

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHNIC IDENTITY, PERCEIVED
ACCEPTANCE, AND SOCIOCULTURAL ADJUSTMENT OF AFRICAN
STUDENTS IN THE US**

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By

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DEDICATION

To *vakoma* (big sister), for who you were.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
ABSTRACT	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background and Purpose of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Rationale and Significance of the Study	8
Definition of Terms	9
Ethnic Identity	9
Sociocultural Adjustment	10
Acceptance of Immigrants and Sojourners	11
Perceived Acceptance	12
Immigrants and Sojourners	12
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	13
African Students in the United States	13
Sociocultural Adjustment	16
The Psychological Acculturation Model	16
The Interactive Acculturation Model	18
The Relative Acculturation Extended Model	20
Antecedents of Sociocultural Adjustment	21
Sociocultural Adjustment of African International Students	23
Risk Factors for Sociocultural Adjustment	24
Protective Factors for Sociocultural Adjustment	25
Ethnic Identity	26
Ethnic Identity Development Process	27
Model of Ethnic Identity Development	28
Minority Ethnic Identity Development Models	28
Black Identity Development Models	29
Critique of Theoretical Models of Ethnic Identity Development	30
Identity Development among African International Students	31
Acceptance of Immigrants and Sojourners	35
Factors Influencing Differential Acceptance	36
Acceptance of African Immigrants and Sojourners	38
Perceived Acceptance by Immigrants and Sojourners	39
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	42
Research Design	43
Phase 1: The Qualitative Study	46
Reflexivity	46
Theoretical Approach	49
Methodology	51
Ethical Considerations	51
Data Collection Methods	52

Triangulation of Data Collection Methods	57
Data Coding and Analyses	58
Trustworthiness	60
Phase 2: Quantitative Study	62
Measurements	62
Participants	69
Hypotheses	70
Data Analyses	72
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	75
Qualitative Results.	77
What Characterizes the Identity of African Students in the United States?	77
Oh! Yeah, that African Girl! Negotiating a Continental Identity	78
Navigating the Intellectual Identity	79
Negotiating Racial Identity.	84
Cultural Identity	90
How do African Students Perceive the Level of their Acceptance by the Host?..	92
The Image of Africa and its Effects on Perception of African Students..	93
Undermined Capabilities.	94
Hierarchy of Acceptance	96
Differential Acceptance by Ethnic Groups	100
What are the sociocultural adjustment experiences of African students?	101
Psychological Effects of the Adjustment Problems.	105
Sociocultural Adjustment Strategies	106
Quantitative Results	108
Preliminary Analysis	108
Descriptive Statistics	109
Bivariate Correlations	111
Structural Equation Modeling	113
Hypotheses Testing Findings	117
Effects of Demographic, Pre-, and Post-migration Variables	119
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS	124
Research Question 1: The Identity of African Students	124
The African Identity	125
Racial Identity	128
Research Question 2: Perceived Acceptance of African Students	130
Consequences of Negative Meta-perceptions	133
Research Question 3: The Sociocultural Adjustment of African Students	134
Sociocultural Adjustment Strategies	136
Research Question 4: The Relationship among the Constructs.	137
Effects of Demographics, Pre- and Post-Migration Variables	139
Summary	141
Conclusions	142
Practical Implications	143
Limitations of the Study	144

Future Directions	144
REFERENCES	146
APPENDICES	169
Appendix A. Permission to Conduct Observations	169
Appendix B. Invitation to Participate in a Qualitative Study	170
Appendix C. Interview Protocol and Questions	171
Appendix D. Invitation to Participate in a Quantitative Study	172
Appendix E: Survey Instrument	173
VITA	178

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. The Distribution of African Students by Region and Top Ten Sending Countries. . . .	14
2. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants	54
3. Factor Loadings for Items Measuring Ethnic identity Extracted by EFA	64
4. Factor Loadings for Items Measuring Perceived Acceptance Extracted by EFA	66
5. Factor Loadings for Items Measuring Sociocultural Adjustment Extracted by EFA..	67
6. Psychometric Properties of the Study Variables and their Respective Factors	68
7. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants	69
8. Descriptive Statistics for the Measurement Instruments	109
9. Categories and Examples of Participants Responses Reflecting Meta-perceptions. .	110
10. Participants Rankings of Perceived Acceptance by Different Ethnic Groups	111
11. Bivariate Correlations for All Variables	112
12. Model Fit Indices for the Initial Models	114
13. Model Fit Indices for the Revised Models.	115
14. Differences in Mean Scores Based on T-tests.	120
15. Differences in Mean Scores Based on One-way ANOVA	121
16. Differences in Mean Scores Based on One-way ANOVA	122

LIST OF FIGURES

1. The sequential model approach.	45
2. The conceptual model of the hypothesized relationships among the variables	70
3. Final models from single factor CFA	116
4. Final path model	117

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ABSTRACT

Researchers have indicated that international students from Africa experienced more difficulties in adjusting to the US social and academic environment as compared to those from other regions of the world. This study investigated the experiences of African students in relation to their ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment, as well as the interrelationship among the constructs. An exploratory mixed methods research design was utilized in which the qualitative phase was conducted first, results of which were used to inform and guide the quantitative phase. The first three research questions of the study sought to qualitatively explore the emergent constructs whereas the fourth research question sought to explore the relationship among the constructs.

African students in this study experienced varied challenges as they navigated into their new environment. They, however, rarely sought professional assistance; rather, they preferred culturally-responsive programs initiated by fellow Africans. African students also negotiated two main identities. First, they consolidated their ethnic and national differences and embraced a monolithic African identity. Second, they negotiated a racial identity in a racially polarized society. African students also exhibited varied

meta-perceptions. Over all, they perceived themselves as better accepted as individuals than they perceived their in-group to be.

In terms of the relationship between ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment, findings revealed that ethnic Pride was positively correlated with sociocultural adjustment factors. The converse was true for Belonging; participants who associated more with fellow Africans tended to experience more adjustment difficulties. Interestingly, participants who held negative meta-perceptions tended to speak more positively of Africa, associate more with fellow Africans, and experience more sociocultural adjustment problems.

Findings also showed that pre- and post-migration factors had a greater influence on the sojourning experiences of African students than demographic factors such as age and gender. Additionally, participants who stayed longer in the United States held more negative meta-perceptions, despite exhibiting a greater understanding of the American value system. Finally, participants from higher socioeconomic backgrounds represented themselves stronger as Africans and also scored significantly higher on sociocultural adjustment factors than those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

In conclusion, this study reveals the multidimensionality of Africanity as a form of ethnic identity and how its different facets relate differently with perceived acceptance and sociocultural adjustment. The study also shows how the sojourning experiences of African students are embedded within their meta-perceptions, with negative meta-perceptions having adverse effects on sociocultural adjustment. Findings from this study have practical implications on the adjustment of African students in particular and international students in general.

CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Background and Purpose of the Study

Even though all college students are bound to encounter adjustment problems, the plight of international students is made worse by difficulties elicited by the new culture (Church, 1982). Additionally, the geographic distance that separates them from their family members decreases their accessibility to familiar support networks (Chalungsooth, & Schneller, 2011). Furthermore, due to their temporary stay, international students, unlike permanent immigrants, do not necessarily require complete assimilation into the host culture; however their sojourning status still seek some sociocultural adjustment.

Cumulative evidence suggests that the sociocultural adjustment process is not the same for all international students, given that they come from different countries, regions, and ethnic backgrounds. Based on a study of acculturative stress of international students, Yeh and Inose (2003) found that region and country of origins accounted for a significant 11.4% of the variance in acculturative stress scores. In a related study, Constantine, Okazaki, and Utsey (2004) reported that international students from sub-Saharan Africa experienced more difficulties in adjusting to the US social environment as compared to those from other regions such as Europe, Asia, and Latin America. In keeping with these findings, an earlier study by Adelegan and Parks (1985) showed that Black African international students had more difficulties in adapting to the US culture than their White and Arabic North African counterparts. There is, therefore, evidence to suggest that sojourners from sub-Saharan Africa face unique stressors and barriers that potentially make their sociocultural adjustment more difficult than their counterparts from other regions. Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell, and Utsey (2005) suggested that the

numeric underrepresentation of African students at US universities potentially makes it more difficult for them to adjust to their host environment. Not much research has, however, been done to investigate possible factors that uniquely influence the sociocultural adjustment of African international students.

Previous studies have delineated several antecedents of sociocultural adjustment of international students and other sojourning people that can be applicable to African students and these include age (Sumer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008), gender (Ward & Kennedy, 1992), marital status (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002), socioeconomic status (Fischer, 2012), length of residence (Swami, Arteche, Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2009), language proficiency (Sumer et al., 2008), and level of education (Swami et al., 2009). In as much as these demographic factors potentially influence the sociocultural adjustment process, very little research has focused on the effects of some psychological processes within international students themselves.

This study qualitatively explores perceptions, feelings, and experiences of African students in the United States in relation to their ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment as well as the relationship among the constructs. However, the overall direction and magnitude of the relationship among the constructs is potentially moderated by several other factors, therefore, the study investigates the effects of demographic characteristics (age, gender, and marital status), pre-migration (rural/urban dwelling and parental education) and post-migration variables (length of residence and family in the US). Understanding the psychological processes related to the sociocultural adjustment of African students may help in formulating culturally appropriate strategies that may help the adaptation process.

Statement of the Problem

Phinney and Onwughalu (1996) proposed that the sociocultural adjustment process of sojourning people is dependent on a number of factors, among them the way in which group members identify with their own culture. Several studies have since investigated predictive effects of ethnic identity on sociocultural adjustment (e.g. Berger-Cardoso & Thompson, 2010; Costigan, Koryzma, Hua, & Chance, 2010; Leung, 2001; Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti, & Solheim, 2004; Portes & MacLeod, 1996; Yoo & Lee, 2008) and conflicting views emerged from these different studies.

On one hand, a strong sense of ethnic identity reportedly helped in promoting a sense of belonging that helped to hasten the sociocultural adjustment process (Liebkind et al., 2004; Phinney & Chavira, 1992). For example, from a study of Vietnamese students studying in Finland, Liebkind et al. (2004) reported that ethnic identity mediated the relationship between perceived discrimination and sociocultural adjustment possibly through alleviating psychological distress and enhancing self-esteem and a sense of mastery. A strong ethnic identity was also associated with better problem-solving and adjustment skills, which enabled the students to cope with the stresses and demands of a new culture. Similarly, a study by Berger-Cardoso and Thompson (2010) investigated resiliency among Latino immigrants in the United States and showed that clinging to cultural values and traditions fostered a sense of emotional protection in the face of adversity, trauma, isolation, and stress related to migration. In keeping with these findings, an earlier study by Bulhan (1978) of Somali students in the United States showed that students who relinquished the 'African identity' exhibited feelings of powerlessness, which potentially impeded their sociocultural adjustment.

On the contrary, several other studies have shown that a strong ethnic identity impedes the sociocultural adjustment process by putting too much emphasis on the individual's difference from the mainstream (e.g. Eshel & Rosenthal-Sokolov, 2000; Eyou, Adair, & Dixon, 2000; Phinney, 1992; Ward & Searle, 1991). There is also evidence that the relinquishment of one's ethnic identity and having a stronger association with the host culture may hasten the sociocultural adjustment process. For example, Eyou et al. (2000) reported that the relinquishment of ethnic identity accelerated the sociocultural adjustment process of Chinese immigrants in New Zealand. In another study, Eshel and Rosenthal-Sokolov (2000) reported that successful sociocultural adjustment among Russian students in Israel entailed the relinquishment of their identity and an adoption of an identity that conformed to the expectations of the new culture. Similarly, Ward and Rana-Deuba's (1999) investigation of acculturation strategies of foreign students in Nepal showed that a stronger identification with the host culture was associated with less social difficulties.

Studies have also shown that a majority of host members in the United States dislike sojourners who express their ethnic identity as compared to those who downplay it (e.g. Kaiser & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009; Yogeewaran, Dasgupta, & Gomez, 2011). Interestingly, the same hosts who publicly endorse principles of multiculturalism tend to respond negatively to sojourning people who identify strongly with their heritage culture (Yogeewaran et al. 2011). It is, thus, arguable from this standpoint that international students who cling to their identity are more likely to experience more difficulties; while those who relinquish their identity and identify with the host culture may encounter fewer difficulties in their sociocultural adjustment process.

However, Swagler and Jome (2005) found that ethnic identity was neither positively nor negatively associated with cross-cultural adjustment among North American sojourners in Taiwan. In light of these conflicting findings, this study investigated the relationship between ethnic identity and sociocultural adjustment among African international students in the United States.

The sociocultural adjustment of immigrant and sojourning people also develops from the degree of receptivity by the host community (Lalonde, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1992). Cumulative evidence has, however, shown that the majority of host members tend to view and accept immigrant groups from different countries and ethnic backgrounds differently. From a national survey conducted in the 1970s, Berry, Kalin, and Taylor (1977) reported that a majority of Canadians evaluated immigrant groups differently depending on how similar they were to the majority hosts. Not surprising, immigrants of Western European origins dominated the top half of the hierarchy, with those of Asian and African descent placed in the bottom half. Berry et al. concluded that such evaluations by host members implied a 'hierarchy of acceptance' of immigrant and sojourning people. Interestingly, a similar study by Moghaddam, Taylor, Tchoryk, Pelletier, and Shepanek (1994) conducted in Canada more than a decade after Berry et al.'s study revealed that the majority of host members seemed to maintain a similar hierarchy to that reported by Berry et al.

The empirical findings that host members have a tendency to rank and subsequently accept ethnic groups of sojourning people differently raise theoretical questions as to the causal factors that underlie these rankings; in particular, the different qualities and characteristics that immigrant groups might possess that determine the

hierarchy of their acceptability or unacceptability. Cumulative evidence suggests that race is one of the driving forces behind the acceptability of sojourning people (Bashi & McDaniel, 1997; Dustmann & Preston, 2004; Ford, 2011). Bashi and McDaniel's (1997) *Theory of Immigration and Racial Stratification* postulates a prevalence of a racial stratification of immigrants in the United States in which Whites are at the top followed by Asians and Latinos and then Blacks from Africa and the Caribbean Islands at the bottom. Furthermore, studies have also shown that sojourning people who are culturally distinct from the dominant group on a range of dimensions are likely to receive a more hostile reception (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997; Ford, 2011; Zhou, 2010). Interestingly, some studies have also shown that sojourners from richer countries are more welcome than those from poor countries. Manguvo (2012) attests that sojourners from wealthier countries have economic and cultural capitals that help them to blend socioculturally in their host societies; as a result, they tend to be more accepted.

