids it is different because they don’t have an accent and no one asks them where they are from. Even now I still have an accent, but the only difference is that I now truly understand, and when people ask me, I say, 'Yes, I am from Nigeria.' But now saying you are from Nigeria makes things worse because of all the problems we are having back home. Before, I was proud to say I was a Nigerian.

MU: Another disadvantage of American culture is Drugs. The use of drugs has affected our black community. Little children selling drugs on the street corners; this is a very negative blight on our community. We have to pray for them. We have to be close to the Lord to make sure that our children do not get into drugs. I pray to God as a single mother that my children never get involved in drugs.

SA: In the other district, the older one was the only Black kid in her class. And you don’t want them being labeled as ‘that Black kid’. If anything happens, they may look to the kid. It does make a difference. There are few minorities here. It is a challenge for them.

OA: The older one feels it more. She takes it seriously. For the middle one and the younger one, it is a constant reminder. We tell them, just remember that you are a Black kid. If you perform well, it will take two or three times as much.
Sometimes, I feel frustration and I will share with them: ‘See what that is, that is a white person that made that achievement and made the national news. To be successful as a Black person in America, you need to know how to play the game. That doesn’t mean you are a wimp or are scared. You need to always challenge yourself. You say I want to get that thing. And he wants to get it and he is white. Maybe, I will do twice as much to get it, not because he is better than me but because society will expect that I will not get it.’

Many of my colleagues also have a PhD, but when they see that I also do they look surprised, and they don’t want to call me ‘Doctor’; they just want to call me by my name. So as a minority, I let them (my kids) know, you have to continue to do well and you have to do extra to get where you are going. The middle one is very sociable, and we always reference bad behavior. If you are hanging out with six white kids and something goes wrong, you stand out. Just because you are the Black kid, they may identify that you are involved, because that’s the way it is. We talk about stories like that. She wants to study criminal justice or psychology, so we always have a dialogue like that.

**BO:** The media is a problem; it’s a big problem because they want these kids to grow up faster than they are, and with too much TV exposure children’s education will suffer. They are going to be an adult for many more years than a child. So this is the problem, but the advantage outweighs that if you have a good solid family. But you must start early; you cannot wake up when they are four or five years old and start in, because then it is too late. You can be flexible, but they must know what is acceptable and what is not.

**BE:** I went to visit my niece in Boston; her daughter is now 13 years old. This child was nominated by the state of Massachusetts to go to a program for three weeks. She was back home within a week and refused to go back. Her parents counseled her to go back and encouraged her to ignore the negative remarks and face her own reasons for being in the program. She has to learn to live with all types of people. But she does not have to be like them. She said that the kids in the program constantly used bad and filthy words, and she did not want to deal with that. This is the negative aspect of American socialization and education. The main question is how can we protect our children from negative influences and try to help them be a positive influence on other kids?

Themes that emerged from the narratives on cultural advantages and disadvantages are shown in Table 8 below.
Table 8

Parent Participants' Views on Cultural Advantages and Disadvantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nigerian culture (advantages)</th>
<th>United States culture (advantages)</th>
<th>Nigerian culture (disadvantages)</th>
<th>United States culture (disadvantages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Nigerian educational system was so advanced (in the post-Colonial period of Federal Government Schools), that when the children made the transition to the American system they excelled.</td>
<td>Even though there may be racism, America provides opportunities.</td>
<td>Disadvantages are fear and respect. Many people in America see that as a lack of self-confidence.</td>
<td>Cultural conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We try as much as possible to monitor what our children are doing.</td>
<td>My children are smart, but America gave them the opportunity to gain the advantages that they now have.</td>
<td>The attitude of our people towards superstition. Nigerians blame witchcraft for every tragedy and misfortune.</td>
<td>The young lack respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another aspect (of education in America) is that education is not only academics.</td>
<td>America provided them a means to borrow money for their education.</td>
<td>Nigeria has become corrupt. But fraud happens in America too. I tell the kids, ‘We are good people, so we don’t have anything to fear.’</td>
<td>African accent has proved to be a disadvantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My children see me to be very hard working. I model for them what I ask them to do...</td>
<td>The opportunities are great.</td>
<td>You can do anything if you believe.</td>
<td>Excessive freedom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It makes you well-grounded in all aspects of your life. So you keep the children well-grounded.</td>
<td>You can be whom you want to be.</td>
<td>Our kids are not learning their Nigerian language.</td>
<td>Peer pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are resources in the schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discrimination at the job place “you train a white person, the boss will promote the trainee and bypass you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The fortunate thing is that I always look at thing from a positive angle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disadvantages of American Culture? - drugs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You don't want to be labeled as &quot;that Black kid.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 4

*What do adult children think their immigrant parents want for their education?*

The topics explored under research question 4 are:

- Adult Children’s Views of Their Parents’ Expectations
- Self-Identity
- Minority Status
- Nigerian Culture: “Likes”
- Nigerian Culture: “Dislikes”
- American Culture: “Likes”
- American Culture: “Dislikes”
- Parental Support

Themes that emerged from the narratives are in bullets and or tables appearing at the end of the section serving as summary.

*Interviews with Adult Children of Participants*

At the beginning of each interview, I informed the adult children participants that I had some questions about their parents’ expectations and school achievement. I asked them to please feel free to talk about anything, and that our interviews are not meant to judge, reject or disagree with their parents’ expectations for them; rather, they are a way to triangulate what their parents expressed as their expectations for them. Further, the responses would be anonymously reported, with no names attached.

The responses were transcribed under the topics and the questions that I asked as follows:
Adult Children’s Views of Their Parents’ Expectations

What are your parents’ expectations for you?

LO: Basically, in anything we do they just want us to try our hardest, no matter what we do. It’s never really been about the grades, but the effort. I always know I have to try my hardest, not that I always do. If they notice that I don’t, that’s when the problems occur. This is my third semester in the university. Last semester I got one C+. It was never an issue about the C+ as far as that I tried hard enough, but what my problem is. Whenever they ask about school, I tell them one class is giving me problems. So, even though I got a C+, it didn’t bother them because I was telling them why. I am typically an A student, but when I do have a bad grade, it’s never about the bad grade but how much effort.

WM: My parents expect me to do the best I can both academically and in life in general. They prepare me for my future by giving me a plethora of responsibilities that in turn they expect me to complete, this being a test of their expectations.

Yes. They have explained to me that in order to succeed in this world, you need to work hard academically and it is completely up to me to decide my path of success.

My parents explained to me that when they went to school, it was extremely difficult for them and that I should appreciate that due to the changing times I should fully utilize all of the resources provided for me. They continued, that with hard work come great rewards. I did not acknowledge this at first, but when I started school I realized that people that worked hard in school received things such as certificates and other awards. Knowing this, I wanted to not only make my parents proud, but myself as well. Receiving awards only proves that the hard work one invests is being recognized.

NO: Education was a priority. I don’t think it was explicit. They were not telling me that you have to study and get all A’s and stuff. It was more just implicit. I don’t think I remember ever being told. They had high expectations.

I was self-motivated. I never needed intervention; I studied on my own.

I don’t think it was ever an issue in high school. But in college, there was pressure to get into a more technical field. I was an engineer. I remember when it was time to apply to college I ended up only applying to Michigan State. When you applied you apply to different colleges within the school like Literature, Sciences and the Arts, as well as engineering school. I remember thinking that I just wanted to do business, but I remember my mom saying ‘No, you need to go into engineering.’ And I could remember my dad saying, ‘let her do whatever she wants.’
I guess it wasn’t like such a big deal to me so I did engineering [laughs]. Now I am back to business. I will be done with my MBA in June.

EE: Education was priority number 1 as far as our parents were concerned. Education was the most important thing for us. We had to perform well in school. If we had any problems at school, our parents would always come to the school to talk to our teachers. They tried to make sure that we could improve our performance and to know what was holding us back. By the end of every school year we were performing on top for the most part.

Do you think your parents’ expectation of your education was too high? Too low? Or just right? Please explain by giving an anecdote.

LO: I think my parent’s expectations for me was just right. They praise me when I do well, and they understand when I do badly. It’s never been an issue. Sometimes, with the others (her siblings), they compare them to me. They’re always at my level for their age. If they’re not, they never punish them if they’re not in comparison to me. It’s never an issue whether or not they push us too hard or whether they scold us if it’s not good enough. They always understand.

Are your self-expectations similar to your parents’ expectations of you or different from theirs? Please explain.

LO: I think I’m harder on myself than they are. On a personal level, I always want to do well. I think I’m harder on myself.

Our expectation is similar. I always attend classes and try my hardest. My experience through high school was that my classes were pretty easy, and I’ve always done well. They were always Honors or AP classes, but they were pretty easy for me. In college, they are a little bit more difficult. At the same time, I’ve had a history of getting A’s, so I want to continue that. It’s a little bit more difficult, but I still have the same standards as in high school. So, I have to try harder, but I still enjoy the A’s for myself.

WM: The expectations that I have for myself may be a little bit greater than that of my parents because I want to be able to go above and beyond my elements.

EE: I would say just right. As far as I can remember from kindergarten, if we did well on a project our parents would give us a sticker or put our names on a board where everyone could see it; that always felt good. As a young person, I wanted to do well and my parents wanted me to do well. They had high expectations for us but they went about it in an encouraging way. Even though their expectations were too high they were encouraging.
Is there anything that stood out for you about your parents' expectations of you when you are growing up?

LO: I've always had good grades, from elementary school to middle school and high school. They always congratulate me on my efforts. When I do get an occasional B or C, they never discipline me or scold me. It's always about what happened and what I can do to improve. If they notice that I haven't tried, then that's when discipline might come into play. I always realize on my own personal effort I should do my best and get straight A's. But when this happens they understand.

EE: I think they always wanted more. They always yelled at us, 'do this do that!' They wanted us to do excellent work at school. And when they had guests they were always bragging about how well we were doing. I would say to my self, 'They are bragging now, and when the guests leave and we slip in any way, we are going to be in trouble.' The problem is that once you have achieved a goal they set for you, they set another one. It is never ending. You feel like you will never satisfy them. There is always more that can be done.

WM: I believe that I am reaching both my parents expectations and mine. I continue to put an equal amount into my work and my parents and professors recognize this.

Did they in any way suggest that you become an engineer? Or anything like that?

(This question was a lead question to the conversation between "EE" and me.)

EE: I think my dad was the one who was always suggesting as to what career we should pursue. Actually, initially I was supposed to become an accountant or economist. I was always good at math, but I didn't know what I could do with it. I have so many uncles that are engineers, none of them ever mentioned to me that I could become one too. I am sure if I were a boy they would have. The only reason I wanted to be an accountant was because in the church that we used to attend I would count the money with the church accountant. He used to praise me on how accurate I was, so I thought since I am good at this I should be an accountant. So what happened was some of the schools I applied to were for accounting and others for economics. I was accepted at MIT. MIT is an engineering school; so in that environment I asked myself, why can't I also be an engineer?

So I took some courses and it turns out that I enjoyed them. As I said earlier, I didn't quite know what my options were; I just walked into it and see how it turned out. At this point my father kept saying you should just do engineering.
He wasn't an engineer, so I don't know why he thinks I should do engineering. [Laughs].

Oh, I should correct that. I did meet a Professor who was an engineer. He spoke to me about pursuing engineering. He has been a mentor to me ever since. He was the one who finally made me think, maybe, this is a career that I would like to pursue. I told him the type of subjects that I liked in school, and he suggested that I might like engineering. All this happened after I had been accepted into several schools and I hadn't made up my mind yet. This is why I decided to go to MIT; it was the only school among the ones that I applied to that had an engineering program.

To what do you attribute your success in school? Luck? Or effort?

LO: Just my expectations for the future --my goals. I know I have to have a certain GPA. I want to get into law school, passing tests. My parents kind of contribute to that, because I want to please them. But it has never been an issue. If I don't succeed, I would be more upset with myself than they would be with me.

Sometimes, I do get a little lazy at school. It was easy in high school. My classes were kind of easy; my teachers were more lenient. I was never up too late doing homework. In college, my freshman year was still kind of easy; my sophomore year was kind of difficult this past semester. But, I am getting back into going to the library all the time. And use my free time to study. Deep down, I know it's just as much work as I want to produce. I'm just adjusting to that.

WM: I attribute my success in school to effort.

EJ: I think effort creates luck. Effort and opportunity create luck. You can have a lot of opportunities, but if you don't put a lot of effort into it nothing is created.

Some people put a lot of effort into what they do and they are successful; but if that is combined with opportunity they can be even more successful. I believe that you have opportunities that come from effort. I believe we are lucky because we have opportunities and we give effort.

What are the three important factors that have been crucial to your success in school?

LO: Time management. I get assistance when needed from professors, or tutors, or friends. Overall goals -- I say I can reach them.
WM: The support and encouragement from my family; my high expectations; my hard work and effort.

EE: Hard work, good teachers and mentors, and good classes.

Self-Identity

How do you identify yourself in the United States?

LO: I identify myself as a Nigerian-American. I have come to identify myself in the past couple years. I grew up in a white suburb. I was one of the only Black people there; it wasn't a situation where I could classify myself not only as a Black, but a Nigerian-American. In college, I am in a state where there are a lot of Blacks, and also a lot of Africans, and a lot of Nigerians. There I can stand up for say and myself, 'I am not only black, but I am a Nigerian-American.' They're a lot of Nigerians there, a lot of Ghanaians, Liberians. There are other ethnicities.

WM: I am an African American woman.

EJ: African American. Our parents are Nigerians; we have that geographic link. We are lucky to have that.

OR: African American.

EE: On official level, I identify as an African American. On an un-official, level as, both African American, and a Nigerian.

NO: That is an interesting question. When people ask where I am from I say, 'I am from Michigan.' I identify as an African American. I was born and raised here. There is no way I can think of myself as solely African, even though by blood I am. I have only visited Nigeria about two or three times. The first time was when I was 24. There is no way that I can think of myself as a Nigerian. For sure, I am an African American.

Minority Status

How do you feel as a minority student?

LO: I've been learning a lot in college about our history. At the high school, it was basic things about slavery and civil rights. In college, I get to see a lot of the historical lessons are still present today. So, now that I'm in college I've become more aware and more involved in Black studies and more involved in social issues that occur in the Black community. I know some people that associate me as Black. If I'm walking around with White people, they see me as Black. They don't say, 'Oh, she is Nigerian.' Even though I am Nigerian-American, I'm still also Black. I've really been identifying myself with those issues, all those
problems that happen on the campus, in the country, in the city. I guess it’s a lot of identification issues. I know who I am; but I also know how I can sympathize with people.

WM: It was slightly difficult. There were some instances when it was a struggle for others to overlook certain prejudice and stereotypes.

LO: I just want to be successful in the future; I know that it is ten times harder being a minority in the country, and I have to put some work into it. Even though it’s unfair that I have to work harder, I also know that it’s a necessity to make way for my sisters, and to make way for younger people, to be like ‘You can do it.’

OR: I just know that I have to push myself and do better. I have to do ten times better. I have to give 110% more. It just shows that I have a drive and I am motivated to do better.

EJ: I think as we said earlier, you are not just representing yourself or your family, even your countrymen, you are representing all Black people as a whole.

Even when I travel to other countries, I am sort of a representative. Others might feel the need to treat Black people better because they’ve known me. I don’t feel any pressure; it is cool to feel that you are not just serving yourself; you are doing something for others. It also means I change how people view us.

**Nigerian Culture: “Likes”**

*What do you like about Nigerian culture?*

LO: I didn’t really have much of a chance through high school to explain to my friends what my culture is about. They were so focused on their families, and I was trying to be more like that because I had no one else to identify with at school. Most of my friends were White or Asian. I knew that the way that they were acting with their families is different from the way I was acting with my family.

I understood why our Nigerian culture deals with respect and elders and education in a different way - basically, respect for people. And now I realize that it’s all to make me a better person, because I can respect people in a different way.

I think I hold a higher value for family and education. I’m trying to improve myself and better myself. I noticed in high school, that some of the families had a lot of money. The grandparents would give them things, and they could travel to wherever they wanted. It has made me more humble and more proud of all that I do have, and that my family has.
WM: I adore the fact that family is a stressed entity. It allows each member to somehow be another’s support system.

OR: I love the music, the arts and just being there. It is where I came from; it is home for me. Every time I go to Nigeria, I am so happy to be there.

BO (mom): ‘OR’ is obsessed about Nigeria. She views blogs about Nigerian online as well as going online to buy Nigerian music and movies. She and her friends watch Nigerian movies

OR: I love cultures. When my friends are with me we always listen to Nigerian music. Nigeria is a part of me. It is a part of me that I acknowledge. I don’t want to be that person that knows where she came from but would not embrace or acknowledge that part. I want to embrace who I am and where I come from.

EJ: I like being home in Nigeria. I like the familiar atmosphere. I like being with other Nigerians even though we get on each other’s nerves by asking the questions of which ethnic groups you belong to and such. But it still feels good to meet and be with other Nigerians, and other African groups in general. I really like sitting there with someone who has the same family as me, such as my aunts and my uncles. ‘OR’ just did a project, a documentary about our family in Nigeria. She documented them in video and in photographs,

It is good to go home and know where you come from. It is amazing to see how many people have made much out of nothing.

The Nigerians are audacious; we are a very proud and bold people, and we have a lot of brainpower. There is so much potential. I just like the family, the culture, and the food, even the police checks.

NO: I think you can see the difference between American culture and Nigerian culture in general. I think the major thing that stands out for me about the Nigerian cultures is the strong family tie. It is not just the immediate family; it is the extended family.

EE: I will say the family again. I have a young family right now; I like the fact that my in-laws, my family and community support us. I have other non-Nigerian friends who do not have such support. I like the extended family and I appreciate that. I like our food. I like the kind of fun we know how to have. We like to have a good party. I like the fact that our people can still be happy if they don’t have many material things. They combine common sense and ingenuity to survive.

Another expectation of our culture is that no matter how educated you are or how demanding your job is, you are still expected to have a family, to raise children. In this country people have a choice whether to have a family or not. I am not
saying that is good or bad. But in Nigerian culture we are expected to be less self-servmg.

_Nigerian Culture: “Dislikes”_

_What do you dislike about Nigerian culture?_

**LO:** The things that I dislike about the culture are not about the culture itself, but it’s about the application of the culture in this country. I have never lived in Nigeria, but I have visited for months at a time. It’s about the environment: the Nigerian culture fits in Nigeria. The problem I do have is application of the cultural aspects in this country, sometimes because it’s not a perfect match. The U. S. is very different from Nigeria. What I object to is the culture of a different country while I am here. Sometimes, it’s very difficult because I’m not really a Nigerian and there are a lot of differences. My friends are saying that they can do this and this and this. And my parents say that it’s not right; so it’s not fair.

It’s difficult because even though I’m in this country, I’m still living in that country at the same time.

**WM:** I dislike the fact that old traditions often shun or disagree with the changing views of society.

**EJ:** Obviously we are not where we want to be politically. We are a fresh democracy. There is also an obsession for weight loss in Nigeria. It is crazy. You go everywhere—it is your weight they focus on.

**OR:** Really, people are always in your face. If you don’t eat they are on you about eating; if you eat, they say you are going to blow up. And they are very rude about it. They will say things like, ‘I wouldn’t wear that because you probably won’t fit into it.’

**EJ:** They will say we like you thin; you should probably do exercises or eat less. That is mean. It is the strangest thing.

**OR:** And the people who are talking have no business to be talking.

**BO (mom):** There was a time that ‘E’ didn’t want to go to Nigeria. She was just upset about how rudely people speak to her about her weight. People who have not seen me for years tell her, ‘Oh, why are you not thin like your mother?’ Sometimes when I go home, they say, ‘beauty is bloated up.’ We can’t emphasize enough this new craze in Nigeria.

**NO:** This is not unique to the Nigerian culture, but the role of women--how I think a woman is viewed; I think this would put a woman at a disadvantage. I think they see a woman as second to the man as opposed to being equal. The
expectations to do chores, such as cooking food, fall on the woman. This is an unrealistic expectation, especially when both genders work.