The context of sociocultural adjustment of international students is, however, not only dependent on the actual degree of receptivity by the host; it is also influenced by their own feelings of acceptance (Lalonde, et al. 1992; Moghaddam et al. 1994; Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, & O'Neil, 2005). Some sojourners may pay too much attention to how they (or think they) are being perceived and accepted by the host. It is highly possible that sojourners meta-perceptions may impact on how they perceive themselves as well. Lalonde et al. (1992) attest that a sense of acceptance among sojourning people, to some degree, builds upon the real levels of acceptance that majority of host members overtly or covertly display through their day-to-day interactions. Such convictions have their basis from the symbolic interactionist's concept of the 'looking-

glass self,' which refers to the way in which people shape their self-perceptions based on other people's perceptions of them, resulting in a reinforcement of those perspectives on oneself. However, there is also a possibility that some sojourning people may adopt either too positive or too negative perceptions of their acceptance by host members; and as Moghaddam et al. (1994) attests, both extreme feelings can be serious impediments to their identity development and sociocultural adjustment.

Some individuals may exaggerate the extent to which they are negatively perceived and accepted by the host. For example, Moghaddam, et al. (1994) examined self-perceptions and meta-perceptions among European, Haitians, Asians, Latin Americans, and Jewish immigrants and compared with the actual perceptions of these immigrant groups by host Quebecers. These researchers found that Haitian, South Asian, and Latin American immigrants thought their hosts perceived them as belonging less than they themselves believed they belonged in Quebec. Feelings of being negatively perceived by the host may have adverse psychological effects on sojourners' well-being. According to Kurman, Eshel, and Sbeit (2005), such individuals are likely to either adopt overly defensive attitudes of their identity or in some cases they may relinquish their ethnic identity. Ultimately, exaggerated negative perceptions of acceptance may impede their ability to socioculturally integrate.

On the other hand, other sojourners may be overconfident about the extent to which they think they are accepted when in fact majority hosts have inward reservations. In Moghaddam et al.'s (1994) study that compared self-perceptions and meta-perceptions among different immigrant groups, it emerged that European immigrants assumed that they were accepted as Quebecers more than they actually were. In a related study,

Moghaddam and Taylor (1987) reported of Indian immigrant women who perceived themselves as more assimilated to the Canadian mainstream at a higher level than what the majority hosts indicated. Although overconfidence appears to be a positive precondition for cross-cultural adaptation, there may be a possibility that overconfident sojourners do not bother to take necessary steps to deal appropriately with reservations that host members might have towards them. Such people, according to Moghaddam et al. (1994), are likely to be presumptuous when interacting with the host; and such orientations may render their social integration more problematic.

In light of the inconsistent findings on the predictive effects of ethnic identity on sociocultural adjustment and the dearth of information on the relationship between ethnic identity, perceived, acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment, this study qualitatively explores perceptions, feelings, and experiences of African students in the United States in relation to these constructs as well as the relationship among the constructs.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Most studies done in the United States on adjustment of international students focused on Asian and Latin Americans (Breuning, 2007; Urban, Orbe, Tavares, & Alvarez, 2010) with very few studies focusing on Africans. Given that international students from different regions and ethnicities have unique experiences (Manguvo, 2012), it is difficult to extrapolate findings from one group and apply it to another. The general lack of research on African students potentially leads to a general neglect of their specific needs by institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, given the adjustment difficulties that African students reportedly experience as compared to international students from other regions (Constantine et al., 2004), investigating psychological factors that are

related to their sociocultural adjustment may provide important information pertaining to their needs. Against this background, this study explores the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of African students in the United States in relation to their identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment as well as the relationship among the constructs.

A better understanding of the experiences of African international students informs stakeholders at institutions of higher learning on how to deliver culturally competent support programs. Furthermore, an understanding of the experiences of African students may help to correct negative apprehensions that some people might have about sojourning people from Africa. Over all, this study provides relevant information to researchers of immigration, race, and ethnicity; specifically those who seek to understand dynamics of the experiences of sojourning African students.

Definition of Terms

Ethnic Identity

The most widely used definition of ethnic identity is the one proposed by Phinney (1992), where ethnic identity is defined as ‘a sense of self as a member of an [ingroup] that claims a common ancestry or shares at least a similar culture, race, language, kinship, religion, or place of origin’ (p. 63). Phinney further identified subcomponents of ethnic identity such as language, friendship, political activity, religious practices, as well as other cultural activities involving media, literature, arts, and sports. Given the broadness of the subcomponents entailed in the construct, in the context of this study, ethnic identity was mainly conceptualized as one’s degree of Africanness.

Africanness. According to Adem (2009), Africanness refers to Africanness. However, as Zeleza (2006) reiterates, Africanness is a complex phenomenon, a simplistic

definition may underestimate the aspects it may truly represent. In the context of this study, Africanity refers to the degree to which one's attitudes, values, behaviors, beliefs, and actions that are reflective of an African oriented-ness.

Pan-African identity. The term Pan-Africanism was originally coined to refer to political activism aiming at securing equal rights, self-governance, and unity for people of the African descent. However, as Zeleza (2006) attests, the concept has evolved over the years and is now seen more as a cultural and social philosophy than the politically-driven movements of the 20th century. While acknowledging that the definition of modern Pan-Africanism is elusive, this study conceptualizes Pan-African identity as a globalized perception of Blackness.

Cultural identity. According to Phinney, Mase, Chen, Roberts, and Romero (1999), cultural identity refers to one's sense of solidarity with the ideals of his/her ethnic group as well as the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors manifested toward one's cultural groups as a result of this solidarity.

Racial identity. Racial identity is usually conceptualized not in terms of quasi-biological characteristics but as a social construct, which refers to a sense of collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common heritage with a particular racial group (Helms, 1994).

Sociocultural Adjustment

Some researchers have used the terms sociocultural adjustment and psychological adjustment interchangeably. This study, however, conceptualizes them as interrelated but conceptually distinct constructs. According to Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999),

sociocultural adjustment refers to the ability to negotiate interactive aspects of a new culture, whereas psychological adjustment refers to the emotional well-being.

Cross-cultural adaptation. Kim (2001) defines cross-cultural adaptation as the process of achieving social efficacy in a new environment through the development of appropriate cultural communicative competence, functional fitness, and psychological health. In this study, the term cross-cultural adaptation is used interchangeably with sociocultural adjustment.

Acceptance of Immigrants and Sojourners

Acceptance of immigrants and sojourners refers to evaluative attitudes and tendencies by majority host members towards individuals or groups of sojourners based on their group membership or ethnic backgrounds and not their individual characteristics.

Perceived Acceptance

Perceived acceptance in the context of this study refers to the extent to which immigrants and sojourners feels validated and respected as equal partners by host members regardless of race, ethnicity, and nationality of origin.

Meta-perceptions. Meta-perceptions are individual beliefs about impressions that others have about oneself (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993). In this study, meta-perceptions are also viewed as collective beliefs about majority hosts' perceptions of one's in-group.

Meta-stereotypes. According to Vorauer, Main, and O'Connell's (1998) Meta-stereotypes refer to a person's beliefs regarding the stereotype that out-group members hold about one's in-group.

Immigrants and Sojourners

An immigrant is a person who settles permanently in another country whereas a sojourner stays in another country temporarily. Ward, Borchner, and Furham (2001) suggest a period of six months to five years as ideal for a sojourning status. Transitional experiences of immigrants and sojourners are, by and large, very similar; as a result literature pertaining to both immigrants and sojourners is widely used in this study.

African International Students. Delineation should be made to the population of African international students referred to in the context of this study. African international students refer to students enrolled in US colleges and universities whose home country is in sub-Saharan Africa and have lived there for a significant part of their lives. The study excludes African students who were born in the United States as well as those who left their home countries at a young age. According to Essandoh (1995), international students from sub-Saharan Africa display fundamental similarities with regards to their cultural background, and for this reason, students from Arabic North African countries were excluded in this study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study explored perceptions, feelings, and experiences of African students in the United States in relation to their identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment as well as the relationship among the constructs. This chapter reviews general literature in relationship to the constructs under investigation. As noted by Best and Khan (1993), a review of related literature links existing information with the problem under investigation, thus, providing insights on how we can build upon existing knowledge. Furthermore, a review of related literature widens the research problem, which enables a better approach, refinement, and focus on the problem under investigation (Leedy, 1981). This chapter presents a historical overview of African students in the United States. The chapter further explores different theoretical models of ethnic identity and sociocultural adjustment and how the models relate to our understanding of ethnic identity and sociocultural adjustment of African students. Additionally, the chapter discusses factors that influence acceptability of sojourning people in general as well as the influence of perceived acceptance on sojourners' identity development and sociocultural adjustment.

African Students in the United States

An estimated 68 Africans had sojourned to United States for studying purposes by the beginning of the 20th century and their numbers remained very low throughout the early and mid-twentieth century (Williams, 1980). A drastic increase, however, occurred in the 1970s and the decades to follow. An estimated 7,000 Africans were studying in the United States in the 1970s, constituting about 5.6% of the total international student population (Laosebikan, 2012). According to Arthur (2001), these early groups of African students provided the nucleus for African immigrant communities due to the

restrictive immigration laws of the time. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of African students in US universities continued to increase; however, it has remained static in the last decade (Institute of International Education, 2011). In 2011, there were 36,690 Africans studying in the United States, making up about 5.1 percent of all international students (Institute of International Education, 2011). Table 1 below shows the distribution of international students from sub-Saharan Africa by region (East, West, Central, and Southern Africa) and nationality of origin (top ten countries) in the period between 2005 and 2011, as reported by the Institute of International Education (2011).

Table 1

The Distribution of African Students by Region and Top Ten Sending Countries

Region/ Country	Academic year					
	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11
W/Africa	13,846	13,344	13,632	13,837	14,064	14,446
E/Africa	10,670	10,579	10,081	10,411	9,872	8,863
S/Africa	5,197	5,099	4,678	5,613	5,313	5,330
C/Africa	2,825	3,257	3,405	2,819	2,827	2,831
TOTAL	32,528	32,279	31,796	32,680	32,076	31,470
Nigeria	6,192	5,943	6,222	6,256	6,568	7,148
Kenya	6,559	6,349	5,838	5,877	5,384	4,666
Ghana	3,160	2,961	2,895	2,988	2,951	2,900
Cameroon	1,582	1,799	1,891	1,826	1,881	1,659
Ethiopia	1,266	1,328	1,316	1,583	1,553	1,392
Zimbabwe	1,704	1,518	1,421	1,269	1,159	1,135
Tanzania	1,239	1,196	1,192	1,217	1,098	1,006
I/Coast	656	651	711	806	867	904
Uganda	685	743	769	836	852	820

Notes

I/Coast=Ivory Coast. S/Africa= South Africa

There are several reasons that continue to draw prospective students from Africa to study in the United States. Most tertiary institutions especially in sub-Saharan Africa have limited capacities; as a result, they have very stringent entry requirements that are not met by many prospective students (Omosho, 2005). Furthermore, most tertiary institutions lack the capacity to offer graduate-level courses that students might be interested in pursuing. Moreover, several of these universities lack adequate teaching and learning resources. In reality of this, the dream of many prospective students in Africa is to study abroad, and the United States is a destination of choice for many of them.

Additionally, several African countries have massive government-funded educational programs in which students and civil servants are sponsored to study in the United States, with the hope that the trained personnel would bring back expertise that would contribute to the social and economic development of their respective countries (Arthur, 2001). In addition, non-governmental organizations and private companies also sponsor African students to study in various fields in US colleges and universities.

Studying in the United States is generally perceived as a great privilege with those who return to their home countries often assuming high positions both in the public and private sectors (Omosho, 2005). As a result, most African students come to the United States with great enthusiasm to acquire expertise in their respective fields of study. Originally, most of them come with the purpose of advancing themselves educationally and hope to return to their home countries upon completion of their studies. However, in some cases, the training they receive in the United States cannot be adequately applied in their home countries due to limited resources, resulting in some of them prolonging their stay in the United States; ultimately transitioning from educational sojourners to

permanent immigrants (Laosebikan, 2012). Their prolonged stay presses a greater need for sociocultural adjustment. Even those who have concrete plans to return to their home countries upon completion of their studies, their temporary stay still requires some sociocultural adjustment. Therefore, the sociocultural adjustment of international students into both the formal and informal social systems of the host society is crucial.

Sociocultural Adjustment

This study investigated the sociocultural adjustment experiences of African students in the United States. Sociocultural adjustment is the ability to fit in and negotiate interactive aspects of a new culture (Searle & Ward, 1990). Subsequent sections will discuss models of acculturation described in literature; highlighting demographic, contextual, and psychological factors that influence the sociocultural adjustment processes and how these models help our understanding of sociocultural adjustment of African students in particular. These different models also examine the acculturative attitudes and preferences of both the sojourning people and those of host members that either impede or hasten sojourners' cross-cultural adjustment process. Various models of acculturation have been used to investigate acculturative strategies adapted by international students in the United States (Sumer et al. 2008; Torres, 2010; Zhou, 2010) and these models can also be applicable to African students. Lastly, risk and protective factors in the sociocultural adjustment of international students in general and African students in particular will be discussed.

The Psychological Acculturation Model

Berry's (1984) *Psychological Acculturation Model* has been widely applied to international students' sociocultural adjustment. This model postulates that immigrants

and sojourners are confronted with issues of deciding whether to retain their native culture or not, and whether to seek or avoid relations with members of the host culture. According to Berry, sojourners can adopt one of the following four acculturation strategies: *assimilation*, which is characterized by relinquishment of one's own cultural identity and adopting the dominant culture; *separation*, which is characterized by the desire to maintain all features of the heritage culture while rejecting relationships with host members; *integration*, which reflects a desire to maintain key features of the heritage culture while adopting some aspects of the host culture; and finally *marginalization*, which is characterized by rejection of contact with both the heritage and the host culture.

Several studies have since been done based on Berry's (1984) model with immigrants and sojourners from different parts of the world (e.g. Koch, Bjerregaard, & Curtis, 2003; Krishnan & Berry, 1992; Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). Findings from these studies suggest that most immigrants and sojourners preferred to adapt to the host environment mainly through integration. A significant proportion of sojourners reportedly preferred assimilation or separation; while marginalization was the least preferred strategy. Furthermore, evidence from a study by Krishnan and Berry (1992) that involved Indian immigrants in the United States suggested that immigrants who adopted the integration strategy were less affected by acculturative stress than those who preferred marginalization.