EE: They believe in witchcraft too much, instead of taking responsibility for themselves. This kind of thinking is not beneficial for us. If a person is sick, instead of thinking she is bewitched, take her to the doctor. I don't like polygamy. I don't like that men are expected to have affairs and that's okay. I don't like that men are expected to leave their wives for another, and that's okay. Things that destabilize the family structure are bothersome. There are lots of good and bad in our culture! [Laughter.]

Another thing is getting education in Nigeria. Many people are educated, but they have no means of using the degree. There is no job available to allow them to make use of the knowledge they have gained. Here when you obtain an education you are expected to do something with it. The opportunity is there to allow you to make use of your knowledge. So we have generations of people who may be wasting their talents.

American Culture: “Likes”

What do you like about American culture (advantages)?

LO: I don't really know what exactly it is, because I live by my culture, which is Nigerian, and American at the same time. I don't know how I can define American culture. I know the culture I live by and I know the culture my parents grew up in. I don't know if I know what American culture really is.

WM: I like that instead of having a primary and a secondary school there is an elementary, middle and high school. This is because it allows each stage to fit well based on age.

EJ: I like the diversity, that all these people can come here and have a fusion of learning.

Some people call it a melting pot, but I don't think it is. I also like the mobility in economic structure, that you can be at a lower scale, but through your effort, opportunity and luck you can rise. Even in the entire West, I think America is a place where this can happen.

OR: I just like the different cultures in one place. Your neighbor could be someone from different race and totally different people from you; this presents opportunities to learn from them and for them to learn from you. Because everybody has so much to offer, so it is a learning experience for all.
NO: The persistence of the American dream is very powerful for everybody. Despite your circumstances you can still do what you want to do. You can achieve and get to the place that you want to be by your own devices. You can do it. It can happen. This is the American state of mind. You can achieve.

EE: I like the education system. As well as people who can fulfill their educational aspirations. For example, my sisters and I have different aspirations and we are able to fulfill them. I am an engineer; here a woman can be an engineer. My sister is a medical doctor, my other sister wants to go into business and my youngest sister wants to go into sales. Here are all these opportunities that would have been very difficult to come by in Nigeria.

American Culture: “Dislikes”

What do you dislike about American culture (disadvantages)? (Let’s say that culture is the way of life of the people: the totality of the way we behave. If we say that is the definition of culture and we apply it to America, what do you see then that might be a good or bad thing?)

LO: What we learned in my political science classes is that you have a difference between social cultures being collectivists and individualists. I dislike that America is an individualist society, compared to a lot of African countries that are collectivist. They are family and group and community oriented.

The U. S. is very individualistic in the sense that economically you are always on your own. You are always trying to compete with each other to be on a path. It doesn’t take a village to raise a child a lot of the time. That’s something I definitely dislike about the culture. What I’m studying and focusing on in school is philosophy and business. Those are my majors.

Politically, I don’t like America in that it’s very arrogant. I dislike its history and culture in that it was imperialistic and colonial. Socially, I feel it’s very backwards. After I discuss with all my friends, who are very diverse - some who are gay, or who are from different parts of the country. We discuss how the country is very hypocritical.

One thing we say is that America was founded on being idealistic—separate from England and not so conservative, not so far off from a King and Queen. Now today, we are very conservative: we don’t like gay marriage, don’t like abortion, don’t like and can’t legalize marijuana, can’t drink until you’re - but you can go to
war! It's a lot of the American culture politically and socially that I don't like that well.

**WM:** I dislike the way people treat one another. It's as though people purposely want to delve into one's personal life only to childishly manipulate a situation. I also dislike the overrated idea of the 'American Dream.' It builds false hope to people who really invest in it.

**EJ:** The racism. Again in any society where you have so much diversity, you are going to find people who will try to separate or try to stigmatize. So that is one issue. Also, as my mother mentioned, the media. I don't know what happens when they try to model a five year old to look like a seventeen year old and a seventeen year old to look like a 30 year old. And then what people see in the media. The children are thinking this is the way I have to be. But that's not true.

**BO (mom):** My sister just called me to tell me that her daughter is graduating in May and will be going to med school. She said they have just gone out to buy some books and it cost her $600 dollars! I said, 'Books are so expensive!' And she retorted, 'Either I buy the books or pay for jail; I would rather buy the books.'

**NO:** I feel like the family unit is not as strong in America; and I feel that's a big disadvantage.

**EE:** Family is not as tight knit as it should be here. For example, right now I am doing my post doctorate study in New York City where I come in contact with many other immigrants. They are very friendly. Sometimes, Americans themselves are not as friendly. And the thing is, families are too formal with each other. For a mother -in- law or any family member to visit here, they are expected to call and make appointment. They can't just drop in, whereas, in Nigerian, culture, family and friends are allowed to drop in and visit anytime. Americans see this as an imposition.

In Nigeria we are expected to take care of our in- laws; here there is no such expectation.

*Do you talk more to your parents or friends?*

**LO:** My friends.

**WM:** I think that I talk to my parents and friends equally. The only difference is the subject of what we discuss.

**EJ:** I do both. When I mean parents, I include my aunts and my uncles. I also talk to my friends, for example my school roommate; she sometimes tells me what I don't want to hear, but I listen because I need to hear them because of the quality of friendship that we have. She tells me when I am misbehaving.
OR: I talk to mom and dad more.

OR: I end up talking to mom and dad more.

NO: I talk to my friends.

NO: Depends on what it is. If it is about buying a car, obtaining loans and such, I talk to my parents. Sometimes I just talk to parents.

Parental Support

OR: Our parents are fully supportive of anything we wish to do. For example, photography is my hobby, and they got me all the equipment that I need to do the job.

BO (mom): Yesterday we went to buy books for a class 'OR' is taking. I told her to buy all the extra books that will help you with the class. We don't drive fancy cars because we want to pour all our resources into helping our children achieve their goals. We just don't say do, we also provide support. We ask them, what materials do you need? Why is it better than another one? How can we get it? And how soon do you need it?

EJ: The support is clearly there for anything and all things we decide to do.

How do you see your self at age 30?

LO: Hopefully, I will have graduated from law school with a law degree and a steady job. Hopefully, married--maybe a kid or two. Yeah, hopefully married and settled somewhere.

WM: I hope to be part of a very strong marketing firm due to my hard work. I also hope to be successful, happy and prepared to settle down.

OR: Going to school.

OR: Travel more.

BO (mom): You will be in school, but you will be an architect by that time.

OR: To like, do what I want to do, I will be like age 40 before I am done.

OR: I want to have my own firm, designing residential and commercial buildings, with more of a focus on commercial and green buildings.
During the school week, how much time do you have free? (Let's start with when you were in high school).

**LO:** School would be an 8-hour day, from about 7 to 3. I played some sports after school. But, in free time, I would come home and work for 2-3 hours. I always had enough time to watch TV or go on the Internet. Now, I find that college is my life! I live on campus and everything I do is all connected to my academics and my extracurricular. I enjoy it. With my class schedule, I usually try to spread out time so that I have class and then an hour break, then another class and an hour break. In my evenings, I am usually free. It all depends on what I have to do for homework and study. I do have a certain amount of free time and I usually spend that doing extra-curricular activities. I'm involved in the Black Action Society in the BSU on campus. I'm always in the office and doing work for that. I'm doing work as a session mentor, the Pre-law Society, the African Students Association. But, it's fun though; anything that is not academic is usually what I am doing.

Table 9 below illuminates themes that emerge from the Parents Participants and their Adult children narratives concerning their views of parental expectations. Success is equated with education, grades and degrees.
Table 9

**Comparison of Participant Parents' and Adult Children's Expectations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ expectations</th>
<th>Adult children’s expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education is priority.</td>
<td>Education was priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation in Yoruba culture is for children to live a better life than parents.</td>
<td>Do the best that I can.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations are that they should become somebody in this world.</td>
<td>Prepared me for the future by giving me plethora of responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They must work hard. We model hard work.</td>
<td>In order to succeed you must work hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are fully involved in the education of their children.</td>
<td>People that work hard in school are rewarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children should be independent financially, have a good home and be happy with their lives--be well educated, happy and then get married.</td>
<td>It is up to me to determine my path to success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When children state their dreams, they must know what it will take to get there.</td>
<td>Our parents had high expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The expectation is letting the children know that knowledge is power and they have to get good grades.</td>
<td>I was self-motivated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To attain an education, to find a good wife or good husband, to have children, live a good life and to be able to come home.</td>
<td>Parents exerted pressure for us to get into more technical fields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our expectations for the children are the same as the grandparents had for us. (Overall with an exception).</td>
<td>I demand more of myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Our parents’ expectations for us are just right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Our parents had high expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think they always wanted more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We are not allowed to slip in any way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My dad was always suggesting careers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes that emerge from the adult children participants’ views of Nigerian and U.S. cultures are illustrated below in Table 10:
Table 10

**Adult Children Responses to Culture: “Likes” and “Dislikes” Nigeria and U.S.A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nigerian culture “likes”</th>
<th>Unites States culture “likes”</th>
<th>Nigerian culture “dislikes”</th>
<th>United States culture “dislike”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The importance of family is stressed.</td>
<td>I like the diversity, and the fusion of learning.</td>
<td>Old traditions are often shunned.</td>
<td>I dislike the over-rated idea of the ‘American Dream.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are one another’s support system.</td>
<td>The mobility in economic structure; through your effort and opportunity you can rise.</td>
<td>We are not where we should be politically.</td>
<td>The racism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love the music and the arts.</td>
<td>I love the fact that we have different cultures in one place; this presents opportunities to learn from them and for them to learn from us.</td>
<td>There is obsession for weight loss among the young; and the old are reinforcing it.</td>
<td>The media’s negative influence on the young.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love the culture.</td>
<td>I like the fact that we have different cultures in one place; this presents opportunities to learn from them and for them to learn from us.</td>
<td>This is not unique to Nigerian culture but I think women are viewed as second to the men.</td>
<td>Family unit is not as strong in America; this is a big disadvantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like visiting Nigeria.</td>
<td>Everybody has much to offer, so it is a learning experience.</td>
<td>They set unrealistic expectations for women--to cook, raise children, and work outside the home full-time.</td>
<td>Sometimes Americans are not very friendly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is amazing to see how many people have made much out of nothing.</td>
<td>Persistence of the ‘American Dream’ is very powerful for everybody.</td>
<td>People have access to education in Nigeria and they get degrees, but there are no jobs.</td>
<td>There is no expectation to care for others, beyond your nuclear family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigerians are audacious.</td>
<td>You can achieve your goals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are a proud and bold people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just like the family, the culture and the food, even the police checks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is so much potential.</td>
<td>I like the education system.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The major thing that stands out for me is the strong family ties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