Despite providing invaluable insights on acculturative strategies of immigrants and sojourners, Berry's (1984) model has several notable weaknesses. One of its major limitations, as highlighted by several authors, is its failure to recognize the significant role played by host members in shaping acculturation orientations of sojourning

individuals or groups (Bourhis, et al., 1997; Navas, Garcia, Sanchez, Rojas, Pumares, & Fernandez, 2005; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdrzalek, 2000; Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001). As argued by Rudmin and Ahmadzadeh (2001), people rarely choose to distance themselves from the community they live; rather, they are forced to marginalize themselves by factors in their host environment. As such, marginalization cannot be conceived solely as a free choice of the sojourning individual or group as suggested by Berry's model, without taking into consideration the contextual environment in which it occurs. For example, a study by Piontkowski et al. (2000) that evaluated predictive variables of acculturation attitudes among dominant groups (Germans, Swiss, and Slovaks) and non-dominant groups (Turks, former Yugoslavians, and Hungarians) showed that the attitudes of the dominant groups had a significant impact on acculturative preferences by non-dominant groups. For example, because Germans were reportedly more accepting to Yugoslav than Turkish immigrants; Yugoslavs generally chose to integrate while Turkish immigrants preferred separation (Piontkowski et al., 2000). This clearly illustrates the influence of host members on sojourners' acculturative preferences.

The Interactive Acculturation Model

In view of the significant influence of host members on immigrants and sojourners' acculturative preferences, Bourhis et al. (1997) proposed the *Interactive Acculturation Model*, which takes into account the role of the host, the sojourning people, and their interaction. The model, thus, has three major components, namely: acculturation orientations of immigrants; acculturation orientations of the host majority; and the outcomes resulting from the interactions between acculturation orientations of the two

groups. The model further postulates that sojourning people prefer *assimilation* when host members encourage them to give up their own cultural identity in order to fit in the dominant culture. On the contrary, *segregation* happens when host members do not want immigrants to adopt the host culture but prefer that they maintain their cultural identity. Similarly, immigrants and sojourners tend to prefer the *integration* strategy when host members accept and value both the immigrants' heritage culture and their adoption of some characteristics of the host culture. Lastly, in the event that the majority hosts are reluctant to accept both the maintenance of the heritage culture and the adoption of the host culture, then immigrants are likely to adopt an *exclusion* orientation.

The Interactive Acculturation Model also places high importance on relational outcomes that emanate from interactions between preferred acculturative orientations by sojourners and host members. Acculturation combinations, depending on various factors, could potentially lead to the following outcomes: consensual (intergroup harmony), problematic (partial agreement), or conflicting (partial agreement) outcomes. Previous studies have shown that when sojourners and host members share integration or assimilation orientations, chances of positive relational outcomes are high (Ngo, 2008). On the other hand, a mismatch of acculturative orientations often culminates in problematic or conflicting relational outcomes (Bourhis et al., 1997; Ngo, 2008).

The Interactive Acculturation Model provides an important theoretical framework that illustrates the significant role of the host on acculturative preferences of sojourning people. However, there still is a wide spectrum of variables and psychological processes that potentially influence the cross-cultural adjustment process that are not accounted for in this model; hence, alternative models have been proposed.

The Relative Acculturation Extended Model

Elaborating on the importance of the interaction between acculturation attitudes of the host and immigrants' preferences, Navas et al. (2005) proposed the *Relative Acculturation Extended Model*, which makes a distinction between *ideal* and *real* situations in which the acculturation process takes place. Based on this model, the ideal situation for immigrants entails their ability to freely choose an acculturation strategy that best suits their needs. On the perspective of the hosts, the ideal situation would be to have immigrants adopt an acculturation strategy they deem appropriate. On the contrary, the real situation in the case of immigrants and sojourners refers to acculturation strategies they actually put into practice, and for the host members, it refers to their perceptions of acculturation strategies that the immigrants actually put into practice.

The Relative Acculturation Extended Model explores beyond the sojourner-host dimensions and distinguishes seven spheres or domains of acculturation, namely: political, work, economic, social, family, religious, and ways of thinking. In a follow-up empirical study seeking to extend the theoretical propositions of the model, Navas, Rojas, Garcia, and Pumares (2007) reported that acculturation choices of Maghrebis and sub-Saharan African immigrants in Spain coincided with those of the host only in certain domains such as work and economic spheres, but revealed significant differences in the cultural spheres, where immigrants preferred separation whereas the hosts preferred assimilation (Navas et al., 2007). This demonstrates that sojourning people's acculturative preferences may not be uniform across different spheres of life. The Relative Acculturation Extended Model, therefore, provides a more precise perspective of acculturation strategies as compared to earlier models.

Although the models of acculturation place emphasis on acculturative preferences of immigrants and the host as well as the outcomes of their interaction, evidence has also shown that the cross-cultural adjustment process is influenced by socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, level of education, length of residence, marital status, socioeconomic status, language proficiency as well as pre-migration characteristics. The next section, therefore, discusses literature on the predictive effects of these demographic variables and pre-migration characteristics on sociocultural adjustment.

Antecedents of Sociocultural Adjustment

Age. Evidence from previous studies that investigated predictors of depression and anxiety among international students suggests that age is an important variable contributing to acculturative anxiety. For example, a study by Sumer et al. (2008) with international students in the United States showed that older students exhibited higher levels of anxiety as compared to younger ones, possibly because they tend to be more traditional and resistant to adopting the host culture's norms and values.

Marital status. Research has shown that the sociocultural adjustment of international students is influenced by marital status. For example, a study by Poyrazli and Kavanaugh (2006) showed that married international students who lived with their families reportedly experienced lower levels of adjustment difficulties as compared to their unmarried counterparts. As suggested by Poyrazli and Kavanaugh, it is possible that married students get social support from their families. However, due to financial constraints, a significant number of international students particularly from sub-Saharan Africa are forced to leave their families behind when they sojourn to the United States.

Gender. The effect of gender on sociocultural adjustment of sojourning people has been extensively studied, with contradictory results reported. On one hand, some studies have shown female international students to have higher emotional, physiological, and behavioral reactions to acculturative stressors (e.g. Misra, Crist, & Burant, 2003; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002). On the other hand, there is also evidence showing that, despite experiencing more acculturative stress, female international students tend to have more social provisions (Bang, Muruiki, & Hodges, 2008). On the contrary, other researchers have reported no relationship between gender and sociocultural adjustment (Sumer et al. 2008; Poyrazli, Arbona, Bullington, & Pisecco, 2001). Interestingly, Sumer (2008) concluded, as compared to males, females tend to identify more with their native culture as an adjustment strategy. These conflicting findings press for the need to further investigate effects of gender on adjustment.

Length of residence. Cumulative evidence shows that international students adjust to their host better with a longer duration of stay. For example, from a study that investigated the possible effects of length of residence on cultural adjustment and psychological distress among Asian and Latin American international students in the United States, Wilton and Constantine (2003) reported that greater length of stay in the United States was associated with less cross-cultural adjustment difficulties. Similar findings were reported from a study by Polek, van Oudenhoven, and ten Berge (2008) with Polish, Russian, and Hungarian sojourners in Netherlands.

Pre-migration characteristics. According to Kessler-Harris and Yans-Mclaughlin (1978), the sociocultural adjustment of sojourning people is, to some degree, dependent on the pre-migration characteristics of the sojourning individual. From a study

with Ghanaian international students in the United States, Fischer (2012) reported that Ghanaian students' socioeconomic background prior to sojourning impacted on their attitudes, expectations, and subsequent adaptation to the US culture. There is, however, limited research on the effects of pre-migration characteristics of sojourning people on their adjustment; hence, the need for further investigation on this variable.

Sociocultural Adjustment of African International Students

Cumulative evidence has shown that the sociocultural adjustment process is not the same for all international students given that they come from different countries and ethnicities. Based on a study of acculturative stress of international students in the United States, Yeh and Inose (2003) reported that region of origins accounted for a significant 11.4% of the variance in acculturative stress scores. In a related study, Constantine et al. (2004) reported that Black African students experienced most difficulties in adjusting to the US environment as compared to those from other regions such as Europe, Asia, and Latin America. In keeping with these findings, an earlier study by Adelegan and Parks (1985) showed that Black African students had more difficulties in adapting to the US culture than their White and Arabic North African counterparts. There is, therefore, evidence to suggest that sojourners from sub-Saharan Africa face unique stressors and barriers that potentially make their sociocultural adjustment more difficult than their counterparts from other regions. According to Bhatia and Ram (2001), any consideration of the adaptation of sojourning people must acknowledge the differential presence of unique barriers of adjustment faced by sojourners from different countries and ethnic backgrounds. The subsequent section discusses some of the risk factors that potentially impede the sociocultural adjustment of African international students.

Risk Factors for Sociocultural Adjustment

The dynamics of adaptation of Black Africans is inextricably linked to the Black-White divide that is inherent in US societies (Arthur, 2001); because American society does not make a clear distinction between African ethnic identity and African American racial identity; hence, by American construction of race, Africans are considered Black (Alba & Nee, 2003; Traore, 2006). This racial tag potentially places Africans in the web of race struggles between Black and White people, which, consequently, may impede their ability to foster relations that are crucial for sociocultural adjustment.

Cultural Distance. Previous studies have shown that cultural clashes often occur when the culture of the sojourning group and that of the host are significantly different, with more transitional challenges experienced when the cultural distance is wider (Bourhis et al., 1997; Zhou, 2010). Given that sub-Saharan Africa has a wider cultural distance with the United States as compared to European and Latin American countries (Hofstede, 2001), this may possibly contribute to the difficulties encountered by African students in adapting to the US culture. For instance, African students reportedly display perspective to life such as collective responsibility; as a result, they experience difficulties when interacting with Americans who, according to Swagler and Ellis (2003), tend to emphasize individualism. Furthermore, because of their high power distance orientation (the degree to which they maintain hierarchical authority), most African students tend to keep transitional problems to themselves and are generally not open to discussing personal problems with their academic advisors. Although this could be viewed as an admirable trait in their cultures, harboring personal problems sometimes can impede the cross-cultural adjustment process (Constantine et al., 2005).

Protective Factors for Sociocultural Adjustment

However, in light of the risk factors that potentially impede the sociocultural adjustment of African students, there are also protective factors that potentially help them cope with the challenges. As Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006) point out, the preferences and subsequent adoption of certain acculturative strategies by sojourning people are, to some degree, a result of the interaction between the prevalent acculturative problems and the individuals' coping strategies. Ward et al. (2001) further argue that the coping strategies employed by the extremely marginalized individuals or groups are more effective to their adaptation than institutional support services. The section below, thus, discusses some of the protective factors that potentially hasten the sociocultural adjustment of African students in the United States.

Social Networks. According to Fischer (2012), African students' social networks stem from three sectors, namely: long-distance relationships with friends in their home countries and fellow nationals in the host country; host country nationals such as classmates and neighbors; and fellow international students with whom they share similar challenges of coping with the unfamiliar culture. Manguvo (2012) further postulates that social networking for African students in the United States is strongly fostered through affiliation to African Students Associations that are a common feature in most colleges and universities, where members foster relationships with fellow African students. The critical role of these social networks, as Kim and McKenry (1998) point out, lies in facilitating adjustment within the mainstream culture.

Although most institutions of higher learning in the United States provide a wide range of information about campus resources and facilities that can aid international

students' sociocultural adjustment, international students often find some aspects pertaining to student life being emphasized to be alien and sometimes irrelevant to them (Manguvo, 2012). Not surprising, Aroian (1992) argues that the main source of help and support for internationals is their own social networks. In congruence, Pires, Stanton, and Ostenfeld (2006), argue that social support from ethnic organizations is more effective because people readily embrace information that comes from familiar sources.

Cultural identity. Evidence has shown that the extent to which sojourners identify with their own culture can potentially hasten the adjustment process. From a study that investigated resiliency among Latino immigrants, Berger-Cardoso and Thompson (2010) reported that participants' cultural values and traditions fostered a sense of emotional protection when faced with adversity, trauma, isolation, and stress that were related to migration. However, there are conflicting views on the possible effects of cultural identity on sociocultural adjustment; hence, this study investigated the relationship between ethnic identity and sociocultural adjustment. The following section, therefore, articulates the construct of ethnic identity and the elements it entails by drawing on existing literature.

Ethnic Identity

According to Bernal and Knight (1993), ethnic identity simply refers to the question 'who am I.' The most widely used definition is the one proposed by Phinney (1992), where ethnic identity is defined as 'a sense of self as a member of an [ingroup] that claims a common ancestry or shares at least a similar culture, race, religion, kinship, language, or place of origin' (p. 63). Phinney identified subcomponents of ethnic identity such as language, friendship, political activity, religious affiliation, as well as other

cultural activities involving media, literature, arts, and sports. Bernal and Knight further identified three dimensions of ethnic identity, namely: ethnic labels or terms that people identify themselves; traditions, customs, values and behavior; as well as preferences, feelings, and the amount of value that people have about their ethnic group membership.

Ethnic Identity Development Process

Identity development has been conceptualized as an internal cognitive as well as external psychosocial process. The conceptualization of ethnic identity as an internal cognitive process has its roots in the work of Erikson (1968), who emphasizes cognitive complexities of the self-identity development process. Erikson presents identity development as a process located in the core of individuals' internal processes in which the final stage involves coming to terms with an identity that produces an equilibration.

The conceptualization of identity development as an internal cognitive process has, however, been criticized for narrowing identity development in too psychological terms (Penuel & Wertch, 1995; Weinreich, Luk & Bond 1986). Weinreich et al (1996) argue that identity development varies depending on social contexts. In agreement, Penuel and Wertch (1995) attest that ethnic identity is constructed by coordinating other people and one's self-perceptions. This demonstrates how the sociocultural environment is integral in ethnic identity development over and above cognitive processes.

Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory helps to explain identity development from both the cognitive and the sociocultural perspectives (Penuel & Wertch, 1995). According to Vigotsky, development takes place in socially and culturally shaped contexts; as such, ethnic identity development should be perceived as a product of active internalization of the existing social and cultural contexts. A Vygotskian approach,

therefore, appropriately recognizes sojourning experiences as integral to the process of ethnic identity development for African students.

Building upon the traditional Eriksonian identity development theory, proposed theoretical models of ethnic identity describe stage by stage progressions by which individuals perceive, process, integrate, and interpret the external stimuli that lead to the establishment of an ethnic identity. The next section discusses selected theoretical models of ethnic identity development and their relevance to our understanding of ethnic identity development by African students upon sojourning to the United States.

Model of Ethnic Identity Development

Phinney (1993) devised a three-stage *Model of Ethnic Identity Development*, which, purportedly, is applicable to members of all ethnic groups. The model generally begins with an *unexamined ethnic identity* stage at which individuals lack awareness of their ethnic identity or, in some cases, might even have negative views of their ethnic group. The second stage is the *ethnic identity search*, where individuals examine what it means to be a member of an ethnic group. This search phase may be initiated by a significant event in one's life and in the case of minority individuals; usually it is racial discrimination that propels individuals into ethnic identity search. The last stage is the *achieved ethnic identity* and at this stage, individuals have explored their ethnic group membership, resolved racial and ethnic dilemmas, and attained a deeper understanding, appreciation, and/or internalization of their ethnic identity.

Minority Ethnic Identity Development Models

Minority ethnic identity development models were formulated to demonstrate that minority groups in the United States have different and unique stages of ethnic identity

development. For example, Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1998) devised a *Minority Identity Development Model*, which was later renamed the *Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model*. The model identifies five stages of ethnic identity development, namely: conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection, and integrative awareness. People at the *conformity* stage possess self-depreciating attitudes and beliefs. The *dissonance* stage is characterized by conflict between self-depreciating and self-appreciating attitudes. In the *resistance and immersion* stage, the individual rejects the dominant cultural values, endorses minority-held views, and seeks to eliminate oppression of one's minority group. An individual in the *introspection* stage begins to experience feelings of discontent and discomfort with resistance and immersion stage group views that may be too rigid. Finally, minority persons in the *integrative awareness* stage have developed an inner sense of security and now appreciate unique aspects of their culture as well as aspects of the mainstream culture and they also desire to eliminate forms of oppression (Atkinson et al., 1998).

Black Identity Development Models

Although some researchers have advocated the distinguishing of racial from ethnic identity (e.g. Cokely, 2007), the two constructs, as demonstrated by Gfeller and Armstrong (2012), have an inextricable interdependence. Black identity development models explain the process by which Black people search for their racial identity in White-dominated societies. One such is Cross's (1995) *Model of Psychological Nigrescence*, which identifies a four-stage process of racial identity development, namely: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization. At the *pre-encounter* stage, the individual absorbs values of the dominant White culture, including

the notion that “White is right” and “Black is wrong.” The individual seeks to be accepted by Whites and actively or passively distances him/herself from other Blacks. The *encounter* stage is typically precipitated by an event or a series of events that force the individual to acknowledge the impact of racism in one’s life; for example, social rejection by White friends, which forces the individual to focus on his or her racial identity. During the *immersion* stage, the individual surrounds him/herself with visible symbols of Blackness. This stage is also characterized by a tendency to glorify Black people and denigrate White people. As individuals enter the *emersion* stage, they actively explore aspects of their own history and culture; the result of which is the emergence of security in the newly defined and affirmed sense of self. Typically, White-focused anger fades away and the individual establishes meaningful relationships with Whites who are respectful of diversity. Finally, individuals at the *internalization-commitment* stage have found ways to translate their personal sense of Blackness into a general sense of commitment to the concerns of Blacks (Cross, 1995).

Critique of Theoretical Models of Ethnic Identity Development

One major criticism that has been leveled against theoretical models of ethnic identity development, as highlighted by Lewis (1997), is that they present ethnic identity development as progressing sequentially in qualitatively distinctive stages and yet ethnic identity development is a dynamic process that fluctuates depending on the individual and the prevailing contexts. For example, some people may experience elements of various stages simultaneously. In a similar fashion, other people may be fixated at one particular stage; others may advance through all stages faster; while others may regress to a lower stage depending on the situation and prevailing contexts (Sue & Sue, 1999).

Moreover, minority ethnic identity development models present ethnic identity development as being highly dependent on one's experiences with an oppressive society, which might not be always the case (Sue & Sue, 1999). For example, the Model of Psychological Nigrescence has its basis on Black individuals' reaction to White racism.

Although minority ethnic identity development models do not explicitly make reference to unique experiences of immigrants and sojourners (thus, highlighting the need for models that specifically address identity development of immigrants), the models still provide useful theoretical frameworks to our understanding of ethnic identity development among African students in the United States. Specifically, Black racial identity development models are an essential reference point to the understanding of racial and, subsequently, ethnic identity development among Black African students.

Identity Development among African International Students

Sojourning to a new country is a multilevel process that involves a search for an identity in consideration of two incompatible cultures. As a result, some individuals reportedly experience identity distress resulting from divided loyalties to the two cultures (Hernandez, Montgomery, & Kurtines, 2006). Exposure to a new culture influences sojourners to develop, intentionally or unintentionally, new identities, which brings about changes in attitudes towards the self and one's own group as well as broadening of one's perceived in-group identity (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). Reynolds and Pope (1991) outline several components of ethnic identity that develop as minority individuals negotiate their existence in pluralist societies. In most cases, these various components of identity embrace one broad ethnic identity, which usually is in opposition to the mainstream cultural identity. The next sections discuss related literature on how

African international students negotiate intellectual, cultural, social, and racial identities as a reaction to their sojourning experiences in the United States.

‘Africans:’ A continental identity. Inhabitants of continental Africa do not usually refer to themselves as Africans, whether as a racial or as a continental identity. Rather, they recognize themselves with various identities based on ethnicity, class, rural-urban dwelling, and so on. National identities emerge occasionally especially during Independence Day celebrations or international sporting activities (Nesbitt, 2003). The continental identity ‘African’ is, however, foisted on Africans upon sojourning to the West because Africa is often viewed as one huge ‘obscure’ place whose inhabitants are simply Africans. With this attainment of a continental identity; the ethnic, linguistic, and rural-urban divides disappear and African students are suddenly viewed as a monolithic group of Africans. Yet, in reality, Africans in the United States are as diversified as the countries they represent; even within the same country, there may be numerous ethnicities and languages (Arthur, 2001). Therefore most communities and institutions of higher learning have solitary associations representing Africans. In most cases, the continental affiliation brings Africans together with mutual understandings that transcend ethnic and national identities (Manguvo, 2012). However, because of some inherent stereotypical negative perceptions of Africa, the assigned continental identity, as Zeleza (2006) points out, often comes along with a badge of inferiority, which, regrettably, instills a sense of self-depreciation attitudes as some individuals begin to see themselves through the popular eyes of the majority.

Intellectual identity. African students in the United States are confronted with several dualities; as such, Du Bois’ concept of double consciousness, though formulated

in reference to African American intellectuals, is even more applicable to African scholars (Nesbitt, 2003). The double consciousness is spawned by the contradictions between their alienation from Africa and the need to affirm their Africanity. According to Nesbitt, the resolution to the identity crisis posed by this dilemma produces three types of intellectual identities among sojourning African intellectuals, namely: the *comprador intelligentsia*, the *postcolonial critics*, and the *progressive exiles*. People who fall under the *comprador intelligentsia* condemn Africa for corruption, tribalism, ineptitude, and so on. The *postcolonial critics* consider themselves expert interpreters of the African experiences to the West; while *progressive exiles* seek to develop a dignified Pan-African identity by promoting African knowledge.

Pan-African identity. According to Vasquez (2001), most Africans develop a Pan-African identity when they sojourn to the West in an attempt to collectively resist entrenched views about blackness. Consistent with this argument, Arthur (2009) attests that feelings of self-worth among Africans in the United States are interwoven with strong attachment to the core principles of Pan-Africanism. Although Pan-Africanism originally refers to political activism aiming at securing equal rights, self-governance, and unity for people of the African descent, Zeleza (2006) argues that Pan-Africanism has, over the years, taken the dimension of a cultural and social philosophy. A Pan-African identity gives a voice of the presence of blackness in contemporary societies; as a result, there is a tendency among Africans upon sojourning to the West to globalize their blackness within the spectrums of Pan-Africanism (Arthur, 2009).

Racial identity. Most contemporary African students in the United States were raised in racially homogenous societies and they come to the United States with very

little or no understanding of the dynamics of racism (Constantine et al., 2005). With the exception of those from South Africa who experienced Apartheid in recent years, most African students are young adults who grew up in post-colonial eras and have no direct experience of legalized racial discrimination that was prevalent under colonial systems. Furthermore, as Arthur (2001) points out, the reality of being Black but not African American further poses a complexity to their construction of a racial identity. Evidently, despite efforts to distance themselves from inherent racial struggles between Black and White Americans, African students' construction of racial identity is inextricably interwoven with that of African Americans (Arthur, 2001; Manyika, 2001).

Cultural identity. Faced with the challenges of adjusting to a new host environment, a significant number of African students cling to their cultural identities as a means of providing a frame of reference from which to increase awareness of Africa and the positive aspects it represents (Manguvo, 2012). Additionally, a significant proportion of African students in the United States also seek to promote positive aspects of the African culture as a way of dealing with negative commentaries such as the perceived backwardness of Africa (Arthur, 2009). Furthermore, given the clustering of Black racial identity by Americans, some African students deliberately make an effort to highlight cultural distinctiveness between them and African Americans through different means including their dress code (Mwakikagile 2006).

Gendered identity. According to Arthur (2009), an understanding of African women's experiences in the United States is pivotal for an overall understanding of how immigrant women of color negotiate their identity. African women, who constitute about 40% of the total African immigrant population, are arguably at greater risk of identity

crisis than their male counterparts (Arthur, 2009). The convergence of issues pertaining to immigration, changing gender roles, and race-related issues create a unique set of challenges. Having been born and raised in relatively more patriarchal societies, most African immigrant women face challenges when trying to bridge the private-public divide in relationship to gender roles. By leaving their home countries, they ideally gained some power to deconstruct the unequal gender structures they were accustomed to; because the United States provides a relatively more egalitarian society than their home countries. However, although their roles are bound to change in the public sector, values related to division of labor in the family are usually maintained (Arthur, 2009). By maintaining their gender roles in their homes, but not necessarily bound by its renditions in their public roles, African immigrant women construct new identities within the spectrums of their heritage and host cultures (Arthur, 2009).

Over all, identity development among Africans students is, undisputedly, influenced by some contextual factors in their host societies, one of which is the degree of receptivity by the majority of host members (Lalonde et al., 1992). The next section discusses literature on acceptance of immigrants as well as perceived levels of acceptance by the immigrant and sojourning people.

Acceptance of Immigrants and Sojourners

The United States has reportedly accepted more immigrants than all other countries in the world combined (Sanchez, 2011), something that can be attributable to the fact that most Americans are immigrants or descendants of immigrants. According to Lalonde, et al. (1992), the well-being of immigrant and sojourning people develops from the degree of receptivity of the host community. It remains to be explored, however,

whether the receptivity of immigrants by majority of host members in the United States has changed over time. From a national survey conducted in the 1970s in Canada, Berry et al. (1977) reported that majority Canadians differentially evaluated immigrant groups depending on how similar they were to the host. Not surprisingly, immigrants from Western Europe appeared at the top half of the hierarchy and those from Asia or Africa were situated at the bottom half. Berry et al. concluded that such evaluations implied a ‘hierarchy of acceptance’ of immigrants. Interestingly, a similar study by Moghaddam et al. (1994) conducted more than decade after Berry et al.’s study revealed a similar hierarchy of acceptance. Moghaddam et al. investigated native Quebecers’ perceptions of European, Haitian, Asian, Latin American, and Jewish immigrants and found that they perceived European and Jewish immigrants more as ‘Quebecers’ and less as ‘outsiders’ as compared to Haitians, Latin American, and Asian immigrants. In keeping with these findings, Bashi and McDaniel’s (1997) attest that majority of host members in the United States do not view and accept immigrant groups equally.

The empirical findings that host members have tendencies to rank sojourning ethnic groups differently raise theoretical questions as to the causal factors that underlie these rankings, particularly the perceived qualities and characteristics of immigrant groups that might contribute to the differential levels of acceptability. The following section discusses some of the factors that have been presented in literature as having a bearing on the level of acceptability of immigrants and sojourners by host members.

Factors Influencing Differential Acceptance of Immigrants and Sojourners

The acceptance of immigrants worldwide reportedly varies depending on the race. Cumulative evidence suggests that there is generally a higher acceptance of immigrants

with lighter skin (Bashi & McDaniel, Dustmann & Preston, 2006; Ford, 2011). In this regard, Bashi and McDaniel's (1997) reported a prevalence of racial stratification of immigrants in the United States, showing that White immigrants are more easily accepted as compared to Asians and Black immigrants from Africa and the Caribbeans. Ford (2011) reported a similar stratification with immigrants in Europe.

Dixon and Levine (2012) postulate that the differential acceptance of immigrants stems from the stereotypes that people have towards certain racial groups. For example, there is a popular belief in the United States that Asians are intelligent and that Mexicans are lazy (Koleser, 2009). Such beliefs are pivotal in shaping day-to-day interactions. It is, therefore, possible that these two groups may be accepted differently.

Studies have also shown that immigrants and sojourners from richer countries are more accepted than those from poorer countries. In line with this argument, Manguvo (2012) argues that sojourners from wealthier countries have the economic and cultural capital resources that help them to blend socioculturally to the host. Furthermore, studies have also shown that highly educated sojourners are more welcomed than less educated ones. Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010), however, argue that the apparent acceptance of educated sojourners is a result of the fact that they usually interact with educated counterparts who have mutual respect for them.

Cumulative evidence has shown that host members adopt positive orientations to immigrants whose culture is similar to that of the host (Bourhis et al., 1997; Zhou, 2010). In a similar fashion, sojourners who are culturally distinct from the dominant group on a range of dimensions likely receive a more hostile reception (Ford, 2011). Furthermore, the hierarchy of acceptance is also contingent with linguistic and religious proximity.

Over all, factors that determine the levels of acceptability or unacceptability of sojourning people are intertwined. For example, in the United States, it is the White immigrant who is likely to come from a richer country, to be more educated, and to share a homogeneous ethnic and cultural background with the dominant host. Although the factors that influence the acceptability/unacceptability of sojourning people are applicable globally, there are factors that seem to uniquely affect immigrants and sojourners from the continent of Africa. The next section, therefore, narrows down the discourse of acceptability of sojourning people to Africans.