In Chapter 4, the voices of all 20 participants in this study are acknowledged. These men and women open another gate of knowledge into the question of how parental expectations affect students' achievement and attainment. The interview responses are grouped as they apply to each of the four basic research questions. Thus they serve to illustrate how parental expectations stem from the participants' life histories (including their upbringing and schooling in Nigeria), the sociocultural and historical contexts of these expectations, the comparison of experiences and beliefs from their home country (Nigeria) and host country (United States), and as a form of verifying, comments from the adult children of the participants were solicited. Lists and tables of themes that result from an examination of the responses serve to focus on the emerging patterns that form the basis for the discussion, conclusions and recommendations that follow in Chapter 5. Tables 9 and 10 highlight comparisons between the participants' expectations with those of their children, and the children's reactions to the Nigerian and American cultures (likes and dislikes). The results of the study and their implications will be discussed in the following section, Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overarching research question and 3 related questions under which the participants' narratives were aligned in Chapter 4 lead to an interpretation of a Nigerian folk theory of parental expectations in Chapter 5. The narratives of Nigerian participants’ parental expectations are constructed within certain sociocultural, sociostructural, and historical and present contexts of the participants’ lives. My view as the researcher and as a Nigerian immigrants cannot be divorced from the findings; therefore, I acknowledge this role in the interpretations.

Chapter 5 discussions begin with sociocultural, sociostructural and historical factors and parental expectations weaving the voices of the participants in the discussion as seen appropriate. These factors are the foundation for the participants’ actions, the impetus for these voluntary immigrants’ expectations. Next, the expectations of the parents for their children, the relationship between family and school, the way families define achievement, the role of acculturation in expectations, and minority status are discussed. Throughout the discussion the voices of the participants are called upon to illuminate the subject. Lastly, the underlying tensions between parents and adult children that surfaced in the narratives as a result of living in two cultures are explored.

On the basis of the findings a list of recommendations for teachers is drawn. While the sample is limited, it is still possible to identify problems surrounding immigrant school children and suggest means by which teachers can overcome them. While this study has been limited to 20 Nigerians (8 families), I believe that many will
find their own stories, and their own solutions represented within the study.

Discussion: Sociocultural, Sociostructural, and Historical Factors and Parental Expectations

The participants emphasized the culture of education repeatedly throughout the interviews. This is clear from the responses to the Life History questions where they discussed early childhood, upbringing and education of the parent participants, which took place in Nigeria. In nearly every case the parent participants came from families who strictly monitored, and supported, their education. (The exception to this was a parent participant who felt that his parents were not supportive of his education because they made him work with them as a fisherman and farm hand until his older brother came to take him away from the village.) Families usually sought out the best schools and made sacrifices in order to provide access to these schools for their children to these schools. This is reflected in a number of responses in Chapter 4. Among them are the quotations that follow. As noted earlier, the letters in parentheses following each quotation, here and in the subsequent pages, are used to identify the source rather than the names to ensure anonymity.

“Education was most important to my parents” (JO).

“Yoruba want to educate their family at all costs. So growing up in a Yoruba household it is very important that you go to school and get your education” (OA).

“There was one thing that was so important: my father had a love for education” (BO).
“My parents always said that education was the best legacy they could leave their children” (SO).

“My dad would sell the last clothes off his back for education” (OA).

“That (education) was the benchmark of the house” (SO).

This was further emphasized when participants were asked what their parents’ goals were for their children. Again they repeatedly cited education.

“My parents’ goal was that we all get as much education as we can” (SO).

“They had high expectations for us. My father wanted his children to have a better education than he had. They taught us that education was our key to success” (JO).

Parents’ and siblings’ influence and support for the participants, in their growing up and schooling, were clearly evident in all cases. Parents were strict in monitoring the participants’ school performance and homework. At the same time they were supportive and made sacrifices to provide the best education possible for their children. Elder brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles also provided motivation and served as role models, with some providing financial support, both in Nigeria and in the United States. As one participant who wanted to go to boarding school, which would stress his father’s financial resources, recalled:

My father was a poor man and could not afford the school fees. But he made a deal with me: if I took chemistry, biology and physics and passed, he would borrow the money to send me to the school. (I passed them all). When I returned home to show my father the results, do you know, he had the money ready. My father believed in me. (OA)
This life history of the participants from their Nigerian culture has not been lost in the parenting of their own children. According to Yoruba tradition, a person’s life is guided by the concept of omoluabi or personhood, meaning one is not a human being just because s/he was born (Akinyemi, 2003; Awoniyi, 1975; Tedla, 1992). Each person has to earn the right to personhood. And how one accomplishes this is by proving one’s self on several levels, including hard work, succeeding in whatever vocation one chooses, and emphasizing the importance of family ties and obligations (one is responsible for one’s brothers and sisters and they are responsible for one in return). For example, participants’ comments included: “My mother wanted me to be somebody, to be myself and help myself and help others” (SA).

“My parents said, ‘just observe and be quiet; don’t tell people what you are made of; let your life show it’” (BO).

“My expectations were for them to become somebody in this world. I wanted them to take their education seriously, because I am also educated” (MU).

(On helping siblings) “I had an older brother over here (U.S.) who pioneered and helped make it happen. You have direct responsibility as the oldest. I was also able to help others” (OA).

As reflected in the responses of the participants, Nigerian indigenous education for Nigerians and other Africans is a process that starts at birth and is continuous till death. Learning is inseparable from the people’s daily lives. And when things began to change due to the arrival of Western education, many parents saw to it that their children upheld the new cultural values while respecting the Nigerian indigenous ones; as a result, a new way of becoming an omoluabi was born.
The Influence of Christian Mission Schools on Participants' Education and Expectations

In the Life History interviews the participants referred to their Christian home environment and the role of mission schools in their early schooling. (One rebelled at the thought, referring to her two older sisters who had attended mission schools.) Comments reflect that the participants grew up in Nigeria during a time of change, (from 1960 onward) including independence from Colonial rule (1960), the post-Colonial emphasis on diminishing the role of the mission schools, and the creation of the Federal Government Colleges (high schools) which earned respect for high quality education based on the Western model.

Many of the participants attended mission elementary schools, and then either continued on in mission high schools or the new Federal Government Colleges. Like most of the participants I attended government schools for both elementary and secondary education in Nigeria in the 1970s. For my high school education, as a Yoruba from the South, I attended the Federal Government Girls' College in Kazure in the North, as part of the government's policy to foster cooperation and understanding among tribal areas and promote the concept of one federal nation. (This is discussed in Chapter 2, Post-Colonial Education in Nigeria.)

The type of schools attended in Nigerian by thirteen of the parent participants in Nigeria were predominantly mission or religious schools and included a Roman Catholic School, Baptist College (high school), Baptist Day School, Methodist Boys School, two Mission Schools (affiliation unidentified), one private school, and one Federal
Government School. Additionally participants mentioned the influence of parochial schools in their lives:

"My mother actually had twelve live births, but there were ten of us left. My dad was a minister who came to the United States in the 40's and studied at a seminary. My mother was a schoolteacher. We grew up in a strict Christian home. Education was most important to my parents" (JO).

"(I went to) The Baptist Day School. My secondary school was a Methodist Secondary School. At home religion had a lot to do with how we cultivated our values and culture" (SO).

Parent participants in this study were part of yet another changing phase in the Nigerian education system. This time it was not a move forced upon the system by outside influences; nevertheless, it was just as dramatic and life altering to the people of Nigeria. A young independent country fighting for the educational soul of its people defined this new phase. It was led by a government, free from the yoke of Colonialism, that realized that whatever institution controls the education of a nation, controls the minds of the young, and thereby controls the future. And so the new Nigerian nation began to establish its own educational institutions on a parallel with the mission schools. The system was an offspring of educational acculturation, a marriage between Nigerian indigenous and Western education. The new Nigerian government of the participants had no standing crop of trained teachers of its own, so it made a bold and expensive move of recruiting teachers from all over the world. In my high school, the Federal Government Girls' College, my teachers composed a "mini United Nations" with representatives in the desert of Northern Nigeria. At one time, the headmistress was an Indian British and
the art teacher an Irishman; the English language teacher, “Miss Whittier,” was a young American woman from Sacramento, California; others were from various African countries, including Nigeria.

This move by the newly independent Nigeria was designed to create an education that would serve its people, following the African tradition of providing for the nation’s children whatever is necessary for them to become omoluabi (attaining personhood) for the betterment of the communities.

A new tradition of becoming an omoluabi was well underway since Nigerian independence from Britain in 1960. Nigerian post-independence government has gradually wrestled the education of its youths away from the missions. One could theorize that the complete break from colonial grip on education was further made possible by the revenue from crude oil. A new generation of Nigerians was sent abroad by Nigerian government to study and bring back western knowledge to help build a new nation. This new generation of Nigerians is known as The Petrol-Dollars Generation or the “Oil Boomers.”

Some of the men and women who are now parents in the United States were a product of what I term the struggle for the educational soul of a nation. Many of them also became beneficiaries of a new Nigerian economic system, the petrol dollar generation, or oil boomers. The discovery of oil in commercial quantity in the mid-1950s, coupled with the oil-boom resulting from the Arab oil embargo on the United States in 1973, produced casualties such as the decline of agricultural production in Nigeria. It resulted in an influx of jobless individuals who had abandoned their farms
for the hope of making their fortune from the newly discovered “black gold.” They came to the capital city, Lagos (Nigeria now has a new capital city, Abuja, founded December 12, 1991). However, there were also many who benefited from this new source of revenue - among them some participants in this study. The Nigerian government sent many school graduates to America and Europe to further their education in order to bring Western expertise back to the developing nation. Many returned to Nigeria to help build a nation, but some fled years later because they believed the government in which they had placed so much hope at the time had not lived up to its promises of freedom and democracy. Among them were some of my participants. So many began life anew in the United States; some came with their children; others married and settled here. However, as shown by their narratives, Nigeria was never far from their thoughts, and the sociocultural influences of “home country” like the concepts of hard work, responsibility and self sufficiency continued to guide the way they raised their children and conducted their lives, even as they benefited and succeeded with U.S. schooling and culture in many resects, they struggled to acculturate to their new country’s sociocultural trappings including its focus on democracy and freedom, which appeared to them as too soft on individual responsibility. They worked to sort out that which they deemed beneficial and helpful.