Acceptance of African Immigrants and Sojourners

The factors that influence the acceptability of sojourning people discussed above point to the fact that immigrants and sojourners from Black Africa are possibly among the least accepted. In addition to the factors highlighted above, the context of reception of Africans is also dependent upon the attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes that host members have upon Africans and the African continent.

The popular image of Africa and its effects on acceptability. It is likely that the commonly portrayed image of Africa in the Western world has profound ramifications on acceptability of Africans in the United States. According to Mwakikagile (2006), Africa is most known in the Western world for problems like famine, civil wars, diseases, and high levels of illiteracy. The presence of Africans in the United States is often viewed as a search for better life and education and is cited as proof of the misery experienced in Africa.

The negative and sometimes exaggerated images of Africa often result in serious stigmatization of sojourning people from Africa, leading to their differential treatment in

some settings (Traore, 2006). For example, as observed by Otomosho (2005), in comparison to international students from other regions, Africans are often perceived as ignorant, primitive, and less competent. Omotosho further contends that such negative stereotypical views might negatively affect African students, resulting in limited participation in class as they often feel derided, underestimated, or unacknowledged.

Perceived Acceptance by Immigrants and Sojourners

Although researchers have investigated the differential acceptance of sojourners, there is limited research on perceived acceptance by the sojourning people themselves. It is, therefore, worthwhile to investigate not only the receptive attitudes of the hosts but also the extent to which sojourning people feel accepted by the majority host members.

Controversy, however, exists with regards to the origins and basis of immigrants and sojourners meta-perceptions. Based on a symbolic interactionist concept of the 'looking-glass-self,' meta-perceptions develop as a result of interpersonal social feedback. On the contrary, social cognitivists (e.g. Kenny & DePaulo, 1993) attest that meta-perceptions are independent of the social world; rather, individuals gain insight into other people's views of themselves simply by turning to their own self-perceptions.

There, however, can be a mismatch between sojourners' meta-perceptions and the actual perceptions by the host. For example, there is a possibility that some sojourning people may adopt either too positive or too negative perceptions of their acceptance by host members; and both extreme feelings can be serious impediments to their identity development and sociocultural adjustment.

On one hand, some sojourners may be overconfident about the extent to which they think they are being accepted when in fact the hosts have inward reservations.

Moghaddam, et al. (1994) found that European immigrants assumed that they were accepted as Quebecers more than they actually were. In a related study, Moghaddam and Taylor (1987) reported of Indian immigrant women who perceived themselves as assimilated to the Canadian mainstream more than what the majority hosts believed they had. Although overconfidence appears to be a positive pre-condition for cross-cultural adaptation, there may be a possibility that overconfident sojourners do not bother to take necessary steps to deal appropriately with reservations that host members might have towards them. Such people, according to Moghaddam et al. (1994), are likely to be presumptuous when interacting with the hosts; and such orientations may render their social integration to become more problematic.

On the contrary, other sojourners may exaggerate the extent to which they are negatively perceived and accepted by hosts when in actual fact host members may be more accepting than the sojourners believe them to be. In Moghaddam et al.'s (1994) study that compared self- and meta-perceptions among different immigrant groups, findings revealed that Haitian, Latin American, and South Asian immigrants in Quebec thought their hosts perceived them as belonging less than they themselves believed they belonged. Feelings of being negatively perceived may have adverse psychological effects on sojourners' well-being. For example, Liebkind and Jasinskaja (2000) showed that perceived discrimination was highly predictive of the psychological well-being and levels of trust in authorities among Russians, Estonians, Somalis, Vietnamese, Arabs, and Turkish immigrants in Finland. Furthermore, negative sense of acceptance as Kurman et al. (2005) point out, may influence an adoption an overly defensive attitude of one's identity or in some cases the relinquishing of one's ethnic identity. Ultimately,

exaggerated negative perceptions potentially impede the ability to socioculturally integrate.

Evidence from the studies reviewed in this chapter has shown that indeed there can be a mismatch between immigrant and sojourners meta-perceptions and the actual perceptions of the hosts. Indisputably, such conflicts can have a bearing on the acculturation practices of the sojourning people as well as the acculturation preferences by the majority of host members. In keeping with this argument, Navas et al.'s (2005) distinguish between the *ideal* plane and the *real* plane in which the adjustment of immigrant and sojourning people takes place. For the immigrant, the real plane refers to their actual practices while the same refers to practices by immigrants from the perspectives of the host members. On the other hand, the ideal plane refers to the acculturation practices that immigrants prefer and what the hosts would like them to adopt. Research has shown that a discrepancy between the two planes results in problematic relations (Navas et al. 2007, Ngo, 2008). Based on this theoretical proposition, this study investigated the extent to which African students felt accepted by the host and how these feelings of acceptance are related to their identity development and sociocultural adjustment.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the overall methodology that guides the study. Because a mixed methods design was utilized, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses and justifies the utilization of the mixed methods research design. The second section, which focuses on the qualitative phase, discusses my positionality as a researcher, the philosophical assumptions I brought into the study, methodology, data collection methods, sample and sampling procedures, data coding and analysis procedures, as well as precautions adopted to enhance trustworthiness of the research findings. The third section presents the methodology in the quantitative phase including the instruments and their psychometric properties, pilot study, sample and sampling procedures, hypotheses, as well as data analysis procedures.

The purpose of this study is to qualitatively explore perceptions, feelings, and experiences of African students in the United States in relation to their identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment as well as to investigate the relationship among the constructs. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What characterizes the identity of African students in the United States?
2. How do African students perceive the level of their acceptance by the host?
3. What are the sociocultural adjustment experiences of African students in the United States?
4. What are the relationship between ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment of African students in the United States?

Research Design

To adequately investigate the proposed research questions for this study, a mixed methods research design was adopted. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define a mixed methods design as research that combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, and approaches in a single study. According to Lincoln and Guba (2000), mixed methods designs bridge the gap between methodological assumptions of quantitative research, where the researcher is divorced from the subject matter and employs objective approach to data analyses; and methodological assumptions of qualitative research, which endorses philosophical viewpoints such as postmodernism and humanism. A mixed method approach helps to add insights that might be missed when only a single method is used; as such, it provides stronger evidence for conclusions through corroboration of research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Bryman (2006) identifies pertinent issues that researchers must consider when using a mixed methods research design. One of the issues highlighted is the need to identify the purpose for employing a mixed methods research design. In this study, the intent for the mixed methods approach is for results of the qualitative phase to inform the quantitative phase, as suggested by Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989). The qualitative phase was conducted to answer the first three research questions of the study by qualitatively investigating the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of African students in relationship to their ethnic identity, sense of acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment. As recommended by Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, and Hanson (2003), the information gathered in the qualitative phase of the study was then employed in the development of the instruments that were used in the quantitative phase; which, as

mentioned above, sought to explore the relationship between ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment of African students.

The study adopted a sequential model in which the qualitative phase was conducted first followed by the quantitative phase. This approach was taken in line with Creswell et al. (2003)'s recommendation to use a sequential approach when conducting research in situations where measures of the constructs being investigated are not currently available and if the constructs being investigated have not been explored in the literature. Currently, available instruments to measure ethnic identity do not represent the population of sojourning African students. It is, therefore, necessary to carry out a qualitative study on ethnic identity first, given the unavailability of instruments that specifically measure Africanity as a form of ethnic identity. Although the hierarchy of acceptance of immigrant and sojourning people is a relatively well researched topic, not much research has focused on the perceptions of the sojourning people themselves on their perceived position in the hierarchy. Consequently, this study was designed to initially use a qualitative approach and explore African students' perceived levels of acceptance after which a quantitative examination of the relationship between perceived acceptance and ethnic identity and sociocultural adjustment is conducted.

In this study, qualitative and quantitative data were handled separately, with results presented in accordance with each specific data type. It was during data interpretation (discussion) that findings from the two phases of the study are integrated. As Woolley (2009) points out, integrating findings of the qualitative and the quantitative phases during data interpretation gives a better overall understanding of the data than

when the studies are considered separately. Figure 1 below summarizes the sequential model approach that was adopted in this study.

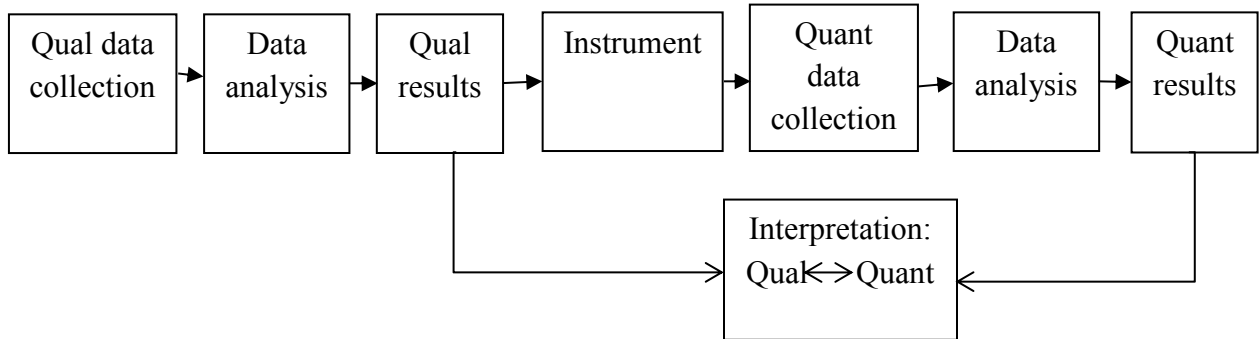


Figure 1. The sequential model approach adopted in this study.

Greene et al. (1989) outline several benefits of using mixed method research designs and these include triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion. *Triangulation* seeks convergence, corroboration, and correspondence of results from different but complementary data on the same topic. *Complementarity*, involves elaboration, illustration, and clarification of results from one method with results from the other. With *development*, results from one method are used to develop or inform the other method. *Initiation* seeks new perspectives and recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method. Finally, *expansion* seeks to extend the breadth of inquiry by using different methods (Greene et al., 1989). Although this study may have realized most of these benefits by combining qualitative and quantitative research designs, the main benefit is in the area of *development*, where results from the qualitative phase are used to inform the quantitative phase. Additionally, triangulation of the two research designs help to corroborate research findings.

Phase 1: The Qualitative Study

As stated earlier, the qualitative phase for this study was incorporated because the constructs under investigation had not been explored much in the literature especially when relating to the context of sojourning Africans. Thus, in addition to qualitatively exploring the constructs of the study, the qualitative phase generated theoretical insights from which the instruments for the quantitative phase were constructed (Creswell, et al., 2003). In this regard, the qualitative attempted to answer the first three research questions that aimed to explore the elements that characterize the identity of African students, their beliefs about the impressions of the host about them, as well as their sociocultural adjustment experiences.

Reflexivity

In qualitative research, researchers are part of the research endeavor rather than objective observers; hence, they cannot be separated from the research process (Bott, 2010). Decisions that researchers make about how their studies progress are, to some extent, influenced by their own positionality within the confines of gender, race, class, and nationality of origins. The research process is also dependent on researchers' personal theoretical standpoints, personal and professional biographies, as well as their passions and prejudices (Bott, 2010). It is, therefore, important that researchers acknowledge their own values and beliefs as they have an integral and inevitable influence on the research outcomes (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Different terms have been used to describe researchers' acknowledgements of how their selves shape different stages of the overall research process. For instance,

Creswell (1998) uses the term *self-awareness*, and Morrow (2005) uses the term *reflexivity*. The purpose of self-awareness/reflexivity is to enhance the quality of the research process through understanding and expressing how our positions and interests as researchers potentially affect the processes of data collection, interpretations, and analyses. In light of this argument, I have found it worthwhile to recognize and acknowledge my personal biography as well as my professional and cultural backgrounds since they may have influenced some stages of the research process.

I am an African international student at a predominantly White institution of higher learning. I was born and raised in Zimbabwe and sojourned to the United States in my early 30s to study. My stay in the United States has exposed me to the realities of the challenges that international students in general are confronted with as they navigate into the social, cultural, and academic systems of their host society. During the last two years of my doctoral studies, I served on the executive board of the International Student Council, an umbrella student organization whose main goal was to improve the academic and social lives of international students, as well as to promote sharing of cultural experiences among diverse students on campus. This position provided me with an opportunity to interact with international students from several countries and regions on a day-to-day basis. I also had the opportunity to meet with leaders and representatives of several international student organizations to discuss pertinent issues relating to their specific academic and social welfare needs and concerns. The formal and informal interactions with diverse cohorts of international students broadened my perspectives of the challenges that international students encounter.

Although the challenges that international students encounter tend to be similar, my service in the International Student Council enlightened me of the differences among international students when relating to their concerns and aspirations. For instance, it appeared some international student organizations were more pre-occupied with self-representation, an aspiration that was not so very prominent with other organizations.

On realizing that African students were frequently discussing issues of stereotypical views that a lot of people appeared to have about them (a revolving theme in African Student Association meetings), I developed immense interest to investigate, from a scholarly perspective, the unique experiences of this group of international students. Additionally, my personal struggles of redefining my identity upon sojourning to the United States probed my interest to research on African students' identity.

Given my positionality and personal experiences, it is indisputable that some form of bias would apparently influence a study of this nature. A phenomenological approach would recommend 'bracketing' or suspending of all pre-conceptions so as to be as open as possible to what participants would share. In this regard, I made a conscious effort to continually self-reflect on my blind spots in order to avoid imposing my beliefs into the study. However, in as much as the self-reflection might have helped to curb some potential biases, it is still possible that my personal standpoints might have influenced the proceedings of the research. For this reason and as recommended by Bott (2010), I openly acknowledge how my positionality and personal experiences might have impacted on this study.

On a positive note and as Hertz (1996) points out, my positionality helped me to gain access to the research participants. Some researchers find entry into the subjective

worlds of participants to be a daunting task; however, my access to the participants was facilitated by my own status as an African student. As a result, rather than *looking at* African students' identity, sense of acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment, I looked *with them* through their eyes to understand their feelings and experiences (Manyika, 2001). Consequently, I was very 'present' to the entire research context, thus allowing a chance to freely exchange information with the participants. Having the privilege of sharing a lot in common with the participants, I managed to have an insider's view of their experiences. Resultantly, I was intimately familiar with the sentiments that they shared. Additionally, my positionality potentially benefited the study as it allowed me to build a sense of trust with the participants. This was especially important given the sensitivity of some of the topics I investigated. It is likely that I was able to obtain more honest and detailed responses from the participants on some of the sensitive issues than they would give someone they did not identify with in terms of race and continent of origins. Thus, my positionality could have ultimately provided an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the participants in a natural context.

Theoretical Approach

According to Greckhamer and Koro-Ljungberg (2005), the processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation must ultimately serve epistemological goals of an overarching theoretical paradigm. Researchers should neither collect data without keeping in mind their epistemology nor should they use a particular methodology without considering its appropriateness to produce the type of knowledge desired. There is, therefore, an inextricable interdependence between the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions of an overarching theoretical paradigm and the

methodologies used to conduct a study. Researchers approach the world with a set of ideas (ontology) that specify a set of questions (epistemology) that would be examined in specific ways (methodology, analysis) (Dezin & Lincoln, 2005). It is, therefore, recommendable for researchers to take cognizance of this conceptual interrelatedness when conducting qualitative research. In light of this, I have found it worthwhile to discuss the way of thinking that I brought into this study.

This study was guided by social constructivism because its underlying assumptions are useful for an investigation of psychological constructs such as ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment. For example, social constructivism conceptualizes ethnic identity as a dynamic and malleable construct (Nils, 2012). From a social constructivist perspective, the construction of an identity by sojourning people depends on the context in which they find themselves in in their respective host societies (Posner, 2004).

Social constructivism denies the existence of objective reality, thus, assuming a relativist ontological position (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In social constructivism, reality is what people have come to believe based on their individual experiences as well as their collective interpretations of those social groups to which they belong (Stake, 1995). Another underlying assumption within social constructivism is that the world consists of multiple realities that are influenced by the contextual environment (Nils, 2012). Thus, researchers who adopt a social constructivist theoretical paradigm maintain that human beings assign meaning to their world of operations.

Epistemologically, social constructivism emphasizes subjective interrelationships between the researcher and participants (Hayes & Oppenheim, 1997). The theoretical

stance within this epistemological position is based on the supposition that reality cannot be outwardly located; rather, it is fabricated from the researchers' intellectual, cognitive, and prior foundations of knowledge (Crotty, 1998). Thus, social constructivism considers researchers as part of the research endeavor rather than objective observers; as such, their values and beliefs must be acknowledged (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this study, I worked collaboratively with the participants to construct and interpret their identities, sense of acceptance by the host, and sociocultural adjustment experiences based on my observations and what the participants shared.

Methodology

In seeking a research methodology that would provide an ontological and epistemological fit within social constructivism, a grounded theory research methodology was adopted in this study. Grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the inquiry generates an explanation of a process, action, or interaction shaped by the views of a large number of the participants (Creswell, 2007). Specifically, I used a constructivist grounded theory paradigm propounded by Charmaz (2000), which takes into account the researcher's positions, perspectives, and priorities, as well as the interactions between the researcher and the participants, in addition to participants' multiple definitions of reality (Charmaz, 2008).

Ethical Considerations

Having established the research design and the methodology that would guide the study, the next step was to consider the ethical issues in the various stages of the research process. The first step was to get permission from executives of the African Students Associations to do research with their members (See Appendix A). The second step was

to get permission from the Institutional Review Board. Following the granting of permissions from both, I visited three universities in the state of Missouri in person and explained to prospective participants the purpose of the study. I also explained the study procedures, confidentiality procedures, benefits, significance, and potential risks of the study to all prospective participants at the initial stage of recruitment (See Appendix B). Participants who were interviewed were compensated \$15.00 in cash for their time. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of numbers to represent the names of the participants. The university where observations were done also remained anonymous.

Data Collection Methods

Proponents of grounded theory recommend collection of data from multiple sources. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) point out, combining of methods in grounded theory research may be done for supplementary and/or complementary reasons. In light of this, this study adopted a multi-method approach of data collection encompassing interviews, direct and participant observations, document analyses, and free-writing.

Interviews. The primary source of data collection was semi-structured interviews with graduate and undergraduates from varied fields of study (See Appendix C for interview questions). According to Wimmer and Dominick (1991), interviews enable researchers to obtain very rich data concerning respondents' opinions, values, motivations, recollections, experiences, and feelings. Guided by the assumptions of social constructivism, interviews were conducted with 20 participants to solicit their perceptions, feelings, and experiences in relation to their identity, perceived acceptance by the host, and sociocultural adjustment. I contacted all interviews in person and most of them averaged about one hour.

Participants were drawn from African students attending three universities in the state of Missouri. All participants were born and had lived in sub-Saharan Africa for at least 15 years. Most participants were recruited through African Students Associations at the selected universities. Some participants were recruited during a regional conference for Africana Studies while others were recruited through snowball sampling, which entails generating participants through the help of other participants.

Sub-Saharan Africa is, however, a huge region constituting four sub-regions, 49 countries, and 100s of ethnic groups and languages. Furthermore, prospective participants had varied years of residence in the United States. Given this diversity, theoretical sampling method proposed within the grounded theory was ideal for this study. Decisions about the persons, locations, and situations in the study were progressively chosen on the basis of the themes that emerged during the initial phases of data analyses (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In order to have a diverse representation, participants were screened through preliminary questioning their demographic characteristics (age, gender, and marital status), pre-migration variables (rural/urban dwelling and parental education), as well as post-migration variables (length of residence and family in the US) prior to being interviewed. The final sample consisted of a diverse 20 participants, 13 male and seven females from three universities. Table 2 below shows the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Country	Years	Marital status
One	Male	24	Nigeria	1	Single
Two	Male	26	Uganda	1	Single
Three	Female	22	Kenya	4	Single
Four	Male	40	Kenya	2	Married
Five	Male	21	Cameroon	1	Single
Six	Female	21	Ghana	2	Single
Seven	Male	35	Kenya	3	Married
Eight	Male	37	Kenya	4	Married
Nine	Female	19	Nigeria	5	Single
Ten	Female	20	Nigeria	6	Single
Eleven	Female	21	Nigeria	6	Single
Twelve	Male	27	Ghana	4	Single
Thirteen	Male	27	Rwanda	1	Single
Fourteen	Male	34	S/Africa	3	Married
Fifteen	Male	27	Rwanda	1	Single
Sixteen	Male	28	Nigeria	1	Single
Seventeen	Female	26	S/Africa	1	Married
Eighteen	Male	34	Zimbabwe	5	Married
Nineteen	Female	33	Malawi	4	Married
Twenty	Male	28	S/Africa	1	Single

Direct and participant observations. In addition to the interviews mentioned above, direct and participant observations were also used as a primary method of data collection. For convenience, observations were done at only one university: University of A. As of the Fall semester of 2012, University A had a total enrollment of over 32,000

students of which 1, 900 (5.4%) were international students from 101 countries. Only 64 were from sub-Saharan Africa. According to Patton (2002), observations are a central tenet of qualitative inquiry because they allow researchers to have direct and personal contact with the participants in their own environments in order to understand their realities. Hatch and Grieshaber (2002) further state that the purpose of observations in a qualitative study is to understand the social phenomenon being studied from the unique perspectives of the participants. Careful and purposeful observations, therefore, allow a better understanding of participants' points of view, motivations, and the meaning of their actions (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979) as well as their values and attitudes (Patton, 2002).

While the continuum of participation in participant observations ranges from non-participation to complete participation (Patton, 2002), my level of participation in events and activities of African students at University of A. was moderate; a balance between participation and observation. Specifically, I attended several meetings of the African Students Association to see the issues discussed and how these issues related to identity, sense of acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment. In addition, I also attended several events and festivals organized by the African Students Association. One such activity was the Africa Week, which is held annually at University of A. Specifically, I examined the extent to which African values and cultures were portrayed and promoted. I also made my observations at the Miss Africa beauty pageant to see the aspects of African values and cultures that were portrayed and promoted during and through the event.

I also examined the levels of Black consciousness among African students through the nature and levels of their participation during the Black History Month. My observations allowed me to explore the level of solidarity between African students,

native-born Blacks, and other Blacks from the Caribbean Islands and how this involvement was indicative of their racial identity. Throughout my observations, I maintained a reflexive journal, as recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1994), recording my personal thoughts, self-reflection, insights, and possible interpretations of what was happening.

Document analyses. For this study, data was also collected through document analyses. According to Altheide (1996), document analysis refers to identification, retrieval, and analysis of documents for their relevance, significance, and meaning with reference to the constructs being investigated. The analyses of documents provided more authentic information to corroborate the themes that were emerging from other sources. Documents are an important source of information because their existence is independent of the researcher; hence, they are likely to reflect authentic situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Despite being independent from the researcher, the meaning and significance of documents are still informed by the researcher's interest (Altheide, 1996).

Documents used in this study were accessed from the African Student Association at University of A such as mission statements, newsletters, and information posted on their website. Additionally, information communicated by board members through mass media was also used. Following Corbin and Strauss's (2008) guidelines, I examined, synthesized, and interpreted phrases, sentences, excerpts, and quotations from several of these documents in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge about African students' perceptions and portrayal of their identity, their sense of acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment.

Free-writing. Participants' sense of acceptance by host members were also collected through free-writing, where they were asked in a questionnaire to write words and/or phrases that best described what they thought were the general impressions by Americans of Africans in the United States. Information collected through this method was analyzed through both qualitative and quantitative content analysis.

Free writing as a method of data collection is, less subject to the mediating effects of interviewers' reactions such as interjections, looks of surprise, or amusement (Elizabeth, 2008). Resultantly, the method has the capacity to foster inner reflexivity among participants. Not surprisingly, free-writing in this study proved to be more self-revelatory as participants highlighted new sentiments that had not emerged during the interviews when relating to their meta-perceptions.

Triangulation of Data Collection Methods

Multiple methods of data collection were adopted in this study for triangulation purposes. Triangulation of data collection methods fostered convergence and corroboration of findings from different sources of data. For example, data collected through participant observation provided essential information that helped to evaluate data from the other methods as well as to develop interview questions. Triangulation also helped to pinpoint questions and areas that needed to be asked and/or revisited as the research was progressing. As Atkinson and Coffey (2004) recommended, I carried out further investigations in cases where evidence from different sources was contradictory. Resultantly, triangulation reduced the impact of potential bias that could be posed by the use of a single method. Ultimately, triangulation of data collection methods enriched the information collected and, subsequently, the research findings.

Data Coding and Analyses

Data transcribing. I transcribed all interviews for the 20 participants verbatim. I further cross-checked the original audiotape for potential errors in verbatim transcription, as recommended by Maclean, Meyer, and Estable (2004). Halcomb and Andrew (2005) argue that verbatim transcriptions are beneficial in facilitating data analyses because it brings researchers closer to their data. Transcribing the interviews by myself indeed helped me to familiarize with the data prior to coding.

Data coding and analysis. Most qualitative researchers describe data management as one of the most daunting tasks (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, data coding and analysis were done using Qualitative Data Analysis Software, NVivo (QSR International, 2011) version 9. Collected data (interview transcripts, documents, and field notes) was imported into NVivo. The software allowed efficient coding of text into indicators, grouping of coded indicators into concepts, and grouping of concepts into categories, thus, formulating hierarchical tree nodes. Additionally, NVivo added rigor to the analysis process by allowing quick and accurate searches during data analysis.

With grounded theory, data coding is an integral part of data analyses because it transports data from transcript to theory. In keeping with this, data analyses began as soon as the first bit of data was collected and continued until the study was completed. Data from interview transcripts, field notes, and documents were analyzed using principles of constant comparison; a central tenet of grounded theory, which entails comparing of indicators to indicators, codes to codes, and categories to categories for similarities and differences (Creswell, 2007). Specifically, analysis was accomplished through an elaborate set of three coding processes namely; open, axial, and selective

coding. The process, continued as concepts, themes, and categories continued to emerge until I reached a point of theoretical saturation, where I was seeing similar instances over and over again, regardless of the transcript, field notes, or document being reviewed (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

Open coding involved scrutinizing data with the aim of producing concepts. The initial process of open coding, therefore, broke data into incidents, which I further examined and analyzed to check for similarities and/or differences. Axial coding involved a constant search for relationships that existed among the concepts established during open coding. I considered some of the theoretical relationships provisional until at a time when I could verify them by their frequent appearance in other sources of data. As Strauss and Corbin (2008) point out, the purpose of axial coding was to put the fractured data together in new ways by making connections between categories and subcategories. Lastly, I reviewed the coded data for the final stage of data analysis. The selective coding process involved integrating and organizing ideas and categories established during axial coding at a higher level of abstraction to formulate theoretical explanations regarding ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). It was during the selective coding process when relationships became transparent within the categories that had emerged during the earlier coding processes.

Data generated from free-writing was analyzed through content analysis. Content analysis can be either deductive (quantitative) or inductive (qualitative). In this study, both quantitative and qualitative content analyses were adopted. Although qualitative content analysis has been used mainly in media and communications, Patton (2002) broadly defines qualitative content analysis as any qualitative data reduction and sense-

making effort that takes qualitative text and attempts to identify consistencies and meanings. There are two forms of coding in qualitative content analysis: emergent and a priori coding. Emergent coding, which was adopted in this study, occurs when the inquirer begins analysis of the artifacts and, throughout initial observations, records codes that are forthcoming. On the contrary, a priori coding occurs when the inquirer pre-determines codes before observations. There are several strengths that are associated with content analysis; hence, its adoption in this study. For example, it provides an opportunity to encompass quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Moreover, content analysis allows replication of the research process, thus, providing greater validity to the research findings (Elizabeth, 2008).

Trustworthiness

In order to establish trustworthiness for this study, several precautions were consciously adopted. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), trustworthiness refers to conceptual accuracy from which the value of a study can be judged; as such, it entails transferability, dependability, credibility, and conformability. I initially employed member-checking to enhance the credibility of the findings. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), member checking can be done during the interview process or at the conclusion of the study. In this study, member-checking was done during the interview process through restating and/or summarizing main points and then asking participants if they concurred with my interpretations. I adopted this approach to decrease the possibilities of incorrect interpretations on my part. Member-checking during interviews also provided an opportunity to solicit more information from the participants.

As recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1994), I also did some peer-debriefing to increase the credibility of the findings. I engaged experts who were more knowledgeable with qualitative research as well as transitional experiences of sojourning people to discuss preliminary data collection and analysis procedures so as to map out methodological steps. According to Shenton (2004), such collaborative sessions can help in testing proposed ideas and interpretations, identifying flaws in the proposed course of action, recognizing the researcher's own biases and preferences, as well as probing alternative approaches to the study.