*Parental Expectations for Children’s Education in the United States*

Parental expectations of the participants for their children’s education in the United States, as evidenced by interview responses, developed over time and were rooted in their Nigerian upbringing and culture, overlaid with their adaptation to their new
American culture. Especially in light of the fact that their children, without foreign accents and often born in the U.S. are immersed in its popular culture as well.

The narratives in Chapter 4, accentuate the participants’ personal beliefs as derived from Nigeria and as acquired in the United States. These response data give credence to the idea that the parental expectations for the education for their children’s academic achievements in the U.S. come about through a blend of cultures “My expectations for my children’s education are culturally induced” (SO).

“It goes back to our culture, too. The Nigerian kids born in America have a conflict of cultures. They have an American mind set and they have a Nigerian mind set” (OA).

In reviewing all the participant’s responses it is evident they have been largely influenced by their Nigerian heritage. The responses of the adult children substantially reflect those of their parents. Further, cultural threads the three generations. Among the responses of the grandchildren in the United States there is commonality with the grandparents in Nigeria. Common characteristics include, “education is the priority,” “hard work,” “high expectations,” “do the best you can,” and “support and encouragement from the family.”

As indicated in this study, parental expectations are formed by sociocultural, sociostructural and historical influences both from the immigrants’ country of origin (Nigeria) and their new country (United States). These formed the values that served as mediators of parental practices, which impact considerably the children’s educational achievement as illustrated in Figure 2. Parenting practices of the participants are strongly influenced by the past and the present. The past not only informed the parent participants
that education brings economic rewards but also elevates the educated in social hierarchy in the community. They believe it brings respect and pride to the family. Their experiences in the United States further reinforce these beliefs; the ideals of the "American Dream," freedom from gender constrictions and the belief that hard work will always yield good results. However, beneath all these some tensions are evident. In America there is little room for authoritarian parenting. Parents now realize that unlike their parents, they have to engage in negotiations with their children while fulfilling their parental duties and obligation to raise an omoluabi.

Figure 2. Parenting practices as mediators of educational achievement

All participants indicated they had demanding jobs that helped them care for their families. Demographic data (see Table 5, pp.63-64) indicate that all parent participants and a number of their adult children are professionals. All had to work hard to attain this status, and they commented that they did so to make sure that their children had a good education. A few moved into the suburbs where there were better schools to make sure that their children were afforded a better opportunity to learn (see BE, p.76), others live in rural areas to lessen their children exposure to negative influences.

Parents in this study believe in discipline and hard work and they make that clear to their children: “Let the children grow and lead them on the right path . . . so they need to go to school and get good grades, . . . they are not going to cuss the teacher out and call the teacher names; they are not going to associate with the bad group in school” (OA).

The parents were also very involved in their children’s schools. They go to all parents-teachers meetings as well as make their expectations clear to the children by constantly telling and retelling oral histories to them. They enroll the children in any academic or extracurricular events that will advance their educational careers. They show support for their children by being present in their school and life events. They make it known to the children that life requires planning and that “failure to plan is plan to fail.” These parents insist that their children engage in imagining their futures and acting on that imagination by being dedicated to their study goals. They instill in them the idea that “effort begets luck” and that with effort all things are possible.

All parents mentioned that they were involved with their children’s homework assignments when they were young; as the children grew they became more independent
needing their parents' direct help on homework assignments less and less. Meanwhile the “homework ethic” had been fully ingrained in the children and this translated to success in school. Their children have grown to become self-motivated students. SA reminisced, “when they were in elementary school, it was that, ‘I could do it.’ We all sat down and did the homework before dinner and it was done. But when they were in middle school, it was: ‘Mommy. We already did it…”

Parents reported that all their children are self-motivated because they had taken the time to do the necessary groundwork while the children were small. They maintained discipline, gave them love and showed them through their own hard work and the telling and retelling of stories about family members and friends who had done well through education: “So our expectation of them was simply letting them know that knowledge is power and they had to get good grades” (OA). This study supports the model of parental influence on education achievement for children as studied by Merchant et al. (2000), and illustrated in Figure 3.
Figure 3. Relations between family and school context variables and students' achievement.


On school context, parents expect the school to give their children the necessary tools that will enable them to succeed in college. They expect the teachers to see their children as equals to all the children in the school and not to assume that the children are deficient or less than because of their ethnic background, a parent notes: “Teachers should not discourage them by saying that they can’t do the work. I expect them to treat all kids the same no matter how different (they seem)…. I want them to treat the children
as college material. (AM) Parents also encourage their children to take challenging
courses, they don’t want them to coast through high school doing the minimal possible to
get by on this family context AM further notes, “I encourage my children to take
challenging classes…. I encourage them to take honors and AP courses when
available…”

The parents in this study felt in promoting their children’s school achievement.
They not only demand that children rise to their expectations but they enable the children
in these endeavors. “AM” further notes: “I help them meet my expectations by helping
them get to school on time, and I am supportive of their education endeavors. I get in
contact with teachers often to build relationships with them.”

The study of Canadian adolescents (Merchant et al., 2001) cited in DesForges &
Abouchaar (2003), indicates that the main determinants of students’ achievement are: (a)
their competence, and (b) their perception of various school and family motivational
forces. Figure 3 highlights and illustrates family context and school context as they relate
to students’ achievement. The comments of the adult children that I interviewed showed
they positively identified with their parents’ expectations for their educational
achievement. Their responses follow the Merchant model. They felt school and family
contexts had shaped them and provided the support they needed for achievement.
Although there is some underlying tension (to be discussed later), the adult children
participants also noted that they are self-motivated and are academically competent; they
are high achievers as indicated in the biographical data in chapter 3. Expectations of the
parent participants and their children’s perception of such expectations as noted in the
narratives in Chapter 4 indicate that parents instill in their children the importance of
education and hard work. The participants’ narratives support the importance of parental values as perceived by students as a mechanism that explains the impact of parental involvement in their children’s school achievement; and further, parental values are the most salient factor influencing these students’ achievement in school (Merchant, et al.).

It is apparent that the dedication that these parents place on the culture of education and the amount of time, effort and support they give their children, is testimony to their values and educational aspirations. They show their support for their children with enthusiasm, and make available to them whatever they need for success. The children in turn have internalized the importance of education, and through their parents’ positive parenting they are imbued with a “can-do” spirit. This, I believe, has impacted their success as students.

As the data were further scrutinized, evidence emerged of the participants’ defining and supporting high achievement levels for their children (Table 6) followed by a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of the two cultures, Nigerian and American (Table 8) and how they bear on parental expectations. This is then followed by the adult children’s expressed likes and dislikes of the two cultures (Table 9).

Defining Achievement

There is an array of parent participants’ responses in (Chapter 4 and Table 6) bearing on academic achievement for their children. The full narratives from the participants indicate Nigerian values drive the responses. Achievement is defined as not only getting good grades, but in becoming a respected citizen of good character. HO states: “Defining achievement for our children is very simple for us. If they have done
the best they can, then they have succeeded. It is not about grades; it's about what they learn in the process. Life-long learning is the issue.”

[GPA] “Is just one way of measurement? I also tell our children they must be well-rounded human beings. You must respect yourself. Character and learning is a critical key. That character involves being a good Christian” (SN).

The participants actively supported their children in school. They were active in PTA organizations, maintained contact with teachers, intervened to help their children when differences arose (often as a result of cultural differences), and regularly attended school events. Among the many factors that helped their children succeed, the parents closely monitored their children’s school work, made sure they did their homework, and encouraged them to “make good friends and to associate with people who were likely smarter than themselves.” (AM)

Defining achievement is the foundation for the parents who then proceed to leverage their means of communicating with and supporting their children in school and in the community (see Figure 4). Interestingly, the school and community often presented the parents with greater challenges, as they were the ones uprooted from a different culture, and finding their way in a new and different culture. Doubtlessly, becoming closely involved in their children’s education was instrumental in making their adjustment to the new culture; this positive acculturation process is instrumental to their expectations as evident in the parent’s narratives (see Chapter 4.) Figure 4 outlines the key players and potential processes in shaping children’s achievement. This is an attempt to encapsulate the dynamics of the forces shaping the immigrant’s child’s educational outcomes as they emerged in the participants’ narratives.
Figure 4. Parental expectations and other forces shaping Nigerian immigrants’ children’s educational outcomes. (The dynamics of community, parents, school and children in parental expectations).

Acculturation

Berry's (1997) work has important implications concerning the parental expectations of Nigerian immigrants and raises issues that bear on the four basic questions that frame this study. In the narratives of the participants in this study the road to acculturation was not easy. In spite of prejudice and other obstacles they persisted. They continue to hold high expectations for themselves and their children. They refused to let obstacles put an end to their dreams. As one of the participants quipped: “We have come too far to fail, failure is not an option.” (BM) Berry in a study of immigration, acculturation and adaptations links positive acculturation with behaviors that enable immigrants to adjust positively to their new country and positive adaptation is important to higher expectation. In his study he asks:

“What happens to individuals, who have developed in one cultural context, when they attempt to live in a new cultural context? If culture is such a powerful shaper of behaviour, do individuals continue to act in the new setting as they did in the previous one, do they change their behavioural repertoire to be more appropriate in the new setting, or is there some complex pattern of continuity and change in how people go about their lives in the new society?” (p. 6)

Berry defines acculturation as the cultural changes resulting from these group encounters. The classical definition of acculturation was presented by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936, p. 149 in Berry 1997, p. 7): “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups.” Berry further notes, even though acculturation is a neutral term in
principle (that is, change may take place in either or both groups), in practice
acculturation tends to induce more change in one of the groups (and this connects to
issues of power and privilege).