As mentioned earlier, triangulation was also adopted as a precautionary measure to increase the credibility of the findings. Although several types of triangulation can be utilized in a single study (Patton, 2002), in this study, triangulation of methods was adopted and it involved use of multiple data sources such as interviews, document analyses, direct and participant observations, and free-writing. Additionally, triangulation of data sources was also attempted through engaging diverse participants in terms of age, gender, lengths of residence, and region of origin. Triangulation, thus, increased the credibility of the findings (Eisner, 1998) and, according to Patton (2002); it helps to guard against the accusation that the findings are an artifact of the investigator's bias.

Phase 2: Quantitative Study

Data obtained from the qualitative study were used for initial determination of the constructs relevant to African students' ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment. A quantitative examination of the relationship among the constructs was then executed. This section presents detailed methodological steps employed in the quantitative phase including the instruments and their psychometric properties, sample and sampling procedures, study hypotheses, and data collection and analysis procedures.

Measurements

As previously stated, items for the measures of ethnic identity and perceived acceptance were formulated from pertinent and recurrent issues that were captured from the qualitative data. Applicability and relevance of the formulated items to the study objectives was assessed independently by two people with expertise in adjustment of immigrants. Based on the suggestions provided by the two experts, a revision was made to the items prior to conducting a pilot study.

Pilot study. A pilot test was done with 20 African students studying at University A located in the state of Missouri in order to assess the logistics and suitability of the instruments prior to the actual study. Based on recommendations from the participants in the pilot study, changes were made to the instrument that addressed issues like vagueness, duplication, and ambiguities.

Data from the pilot study was also used to establish the psychometric properties of the instruments, as recommended by Johnson and Christensen (2000). Data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 19. Exploratory

Factor Analysis (EFA) with a Varimax rotation was used to construct fewer hypothetical factors for the study constructs. Based on the pilot data, items with a factor loading of at least .40 were retained. The specific details of the adopted items and the extraction of factors for each study construct are presented below.

Ethnic Identity. As previously stated, this study conceptualized ethnic identity as a multidimensional construct that centered on participants' degree of Africanity. These constructs included knowledge, awareness, behavioral commitment, and participation in affairs related to Africans. Other items included feelings of pride with group membership as Africans and the extent to which aspects of friendship, media, and sports were reflective of Africanity. A total of 27 items were formulated. The items were rated on a 5-point Likert-scale with different response formats (See Appendix A). Three conceptually different factors were extracted through a forced factor analysis using EFA.

Eight of the items loaded on Factor 1. These items examined the level of pride in their Africanity; therefore, the factor was named Pride. Seven items loaded on Factor 2. Most of these items measured the degree of affirmation with Africanity; therefore, the Factor was named Belonging. Six items that loaded on Factor 3 examined the extent of self-representation as Africans and the factor was named Representation. The other six items that were cross loading were excluded and these were: *I think being Black has an effect on how I feel about myself; I see myself much of a member of the Black racial group in the US; I am very active in Black-related events e.g. Black History Month; I do not usually talk about African affairs unless someone asks; I can talk freely about my culture; and I try not to show the parts of me that are too African.* Table 3 below shows the factor loadings for items measuring ethnic identity extracted by EFA.

Table 3

Factor Loadings for Items Measuring Ethnic identity Extracted by EFA

Item	F1	F2	F3
How important is it to you that you are African?	.714		
There are some things about Africa that make me feel embarrassed	.627		
How do you describe yourself, culturally?	.576		
I do not mention my African origins unless someone asks me	.575		
I feel good about my Africanness	.548		
I have a lot of pride in accomplishments by Africans	.512		
Sometimes I think I am embarrassed to be African	.485		
I am often less proud to be an African than I would want to be	.421		
I am active in social groups that include mostly Africans		.847	
I have a strong sense of belonging to my Africanness		.747	
It offends me to be identified as 'African' instead of my home country		.694	
How often do you attend African cultural events/festivals?		.678	
Most of my friends are not Africans		.674	
How often do you consciously follow African individuals/countries performances in international sports?			.675
How often do you consciously search for news about African countries other than your home country?			.571
I actively participate in forums/blogs that discuss African Affairs			.548
If incorrect things are said about Africa, I make efforts to correct that			.517
I always speak positively about Africa			.465
When people ask about a catastrophe in Africa, how comfortable do you feel to provide information?			.421

Notes

F1=Pride, F2=Belonging, F3=Representation

Perceived acceptance. Perceived acceptance was conceptualized as feelings of being validated and respected by host members regardless of race, ethnicity, and nationality of origin. Perceived acceptance was, therefore, measured through examining participants' meta-perceptions, which refer to their beliefs about impressions that host members have about them (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993). Perceived acceptance was measured using a 15-item questionnaire rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree=5, Strongly Disagree=1*. Factor analysis was conducted as described above and two factors were extracted through a forced factor analysis. A total of seven items loaded on Factor 1 and these items solicited meta-perceptions of oneself as an *individual*; as a result, the factor was named Perceived Personal Acceptance (PA Personal). Four items loaded on Factor 2 and these items solicited meta-perceptions of one's in-group (Africans); as a result, the factor was named Perceived Group Acceptance (PA Group). Four items namely: *My African origins makes it hard for me to fit in social networks; People always make me feel like I am an outsider; People's gestures make me feel like belong on this campus* and *I sometimes perceive unwelcome gestures among Americans* were cross-loading and they were removed. Table 4 shows factor loadings for items measuring perceived acceptance extracted by EFA.

The perceived acceptance subscale also contained a free-writing item where participants were asked to write words and/or phrases that described their beliefs about impressions that host members hold about Africans in the United States. Data collected through this method was analyzed through quantitative content analysis.

Table 4

Factor Loadings for Items Measuring Perceived Acceptance Extracted by EFA

Item	F1	F2
I feel that Americans value my contributions in class discussions	.860	
I feel that Americans relate to me with respect	.856	
I feel I am denigrated because I am African	.781	
I feel that Americans relate to me with courtesy regardless of my origins	.758	
I don't feel very much accepted by most Americans	.717	
I feel ignored most of the times	.604	
My African origins makes it hard for me to fit in social networks	.538	
My capabilities are often undermined because of my continent of origins	.530	
Although Americans appear nice, I know they don't accept Africans as equals		.816
I think Americans have a negative attitudes towards Africans		.714
I think international students from other regions as better accepted than Africans		.678
People always make me feel I am an outsider		.620
I feel that most Americans treat me as an equal partner		.586

Note

F1=Perceived Personal Acceptance F2=Perceived Group Acceptance

Sociocultural adjustment. Sociocultural adjustment was measured using 16 items selected from Ward and Kennedy's (1999) Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS). The items were perceived as representing sociocultural difficulties for African students based on the findings of the qualitative phase. The SCAS is measured on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from *No difficulty=5*, *Extreme difficulty=1*. Various modified versions of the SCAS have been used with a reliability alpha ranging from .75-.94 (Li & Gasser, 2005). EFA was performed to construct fewer hypothetical factors and two factors were extracted through a forced factor analysis. The factor loadings are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Factor Loadings for Items Measuring Sociocultural Adjustment Extracted by EFA

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
Getting used to the pace of life	.776	
Understanding jokes and humor	.734	
Dealing with the bureaucracy	.698	
Making yourself understood	.697	
Going to coffee shops/food stalls/restaurants/fast food outlets	.621	
Seeing things from the locals' point of view	.585	
Dealing with people in authority	.585	
Going to social events/gatherings/functions	.576	
Following rules and regulations	.548	
Understanding what is required of you at university	.545	
Understanding the local accent/language		.847
Adapting to local etiquette		.747
Understanding the local value system		.694
Taking a local perspective on the culture		.678
Understanding the locals' world view		.674

Notes

Factor 1=Impersonal Endeavors, Factor 2=Cultural Empathy

As shown in Table 5 above, nine items loaded on Factor 1 and these items expressed participants' difficulties in day-to-day interactions and endeavors. On the other hand, six items loaded on Factor 2 and these items examined participants' understanding of the global American cultural and value system. Previously, Ward and Kennedy (1999) employed a forced factor analysis on the SCAS and generated two factors; Cultural Empathy & Relatedness, and Impersonal Endeavors & Perils. Factors in this study were quite close to those in Ward and Kennedy's study. In keeping with this, Factor 1 was

named Impersonal Endeavors while Factor 2 was named Cultural Empathy. One item; *Dealing with unsatisfactory service* was cross-loading and the item was removed.

Over all, the reliability coefficients of all the study variables ranged from .852-.903, while those for the respective factors ranged from .722-.873. These reliability coefficients, according to Kline (2005), fall within acceptable to strong reliability ranges. Table 6 shows psychometric properties of the variables and their respective factors.

Table 6

Psychometric Properties of the Study Variables and their Respective Factors

Measure	# of items	Scoring range	Reliability α
Ethnic Identity	21		.895
Pride	8	8-40	.800
Belonging	7	7-34	.792
Representation	6	6-30	.722
Perceived Acceptance	12		.852
PA Personal	8	7-35	.873
PA Group	4	4-20	.740
Sociocultural Adjustment	15		.903
Impersonal Endeavors	9	9-45	.858
Cultural Empathy	6	6-30	.843

Demographic characteristics. Although the effects of demographic variables on the study variables were not the main focus of this study, demographic variables were investigated due to their possible moderating effects. As a result, items on personal demographic characteristic (age, gender, and marital status), pre-migration (parental education and place of residence) as well as post-migration variables (length of residence and having family in the United States) were included in the survey (See Appendix E).

Participants

Participants for the main study were drawn from six universities in Mid-West region. Prospective participants were recruited through African Students Associations and snowball sampling. As was the case with the qualitative phase, participants were restricted to those who had lived in sub-Saharan Africa for at least 15 years. The study procedures, confidentiality measures, benefits, and potential risks were explained to all prospective participants as outlined in the consent document (See Appendix D). A total of 135 students were initially recruited. The survey was administered both physically and on-line. Table 7 below shows the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 7

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Variable	N (%)	Variable	N (%)
Age (years)		Parent Education	
Less than 25	66 (53.7)	>Primary	19 (15.9)
26 – 30	17 (13.8)	Secondary	27 (22.0)
31-35	23 (18.7)	Diploma/Certificate	20 (16.0)
36+	17 (13.8)	University Degree	67 (54.5)
Gender		Program	
Male	59 (48.0)	Graduate	58 (48.8)
Female	64 (52.0)	Undergraduate	65 (52.8)
Marital Status		Family in the US	
Single	87 (70.7)	Yes	59 (48.0)
Married	36 (29.3)	No	64 (52.0)
Res (home country)		Duration of stay in US	
Rural	31 (25.2)	>2 Years	30 (24.4)
Urban	70 (56.9)	2-4 Years	29 (31.7)
Semi-urban	22 (17.9)	> 4 Years	54 (43.9)10

Hypotheses

Drawing from the conceptual frameworks and the trends that emerged from the qualitative findings, the following hypotheses were proposed with regards to the relationship among identified variables, as shown in figure 2 below.

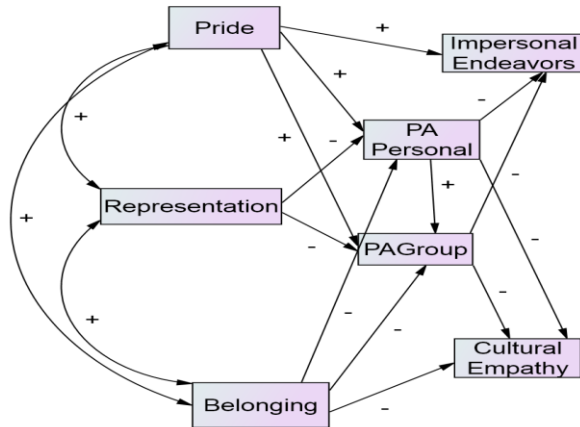


Figure 2. The conceptual model of the hypothesized relationships among the variables.

As shown in the conceptual model above, it was hypothesized that Pride is positively correlated with Perceived Personal Acceptance (Hypothesis 1a), anticipating that participants with higher levels of pride in their Africanity tend to hold positive *individual* meta-perceptions and potentially have positive feelings of acceptance. On similar grounds, it was hypothesized that Pride was positively correlated with Perceived Group Acceptance (Hypothesis 1b). It was further hypothesized that Pride is positively correlated with Impersonal Endeavors (Hypothesis 1c). This hypothesis was based on the premises that the more pride African students have in their Africaness, the more likelihood that they would better adjust when relating to impersonal endeavors with members of the host.

Secondly, it was hypothesized that Belonging is negatively correlated with Perceived Personal Acceptance (Hypothesis 2a). This was based on the argument that participants who interact more with members of their ethnic group than they do with members of the host would likely have negative *individual* meta-perceptions. On this basis, it was similarly hypothesized that Belonging is negatively correlated with Perceived Group Acceptance (Hypothesis 2b). It also was hypothesized that Belonging is negatively correlated with Cultural Empathy (Hypothesis 2c). Findings from the qualitative phase hinted that participants who interacted more with members of their ethnic group experienced difficulties with understanding the cultural values of their host.

Thirdly, it was hypothesized that Representation is negatively correlated with Perceived Personal Acceptance (Hypothesis 3a) based on the premises that African students who represent themselves strongly as Africans are likely to have negative *individual* meta-perceptions. On similar grounds, it was hypothesized that Representation is negatively correlated with Perceived Group Acceptance (Hypothesis 3b).

Based on the argument that African students with negative *individual* meta-perceptions are likely to experience more difficulties in interacting with members of the host, it was hypothesized that Perceived Personal Acceptance is negatively correlated with Impersonal Endeavors (Hypothesis 4a). It was also hypothesized that Perceived Personal Acceptance is negatively correlated with Cultural Empathy. The basis for this hypothesis is that participants who hold negative meta-perceptions are likely to experience more difficulties in understanding American value system.

Lastly, it was hypothesized that Perceived Group Acceptance is negatively correlated with Impersonal Endeavors (Hypothesis 5a) and Cultural Empathy

(Hypothesis 5b). Findings from the qualitative phase suggested that participants who generally feel negatively perceived as Africans are likely to experience more difficulties interacting with members of the host and understanding American values.