Berry (1997) continues that in a *culturally plural society* (that is a society of
people with many cultural backgrounds) there will be *power differentials*, whether
numerical, economic or political. These power differences have given rise to popular and
social science terms such as *mainstream, minority, ethnic group*, etc. Some groups have
entered into the acculturation process voluntarily (e.g. immigrants) while others
experience acculturation without having sought it out (e.g. refugees, indigenous peoples).
Other groups are in contact because they have migrated to a new location (e.g.
immigrants and refugees), while others have had the new culture brought to them (e.g.
indigenous peoples and *national minorities*). And finally, among those who have
migrated, some are relatively permanently settled into the process (e.g. immigrants),
while for others the situation is a temporary one (e.g. sojourners such as international
students and guest workers, or asylum seekers who may eventually be deported). Despite
these variations in factors leading to acculturation, one of the conclusions that has been
reached is that the basic process of adaptation appears to be common to all these groups.

*Parental Cultural Dynamics*

Parental-child cultural dynamics also stand out prominently in the narratives. The
parents in their narratives tell of doing their best to link their children to Nigerian culture.
They take holidays in Nigeria, attend Black churches, and take their children to
gatherings of Nigerians and African Americans. They try their best to instill pride of
their homeland in their children while also supporting their own and their children’s
positive acculturation in U.S. culture. They do not deny their past (Nigeria) nor refute their now and future (U.S.) in favor of the other. Berry (1997) hypothesized that acculturation strategies in plural societies, cultural groups and the individual members in both dominant and non-dominant situations, must grapple with the issue of how to acculturate. Strategies to navigate these issues are usually a dance between cultures and the people involved. This is borne out by the expressed feelings of the participants in this study (illustrated in Chapter 4, Table 10). Berry continues, “The issues involved are cultural maintenance (to what extent are cultural identity characteristics considered to be important and their maintenance strived for); and contact and participation (to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves)” (p. 9). In Tables 9 and 10, the participants in this study have chosen an integration option of acculturation (Berry) to participate in the larger network of their new country by doing what it takes within the boundaries of their original country culture dictum. They are maintaining active interests in both the original culture (Nigeria) as well as participating fully in their new culture’s larger society. Quotations from the parents and their children illustrate this option as noted in Tables 9 and 10, (pp. 142-143).

Children’s Cultural Identity Dynamic

I asked each of the adult children participants how they identified themselves in the United States. They all replied: “African American.” There was an element of pride in the response, “I am an African American woman.” EJ said, “I am an African American, but our parents are Nigerians; we have that geographic link. We are lucky to have that.”
EE added, "On the official level, I identify as an African American. On an un-official level, as both African American, and a Nigerian."

These are all adults who were brought up and schooled in predominantly white city suburbs, supported by caring (and strict) parents. They are excellent students who attended prestigious colleges, traveled widely, and became as close as anyone can to being "global citizens." The work of Banks (2001) outlines the stages of cultural identity as he has identified and articulated them over the years. In a six-tier typology he classifies "the basic stages of development of cultural identity" as they apply to minority groups, including immigrants, ranging from the individual who absorbs the negative ideologies and beliefs about his or her cultural group, up the ladder of acculturation and adjustment to the sixth tier, that of "globalism and competency." (Banks, pp. 127-144).

(1) Stage 1, Cultural Psychological Captivity: This individual absorbs negative ideologies and beliefs about his or her cultural group that are institutionalized within the society. (Looking at the responses of the adult children in this study it appears that they escaped this stage largely because they were born and raised bicultural.)

(2) Stage 2, Cultural Encapsulation: characterized by cultural encapsulation and cultural exclusiveness, including voluntary separatism. (All participants in this study have escaped this stage due to the fact that they actively sought positive acculturation by celebrating the better part of culture they came from as well as embracing fully the better part of the United States' culture. This, was noted, has contributed greatly to their successes both educationally and socioculturally.)
(3) Stage 3, Cultural Identity Clarification: The individual within this stage is able to clarify personal attitudes, and cultural identities, to reduce intrapsychic conflict, and develop clarified positive attitudes towards his or her own group.

(4) Stage 4, Biculturalism: The individual within this stage has a healthy sense of cultural identity and all the characteristics and skills needed to participate successfully in his or her own community as well as in another cultural community.

(5) Stage 5, Multiculturalism and Reflective Nationalism: This individual has clarified, reflective and positive personal, cultural and national identities. S/he has positive attitudes towards other cultural, ethnic and racial groups and is self-actualized.

(6) Stage 6, Globalism and Global Competency: This individual has clarified, reflective and positive personal, cultural, national, and global identities and the knowledge, skills, attitude and abilities needed to function within cultures and within his or her own nation as well as within cultures around the world (Banks, 2001, pp. 136-139).

Within this continuum, the responses of the adult children participants suggest that they have successfully navigated and are navigating Banks’ stages of cultural identity; all adult children participants identify themselves as “African Americans.” NO notes, “when people ask where I am from I say, ‘I am from Michigan.’ I identify as an African American. I was born and raised here…”

EJ (who has traveled widely and speaks Japanese and Mandarin fluently) offered this: “it is cool to feel that you are not just serving yourself; you are doing something for others. It also means I change how people view us.”
As surely as we detect it in our 21st century world, the question of minority status has impacted the entire spectrum of these interviews in both direct and subtle ways.

**Minority Status and Educational Success**

Since this study is anchored to the frameworks of Ogbu’s studies of over two decades (1991-2003), I asked my participants if their minority status have anything to do with their expectations. This is a crucial question because Ogbu found that the relative success of the children of immigrants and non-immigrant students of color and linguistic minorities in education is linked to their educational success or lack thereof. In his study of *Cultural Problems in Minority Education* (1995a, 1995b), he aims to separate the issue of cultural diversity or representation from cultural problems, and focus solely on “cultural problems.” He introduces a *cultural frame of reference* to the discourse on minority education in order to bring to light the difficulty experienced by some minorities with the cultural and language milieu of the classroom. He states that all minorities face cultural and language differences; however, their ability to overcome such differences and succeed in school is contingent on their cultural frame of reference, which is how they interpret the differences. Ogbu concludes that voluntary minorities, who do not have an oppositional frame of reference, are more successful in school partially because they interpret learning the school culture and language as a plus and not counter to their cultural and language identity. In the narratives of the participants in this study, a non oppositional *cultural frame of reference* highlighted is that of strong resilience in the face of obstacles, as well as the participants’ own creation of a folk theory that hinges on the belief that success is possible, success is expected.
The last question that I posed to the parents and the adult children of immigrants in my study was: *How did minority status affect your education or your children's education?* This was to encourage the respondents to reflect on their successes as well as their relationship to the larger American community. A parent indicates: "Being a minority did not influence my children at all.... I have told them to be proud of themselves and their heritage. I have told them to rely on themselves." (MO) Another parent notes, "there are hurdles. I explain to her that she has to do more than 100%. I tell her to respect other people.... and to deal with people with honesty. (SB)

On the issues of minority status, education and cultural frame of reference, the adult children participants in this study respond in the same frame of reference as their parents. They note that they do not dwell on negatives; they focus on what they can do and they emphasize and re-emphasize the importance of hard work and respect for themselves as well as for others. One of the adult children participants notes, "I know who I am; ... I just want to be successful in the future; I know that it is ten times harder being a minority in this country." (LO) Another student responds, "I just know that I have to push myself and do better. I have to do ten times better. I have to give 110% more. It just shows that I have a drive and I am motivated to do better." (OR) These adult children have not let racism become detrimental to their achievements; they have managed to see it as an obstacle that is surmountable through hard work and self-confidence.

In his speech in Philadelphia in March 2008, the presidential candidate, Barak Obama, warned U.S. citizens against wishing away the issue of racial inequity and urged us to face it. The question on discrimination was the most uncomfortable one for most of
the participants to address. In their narratives some acknowledge that they face obstacles, but they strongly believe that these obstacles are not insurmountable. They, like Obama, assert that they can be successful in America; they just need to try harder than the majority. Obama states:

What's remarkable is not how many failed in the face of discrimination, but rather how many men and women overcame the odds; how many were able to make a way out of no way for those like me who would come after them ... I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible [italics added].

(Obama, 2008)

Conclusions: Cross Cultural Achievement

This study of “Parental expectations” has personal relevance for this researcher. Nigerian culture requires that one be tuned in to the subtle spoken and unspoken nuances of person, culture, feelings and situation. This has been found to be both a help and a hindrance according to the participants. Nigerian culture that participants follow dictates that parents should be listened to and revered. The same culture also specifies that children be loved, cherished and guided. This study and my experience show positive outcomes of maintaining these cultural belief.

The expectations that my parents had for me have led me to what some of my friends term, “an obsession with education.” Like most of my participants’ parents, my parents did not dictate what I should do as a vocation, what type of school to attend or what degree to acquire; however, they expected me to do the best that I could in all my endeavors. They stressed that hard work and education ensure a better life. As a parent
now of a college age son, I have drummed into him from the cradle, the importance of being an *Omoluabi* (attaining ideal personhood), of hard work, and of education.

No research has been done to date on the subject of Nigerian immigrants' parental expectations for education of their children in America. I embarked on this research in order to understand the reason for reports of success (U.S. Census, 2000), and the basis for it, and to see if sociocultural factors had any bearing. What I mean by sociocultural factors in this study are the impacts of Nigerian and American cultures on parental expectations, as well as the impacts of historical patterns (pre-Colonial and post-Colonial education in Nigeria) that formed the background of the parents.

A number of factors are identified which bear on the performance of the immigrants' children born and educated in the United States. All the children in this study were high achievers in U.S. schools, up through their college and postgraduate years. All are from educated families.

Factors that have a bearing on the performance of the individuals in this study have been identified in the results. This study traces factors back to their cultural roots---and it is the fusion, or more precisely, the interactive dynamics of these factors, that can be connected to academic achievements (see Chapter 4).

Studies on sociostructural theory (Pearce, 2006; Portes & Zady, 1996; Sowel, 1981; Steinberg, 1981) find that immigrants' children confront the same sociostructural issues as their parents. This is true for the participants in this study as well. The cultural characteristics of the Nigerian immigrants families that bear on the upbringing of children include hard work, discipline, importance of education (which can lead to a better life for the children than that of their parents), sacrifice for a commitment to education, and the
support of parents, siblings, extended family members and the community. Past research has sighted cultural resources of hard work, frugality and entrepreneurship of non-English speaking immigrants from Europe as responsible for their successes (Sowell, 1981) and this is true of English speaking Nigerian immigrants in this study as reported in their narratives.

The characteristics of the American culture, which support academic achievement, include progressive school programs, extracurricular activities, educational resources, and opportunities for women, college financial aid, a laissez fair mode of child rearing, and opportunities for choices in education and career. Although cultural conflicts exist, they are usually resolved.

The fusion of the two cultures, and the human behavioral patterns that emerge, become the basis for the conclusions and recommendations outlined herein.

A Nigerian Folk Theory of Parental Expectations

Based on the four research questions, and the narratives of 20 participants, a Nigerian folk theory emerged in this study. On the basis of this experience, the parental expectations of Nigerian voluntary immigrants emerge out of actions, beliefs and opportunities as described. These include:

- Hard work by parents to provide educational opportunities for their children, and to serve as role models.
- Opportunity for a better education and brighter future in America than in Nigeria.
- Parental support and involvement in children’s education, schools and extracurricular activities.
• Communication between parents and children concerning their school performance and expectations derived from Nigerian cultural values, which stress hard work and the importance of education.

• Overcoming disadvantages of minority status as an impetus for parental educational expectations, through hard work and exceeding the expectations for grades and other performance in the school.

• Education regarded by Nigerian parents as a vehicle to a better life and a means of transcending obstacles.

• The concept that education is not only about grades; it is about how one treats people, serves the community, and respects others and self. This is the ideal "personhood," known in the Nigerian culture as Omoluabi.

• A strong belief that whether children have a level playing field or not, they can succeed.

• Pressure.

• Rewards for achievement.

• Self-motivation.

• Children internalizing the expectations of their parents, coupled with self-motivation.

• Children having acculturated well; while identifying as African Americans they also celebrate and are proud of their Nigerian culture.

Participants related inspiring stories. With the exception of two families, who started from meager circumstance in Nigeria, and today through hard work and perseverance, are opening the doors of opportunity for their children by a determination
to meet high expectations for their education. Parent participants have acculturated positively; this was not an easy task nor has the process ended. Parent participants have chosen to adapt to their new environment while hanging on to the best of the culture they brought with them. The have also made good use of the human, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1974; Rueda, Monzo, & Arzubiaga, 2003) available to them in the United States.

Educational Implications

The educational implications of this research are as follows: (a) contributions, (b) practical implications, (c) limitations, and (d) tension (e) recommendations.

Contributions

It is my hope that this study will make a contribution to what is known about Nigerian voluntary immigrants in the United States, and this will lead to more research. Additional studies should follow so that their achievement, contributions and struggles will be part of the annals of American folk culture. Further, it is anticipated that when people learn about and are familiar with Nigerian Americans, the familiarity will promote respect, understanding and less prejudice.

Practical Implications

This study adds information and theory to better understand U.S. diverse and multicultural population, especially the newcomers, it to see Nigerians through Nigerians eyes. Findings and conclusions may be useful to educators to help understand their students’ parents’ expectations and to strengthen communication between school and home.
Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is that I am the lone researcher, and my viewpoints are closely aligned with those of the participants. This may not allow me to all angles that may be present in the findings. I acknowledge my views and I have tried to be objective. During the interviews I strictly kept my opinions on certain issues silent. Another limitation is, the small number of participants (N = 20) which may lessen the likelihood that this research can be generalized to all Nigerian groups or Africans as a whole. This research is exploratory and will lead to additional questions and directions of study to fully explore the topic. Parent participants in this study are all professional class and this has given them access to better education for their children; furthermore, they also have been through the education system both in the U.S and Nigeria, which has allowed them to learn the intricacies of these process, making it easier for them to help their children in navigating the system. Perhaps this group was distinctive in capitalizing successfully on their human, social, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1974; Rueda, Monzó, & Arzubiaga, 2003). They have made use of multiple sources of social resources. The parent participants spoke about making use of extensive network of friends and family and getting involving in all school and extracurricular activities that would advance their expectations for their children academic achievements.

Tension

There are undercurrents of tension within the great picture of success in this study. Adult children interviewed not only feel great pressure from home to do well in their schooling, but, they also feel that the school community applies undue pressure on them to be better than others because of their minority status.
Parents work hard with the schools to make sure their children are not falling behind; they advocate for them and are involved as much as possible in every facet of school demands. There is clearly an open channel of communication between these parents and their children’s schools. However, nearly all the adult children participants voiced a disturbing situation: they reported that they feel they have to “give more than 110%” to be recognized by their teachers. They have to work much harder to get the same recognition as their peers from their school community. In other words, they have to be a model child to all or be labeled as a bad “black kid.” They feel they are constantly representing a maligned community. This is disturbing. In a multicultural society like ours, no child should walk on eggshells around his or her teachers and school community for the fear of being labeled. Our schools should try to give continuous in-service training to all who have responsibilities towards children of color; this will enable them to be as judgment free as possible. School curricula should reflect all cultures and ethnic groups’ contributions. This said many right-thinking teachers and the community of educators in general have supported the successes of these adult children and their parents, contributing immensely to the social and cultural capital wealth of these voluntary immigrant families and the new nation in which they reside.

Recommendations

From what the participants said, it is clear that they would want the teachers to:

- Maintain a respectful and professional channel of communication between themselves and Nigerian immigrant families.
- Reserve judgment about their child until they have met and spoken to the family.
• Understand that their children can learn and are endowed with the capability to do so.

• Beware of letting racial prejudices towards African Americans/Nigerian Americans cloud their judgment.

• Learn as much as possible about Nigerian cultures in order to help the Nigerian children in their classroom.

• Celebrate diversity in their curriculum and their classroom.

• Actively seek opportunities for professional growth that can teach them more about Nigerian culture.

• Make it their goal to create world citizens of their students; and model being world citizens themselves.

Summary

In this chapter, discussed the results presented in Chapter 4, which were organized under the overarching research question and 3 related questions. The dynamic of the interplay among all the actors (participants’ Life History in Nigeria, coming to America, children in America) are diagramed in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4. Variables include beliefs and expectations generated in the two cultures, family, home, community, school, overlaying political developments, motivation, and sociocultural factors that connect, merge, push-and-pull throughout the lives of the participants. All parent participants’ responses highlight the fact that Nigerian and American cultures are influential in how they parent, and these enable the successes of their children in education.

The results of this study also show that the parent participants are a product of three systems of education, the Nigerian indigenous education system (which was still at
play in Nigeria at the beginning of their education and it was under this system that their own parents were tutored); the Colonial education system of which the driving forces are Catholic and Protestant churches from Europe and America (their main purpose was to convert souls and reshape the African ways of life which many of them saw as "less than or even Barbarian" compared to what they have to offer, and of course, winning the hearts of the young, which would provide labor and materials for Europe’s development in the 19th and 20th century); and finally, the last educational system is a parallel system of schools set up by Nigerian government reclaiming Nigerian identity and culture.

References to the literature bearing directly on these discussions include Ogbu’s *cultural frame of reference*, a discourse on minority education that sheds light on the difficulty experienced by some minorities within the cultural and language milieu of the classroom. Berry’s work on acculturation (1997) and Banks’ six-tier typology of cultural identity (2001); and Rueda, Monzó, & Arzubiaga, (2003) work on cultural capital were also discussed in the light of my findings. The work of Merchant, Paulson and Rothlisberg (cited in Deforges & Abouchaar, 2003) and Nehyba, et al. (cited in Deforges & Abouchaar, 2003) provided the basis for the adapted figures depicting the dynamics of parental expectations, school, support, and student achievement.

It is the marriage of the two cultures, and the human behavioral patterns that emerge, that become the basis for my conclusions and theory outlined therein.

The sociostructural foundation upon which participant parents credit their parental expectations and successes are hard work and perseverance. They and their children believe that “effort begets luck”.
Participants’ discourses took us on a journey into the role of indigenous education of their parents and their lives; this was the foundation on which all other subsequent education of these men and women was built. Parent participants past experiences in post-Colonial schooling times in Nigeria were also rooted in parochial, public and private schools. Many of their own parents were not financially well to do and suffered financial hardships, but they insisted that their children go to school because they believed in education as the foundation for a better life. The participants also spoke about the role of their siblings, their friends and their communities, in helping them achieve their educational goals. The post-Colonial Nigeria and its oil boom dollars further propelled some of these participants into the Western world to gain knowledge in order to help build the nation for a number of reasons, many did not return. As the participants became parents themselves in the United States, they employed all the sociocultural and sociostructural knowledge gleaned from their past and present experiences to raise and educate academically successful children in the United States.

During the interviews with the adult children, it is evident that these students are self-assured and are academically and life competent. They have successfully and positively internalized their parents’ expectations for them and have grown to be self-motivated and purposeful people as indicated by their narratives. Upon further reflection, I realized that these narratives are much more than stories of educational attainment and success. The narratives are also about all human yearnings. They are about raison d’être, the strive for personhood or becoming an Omoluabi. The results of this study have resulted in conclusions based on the four research questions. From these results, a Nigerian folk theory of parental expectations of voluntary immigrants has emerged.
Specific recommendations for teachers for the betterment of professional practice, schools, students, parents and community are suggested.
APPENDIX A

Demographic Questionnaire for Parents

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<th>Please circle one:</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
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<tr>
<td>Occupation:</td>
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<td>How long have you lived in the United States?</td>
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<td>How many children do you have?</td>
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<td>What are your children’s ages?</td>
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Demographic Questionnaire for Adult Children Participants

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Education level:</th>
<th>Where were you born?</th>
<th>Occupation:</th>
<th>Email address:</th>
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APPENDIX B

Protection of Human Subjects/IRB Certification

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I
Committee on Human Studies

MEMORANDUM
April 30, 2007

TO: Dolapo Adeniji Neill
Principal Investigator
Curriculum and Instruction-Education

FROM: William H. Deni
Executive Secretary

SUBJECT: CHS #15224- "Parental Expectations of Nigerian Immigrants in Their Children's School Achievement: A Qualitative Study of First Generation Nigerian Parents in Vermont and Michigan"

Your project identified above was reviewed and has been determined to be exempt from Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations, 45 CFR Part 46. Specifically, the authority for this exemption is section 46.101(b)(2). Your certificate of exemption (Optional Form 310) is enclosed. This certificate is your record of CHS review of this study and will be effective as of the date shown on the certificate.

An exempt status signifies that you will not be required to submit renewal applications for full Committee review as long as that portion of your project involving human subjects remains unchanged. If, during the course of your project, you intend to make changes which may significantly affect the human subjects involved, you should contact this office for guidance prior to implementing these changes.

Any unanticipated problems related to your use of human subjects in this project must be promptly reported to the CHS through this office. This is required so that the CHS can institute or update protective measures for human subjects as may be necessary. In addition, under the University's Assurance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the University must report certain situations to the federal government. Examples of these reportable situations include deaths, injuries, adverse reactions or unforeseen risks to human subjects. These reports must be made regardless of the source funding or exempt status of your project.

University policy requires you to maintain as an essential part of your project records, any documents pertaining to the use of humans as subjects in your research. This includes any information or materials conveyed to, and received from, the subjects, as well as any executed consent forms, data and analysis results. These records must be maintained for at least three years after project completion or termination. If this is a funded project, you should be aware that these records are subject to inspection and review by authorized representatives of the University, State and Federal governments.

Please notify this office when your project is completed. We may ask that you provide information regarding your experiences with human subjects and with the CHS review process. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your project. Any subsequent reactivation of the project will require a new CHS application.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require assistance. I will be happy to assist you in any way I can.

Thank you for your cooperation and efforts throughout this review process. I wish you success in this endeavor.

Enclosure

2540 Māile Way, Spalding 253, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822-2303
Telephone: (808) 956-5007, Facsimile: (808) 956-8883, Website: www.hawaii.edu/irb
An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution
Appendix B (continued).

Protection of Human Subjects
Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption
(Common Rule)

Affirm: Research activities involving human subjects may not be conducted or supported by the Department and Agencies adopting the Common Rule (45CFR46.102(a), reissue 12, 1991) unless the activities are exempt, determined as approved in accordance with the Common Rule. See section 101(b) of the Common Rule for exemptions. Institutions submitting applications or proposals for support must submit certification of appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) review and approval to the Department or Agency in accordance with the Common Rule.

Institutions must have an assurance of compliance that applies to the research as conducted and should submit certification of IRB review and approval with each application or proposal unless otherwise advised by the Department or Agency.

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<tr>
<th>1. Request Type</th>
<th>2. Type of Mechanism</th>
<th>3. Name of Federal Department or Agency and, if known, Application or Proposal Identification No.</th>
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4. Title of Application or Activity
"Parental Expectations of Nigerian Immigrants in Their Children's School Achievement: A Qualitative Study of First Generation Nigerian Parents in Vermont and Michigan"

5. Name of Principal Investigator, Program Director, Fellow, or Other
Dolapo Adeniji Nell

6. Assurance Status of this Project (Respond to one of the following)

[X] This Assurance, on file with Department of Health and Human Services, covers this activity.
Assurance Identification No.: IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption
(If applicable)

[ ] This Assurance, on file with [agency/department], identifies the purpose or project and covers the activity.
Assurance No.: IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption
Expiration date: (If applicable)

[ ] No assurance has been filed for this institution. This institution declares that it will provide an Assurance and Certification of IRB review and approval upon request.

[X] Exemption Status: Human subjects are involved, but this activity qualifies for exemption under Section 101(b), paragraph 2.

7. Certification of IRB Review (Respond to one of the following if you have an Assurance on file)

[ ] This activity has been reviewed and approved by the IRB in accordance with the Common Rule and any other governing regulations.
by: [ ] Full IRB Review on (date of IRB meeting) of [ ]Expedited Review on (date)
[ ] less than one year approval, provide expiration date

[ ] This activity contains multiple projects, some of which have not been reviewed. The IRB has granted approval on condition that all projects covered by the Common Rule will be reviewed and approved before they are initiated and that appropriate further certification will be submitted.

8. Comments

9. The official signing below certifies that the information provided above is correct and that, as required, future reviews will be performed until study closure and certification will be provided.

10. Name and Address of Institution

   University of Hawaii at Manoa
   2444 Dole Street, Beckman Hall
   Honolulu, HI 96822

   [ ] Title
   Compliance Officer

   [ ] Signature

   [ ] Date
   April 30, 2007

   Authorized for local Reproduction

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APPENDIX C

Consent Form

Agreement to Participate in
PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS OF NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS
FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FIRST GENERATION NIGERIAN PARENTS IN
VERMONT AND MICHIGAN

Dolapo Adeniji-Neill
Principal Investigator
802-869-2143
808-223-6291 (Cell)
dolapo@hawaii.edu

This research project is being conducted as a component of a dissertation for a doctoral
degree. The purpose of this study is to listen to the voices of Nigerian parents in regards
to their expectations about their children’s education and their role in their children’s
educational success. This exploration will concentrate in particular on how cultural and
historical experiences affect parental expectations in children’s education.

Participation in the project will consist of filling out a form on background information
about yourself, and an interview with the investigator. Interview questions will focus on
what your expectations are for your children’s educational achievement. No personal
identifying information will be included with the research results. Completion of the
form containing background data should take no more than 5 minutes. Each interview
will last no longer than 90 minutes. Approximately 10 people will participate in the
study. Interviews will be audio recorded for the purpose of transcription.

The investigator believes there is little or no risk to participating in this research project.
However, there may be a small risk that you will experience psychological pain when
closely examining your past involvement in your children’s education.

Participating in this research may be of no direct benefit to you. It is believed, however,
the results from this project will help to identify why parental expectations is valuable to
students success. There will be no compensation for time spent participating in the
research project.

Research data will be confidential to the extent allowed by law. Agencies with research
oversight, such as the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review
research data. All research records will be stored in a locked file in the Principal
Investigator's office for the duration of the research project. Audiotapes will be destroyed.

Appendix C (continued).

immediately following transcription. All other research records will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time during the duration of the project with no penalty.

If you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact the researcher, Dolapo Adeniji-Neill, at 802-869-2143 (H) or 808-223-6291 (Cell)

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the UH Committee on Human Studies at (808) 956-5007.

**Participant:**
I have read and understand the above information, and agree to participate in this research project.

________________________________________
Name (printed)

________________________________________
Signature

___________
Date
Interview Questions for Adult Participants

Interview no. 1: Life History

This interview seeks to establish a context from which to consider the participants’ expectations about their children’s school achievement. In keeping with the phenomenological belief that our perceptions and experiences are mediated by our past environment and lived experiences, the first interview focuses on the life history of the participants.

1. Tell me about yourself, how you grew up, about your parents and your schooling experiences.
   a. What is your first memory of schooling?
   b. How old were you?
   c. What was the situation?
   d. How do you perceive your parents’ involvement in your early schooling?

2. Did you go to high school?
   a. Tell me about your high school learning experiences.

3. Did you go to college or professional school?
   a. Tell me about your undergraduate learning experiences.
   b. Tell me about your other schooling experiences.

4. What were your parents’ goals and aspirations for you?

5. Have you met those goals and aspirations?
Interview no. 2: Parental Expectations of the Participants

I will begin with: I have some questions about your expectations for your children’s education. There is no right or wrong answer. I just want to have a discussion with you. Please feel free to give me stories and anecdotes as you see fit.

1. What are your expectations for your child’s education?
   a. How are these expectations influenced by your personal beliefs and life experiences in Nigeria?
   b. How are these expectations influenced by your personal beliefs and life experiences in the United States?

2. Do you have discussions about your expectations with your child?
   a. Does your child understand your expectations? Give me an example, please.
   b. How do you convey your expectations to your child? Tell me some stories regarding this, please.

3. How do you define achievement or success for your child?
   a. Are you satisfied with your child’s success (performance) in school?
   b. As a minority in America, how important is it for your child to do well in school?
   c. Have your expectations changed since you came to America?

4. How do you help your child meet your expectations?
   a. Do you think your expectations motivate your child to do well at school? (Achievement motivation: goal orientation, self-efficacy
Appendix D (continued).

c. What factors do you think are important in helping your child to succeed at school?

5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of our Nigerian cultural heritage for your children’s school achievement?

6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the American cultural heritage for your children’s school achievement?

7. Imagine your child at the age of 30; what would your child have become?

Interview no. 3: Exit interview/Participant Co-evaluation of Data.

Before this exit interview, I gave participants copies of the transcripts from their first two interviews. Then, I ask the participants to provide additions and/or corrections to our previous interviews and to discuss key concepts that have been uncovered in the course of all three interviews.

1. Now that you have had a chance to review the transcripts of our previous discussions, are there any corrections or additions you would like to make?

2. Do you feel your goals for participating have been met?
   a. In what ways were your goals met or not met?
   b. Why or why not?

3. Can you reflect on the possible outcomes of this study?
   a. For yourself?
   b. For others who might read this work?

Appendix D (continued).
4. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

**Interview Questions for Adult Children**

(Pre interview: I have some questions about your parents' expectations and your school achievement. Please feel free to talk about anything. This is not meant to judge; rather it is a way to confirm and support your parents' role in helping you to achieve academic success. No names will be attached to the answers.)

1. What are your parents’ expectations for you? Was it made clear to you what your parents sought for your academic achievement?

2. Please elaborate by telling me a story or anecdotes of when you realized this.

3. Do you think your parents’ expectation for your education was too high? Too low?

   Or just right? Please explain by giving an anecdote.

4. Are your self-expectations similar to your parents’ expectations for you, or different?

   Please explain.

5. If your parents’ expectations for your education are similar to yours, are you meeting these expectations? If yes, please explain.

6. If you do not agree with your parents’ expectations, please explain the reasons why you disagree.

7. To what do you attribute your success in school? Luck? or Effort?

8. Please list three important factors that have been crucial to your success in school.

Appendix D (continued).
9. How do you identify yourself in the United States?

10. How do you feel as a minority student in the United States?

11. How important is (was, if you have finished school) it for you to do well in school?

12. What do you like about the Nigerian culture?

13. What do you dislike about the Nigerian culture?

14. What do you like about the American culture?

15. What do you dislike about the American culture?

16. Do you talk more to your parents or to your friends?

17. How do you see yourself when you reach the age of 30?

(Appendix D, interview questions adapted from Li, 2001).
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