Data Analyses

Collected data were analyzed using SPSS Version 19 and Amos version 21. Prior to performing statistical analyses, preliminary data cleaning was done. The initial step involved handling of missing values. Twelve cases with at least 20% missing values were excluded. The remaining cases with fewer missing values were retained and the missing values were handled by mean substitution, as recommended by Anderson, Basilevsky, and Hum (1983).

Negatively worded items for ethnic identity were reverse-coded in order to align high scores with higher levels with regards to the construct. Similarly, in the case of perceived acceptance, a higher score represents a higher sense of acceptance. However, a higher score in sociocultural adjustment represents more adjustment difficulties.

Descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics to examine the distribution of general characteristics of the study variables were determined and obtained data were presented as frequencies, means, and standard deviations.

Content analysis. Data collected through free-writing were analyzed through quantitative content analysis, which emphasizes the quantification of qualitative data (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico 1998). A deductive approach was adopted in this study, where pre-determined categories were used to quantitatively classify qualitative data from the free writing. Specifically, emergent coding was adopted in which words and phrases from a

few participants were analyzed so as to formulate categories upon which data from the remaining participants were coded.

T-tests and ANOVA. T-tests and ANOVA were used to evaluate mean differences for all the study variables as a function of demographic characteristics (age, gender, and marital status) pre-migration variables (rural/urban dwelling and parental education) as well as post-migration variables (length of residence and family in the US).

Bivariate correlations. Bivariate correlations were conducted as an initial step to determine the magnitude and direction of the association among the study variables.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM was conducted to examine the psychometric properties of the measures as well as to examine the relationship among the variables. To specify the relationships among latent variables and their indicators, separate Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) were conducted. CFA was also intended to confirm what had been assessed through EFA with data from the pilot study, to see if the factors produced would fit the data from the larger sample. Examination of the relationship among the latent variables was accomplished through path analysis. These two main objectives (examining the psychometric properties and examining the relationship between latent variable) were developed sequentially. The underlying rationale for the sequential procedure, as Fornell and Yi (1992) argues, was that in the event of poor model fit, it would be easier to identify where the model had been misspecified; whether it was the measurement or the structural part.

The major advantage of using SEM is that latent variables are free of random error because the error has been estimated and removed, leaving only a common variance. Over all, SEM provided an opportunity of adopting a more holistic approach to

the relationship among the study variables by presenting the correlations among variables in one complete picture (Kline, 2005).

The Chi-square statistic was used to evaluate model fit. According to Hu and Bentler (1999), the Chi-square assesses the magnitude of the discrepancy between the sample and fitted covariance matrices. A good model fit would provide an insignificant Chi-square statistic. Although the Chi-square statistic is considered a fundamental measure of absolute model fit, it has notable limitations; for example, as McIntosh (2006) argues, a slight violation of normality may result in model rejections even when the model is properly specified. Because some of these conditions were observed in this study, other fit indices were also used to evaluate the model fit. In particular, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), which is less biased toward small sample sizes, was used. Additionally, the Normed Fit Index (NFI), which compares the Chi-square value of the model to that of the null model, was also used to evaluate model fit. According to Marsh, Hau & Wen (2004), CFI values of 0.90 or greater are indicative of acceptable models.

In addition to the fit indices described above, the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) fit index was also used to evaluate model fit. The RMSEA depends on error of approximation, as a result; it produces more favorable values for simpler, parsimonious models. According to Browne and Cudeck (1993), RMSEA values of .06 indicate a close fit; .08 a fair fit; and .10 a marginal fit.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This study investigated the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of African students in the United States in relation to their identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment as well the relationship between ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment. In order to have an adequate and comprehensive investigation of the constructs and their interrelatedness, the study utilized a mixed method research design. A sequential model approach was utilized in which the qualitative phase was conducted first, results of which were used to inform and guide the instruments used in the quantitative phase. This chapter is divided into two parts; the first part presents findings from the qualitative phase and the second part present findings from the quantitative study.

Qualitative Results

The qualitative phase of this study investigated perceptions, feelings, and experiences of African students in relation to their identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment. The qualitative phase is divided into three main sections, each presenting findings that emerged from an investigation of the following research questions:

1. What characterizes the identity of African students in the United States?
2. How do African students perceive the level of their acceptance by the host?
3. What are the sociocultural adjustment experiences of African students in the United States?

What Characterizes the Identity of African Students in the United States?

This study investigated African students' negotiations of various forms of identity when confronted with the duality that arises as a result of contradictions between their

alienation from Africa and the need to affirm their Africanity. The emerging themes from this study revealed negotiations of continental, racial, cultural, and gendered identities.

“Oh! Yeah, that African Girl!” Negotiating a continental identity. Participants in this study contended that they were, on several occasions, referred to simply as ‘Africans’ by some members of the host. According to Nesbitt (2003), inhabitants of the continental Africa do not usually refer to themselves as Africans, whether as a racial or as a continental identity. Upon sojourning to the West, however, a continental term ‘Africans’ is foisted upon them. These sentiments were echoed by Nine and Ten, female undergraduate students from Nigeria:

Sometimes people say “Oh yeah that African girl, Oh, yeah that African girl, that African girl,” well, maybe this is their way of saying, I am not from here. Maybe they do not know my name and they want to refer me to as “that African girl.”

When I was back in Nigeria, I would think of myself as Nigerian, actually not even Nigerian, but as Yoruba. But when I moved to America, people just say, “African,” because they do not think of separate countries. At first it was a little awkward because I had never thought of myself as African before, but then, I have learned to solidify and view myself as African.

Given the majority of the participants who contended that they were, on several occasions, referred to simply as Africans, I further investigated on their reaction on being referred to as Africans. Interestingly, there were contrasting views with some participants embracing the foisted continental identity while others felt offended by it. Four was one of those participants who expressed a liking towards the foisted continental identity:

There is nothing that makes me feel absolutely proud than being referred to as African. The other day we had an International Day and I was very excited to see that there was only one table representing all Africans; this shows that we are one people, Africans. And also when I went to Denver last week, I met quite a number of people from Africa, one from Malawi, another from Zambia, then from Congo Brazzaville, you know that we have two Congos, Congo Kinshasa and Congo Brazzaville, and one from Burkina Faso; and when I met them, the feeling was good, we had something in common.

In agreement with findings from an earlier study by Nwadiora (1996), it emerged that some participants embraced the foisted continental identity because they assumed it exonerated them from the inherent negative stereotypes associated with the Black identity in the United States. These sentiments are exemplified by Nineteen and Ten:

I just want to be known as African because now that my accent is dying away, some people mistake me for an African American but African Americans have so many issues and I would not want to be associated with. . . mostly I hear stuff, I am not sure whether the things are true, but from what I have heard, they say African Americans are, I would not want to use the word violent, but something like that, but maybe only half of the things that are said are actually true.

Well, they [White people] look at us and they see a Black person, but not until they know that you are African and they say “Ah, she is hardworking,” but if a person just sees me like this, they just say oh yeah she is Black, so yeah sometimes you would want them to know right away that you are African.

On the contrary, other participants revealed that they felt offended by being referred to as Africans. For example, Twelve and Sixteen attested that the foisted continental identity showed lack of geographic understanding of the African continent:

I have not seen any African people doing it [referring to someone as African], it is annoying because the African continent is big and I have been in Ghana all my life. I hardly know the country next door that is Togo, except the few stories that I saw on TV. Then the other part of it why I said it is annoying is that; people just lump Africa together as if it was a small place, Africa is so big and diverse. . . There is this friend of mine, and when I told her I was from Ghana and that Ghana was from the West Coast of Africa and she said, “Oh I see, in Africa, so that is where pirates are hijacking ships. . .” and I am like, “Oh my God, she talking of Somalia.” She did not know the difference between the West Coast and the East Coast and she is in Grad [graduate] school and this is an honest ignorance.

I had this gentleman from our program and this gentleman came when I was speaking with this other lady who is from Gambia, we were talking and this gentleman said, “Why do you guys speak in English, why do you not speak in your language?” And when I actually told him that Africa does not have one language, he was surprised. So, some people I have met seem to think that Africa is a country, where there is no electricity, where there is no water.

Findings from this study further showed that some participants were offended to be identified simply as Africans because of the denigrating overtones that are apparently

evident in the use of the term ‘Africans.’ In agreement with what Mwakikagile (2006) previously pointed out, a significant number of the participants did not want their identity to be linked with the negative perceptions commonly associated with Africa in the Western world such as famine, civil wars, diseases, and high levels of illiteracy. This sentiment is captured in excerpt from an interview with One, who said:

Sometimes I do not really like it [being referred to as African] because when people say “Africa” in most cases it is said in a negative way, that is my opinion, because they just think, well they are Africans, same people, and yet it is the diversity that makes us who we are. And also, when people compare countries and they say “Ah, Africa,” so, you see. When at first someone calls me African, I would tell them, “No, Nigerian.” But at some point I got tired of that, so [laughter] now when they call me African, I do not care that much anymore.

Given the conflicting views by participants on embracement of the foisted African identity, I further investigated participants’ feelings of kinsman-ship with fellow Africans. A study by Manguvo (2012) had suggested that Africans in the United States were likely to foster close relations because of their fundamental cultural similarities. Consistent with this, most participants who embraced the foisted continental identity reported having a sense of brotherhood with fellow Africans. On the contrary, those who reportedly felt offended did not feel any close affinity with fellow Africans. These contrasting views are captured in the excerpts below from Four and One respectively:

When they call me African, I actually feel more African. The way I feel about my Ugandan brothers or my Tanzanian brothers when I am in Nairobi, not even my brothers from Uganda and Tanzania, even my own Kenyans when I am in Nairobi is completely different. Here, when you are far away from home you are more African than anything. In as much as Africa is diverse in terms of geographical locations and culture, when you are here, that diversity ceases to be any prominent, what becomes prominent is that you come from Africa, period. So, if I happen to see someone who is from Africa, I see them as brothers and sisters, so, I have friends from Africa all over campus. We are one people, there is nothing like, “Oh, you are from Kenya, Oh, you are from Ghana, you are from Nigeria, or you are from South Africa.” So, any African I meet, I actually draw closer and want to know more about them.

When I first came here, I used to feel that [kinsman-ship] but now I do not really care. If you say hello to me I say hello to you and we chat and I am not like well because this person is from the West Coast of Africa, so he should be my brother or my friend, no, I do not think like that.

Navigating the intellectual identity. The assumption of a continental identity comes along with a greater responsibility for African students to act as ‘ambassadors’ of the African continent. It emerged from this study that some participants often felt the responsibility to speak, not only on behalf of their respective countries, but for the entire African continent. Some host members assumed that African students are knowledgeable of events, especially catastrophes that occur in Africa that are highlighted by the media. Not surprising, a number of participants in this study reportedly were asked to shed more light on these events, as narrated by Three and Ten, originally from Kenya and Nigeria, who were asked to clarify on issues that had occurred in Somalia and Sudan, respectively:

We sometime get to socialize and they really want to know, like when they see this stuff on TV, does it really happen? So they bring in some pictures of things going on in Somalia and people are like “Tell us; is it true what is going on? Tell us; what really is going on?” You know, I also do not really know what is going on in Somalia, I have never been there, but I tell them “Yes it happens in some parts but it does not mean this is what is happening in all parts of Africa.”

When I came here [during high school], people would bring pictures of hunger-stricken children from Sudan and they are like, “Are you from Sudan?” At that time I did not know much about what was going on in Sudan, the Darfur region, but people assumed that I knew and so they asked and I am like, “Where is Sudan?” I honestly did not even know where Sudan was located in Africa.

Given the general expectations for African students to address issues pertaining to the African continent in its entirety, I decided to investigate further the extent to which they made conscious efforts to keep up-to-date with events happening in African countries other than their own. Interestingly, my findings showed that, as a result of the foisted African identity, some participants exerted more conscious effort and interest on

what was happening in Africa than prior to sojourning to the United States. Such sentiments are well represented in the words of Four and Sixteen:

I really make a conscious effort to look for information about what is happening in various parts of Africa, especially major events like elections. Like you know, Kenya went through a process in 2008, and we had a very bad experience and I would not want any African country to undergo such an experience. So, elections tend to give me some phobia because most of these African countries tend to have the same dynamics with what we have in Kenya. So, I was very worried about what was going to happen with elections in Zambia with Sata and Banda. I was very worried about the referendum in Sudan, what is the outcome.

Back in Nigeria, I paid attention to the kind of news that I thought had something to do with my job or with me, now that I am in a place outside Africa, Africa has become like a family for me and this has also been enhanced by the available media sources of communication, it has become a lot easier to learn about what is happening in other African countries.

Other participants revealed that they would not necessarily make conscious efforts to get information on on-going events in Africa. Most of these participants, however, admitted that they often get attracted to news items that focused on Africa.

In light of the assumed position of being ‘ambassadors’ for the continent of Africa, I wanted to know how African students represented Africa. Four intellectual identities emerged from this inquiry. The first group, whom I categorized as *outspoken critics*, comprised of participants who were openly critical of the current leadership in Africa. Sentiments of this group are best captured in the excerpt below from my interview with Twenty:

The negatives tend to make me feel really low, because these catastrophes, most of them are of our own making. Right now if someone says, “Name 20 good African post-colonial presidents;” maybe Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, maybe Mandela; and from there you get stuck. The rest are corrupt, I do not know whether it is in our DNA or what, because even if the government changes, the new government comes in with the very same motive; looting. . . Actually I believe that Africa was better off during colonial eras, there was less wars, the economy was very strong compared to now, there was developments of infrastructure. Everything was better; the only issue was oppression of the people.

On the other hand, the second group of students, whom I categorized as the *dignifiers*, while acknowledging the tragic events in their home countries and the African continent at large, made conscious efforts to counteract the negatives by presenting a dignified image instead. These students believed that Africa had more positives to offer and should be perceived in terms of those positives. For example, Thirteen, a graduate student from Rwanda who reportedly had been confronted with questions about the Rwandan genocide on several occasions discussed how he strives to present a positive image instead:

Many people know Rwanda by the genocide than anything else. So when people bring the topic about the genocide, I explain to them but I explain more about [what happened] after the genocide, so, I ask myself, “What should I tell this person besides the bad things?” because there are many good things happening right now. So, I show them the two sides of Rwanda, what happened during the genocide and the Rwanda of today, their reconciliation and their visions. Because as I stand here, I represent Rwanda, like an ambassador and I should represent it positively. So I tell them that Rwanda has changed, it is no longer the Rwanda of ethnicities, the Hutus and the Tutsis, it is a Rwanda of Rwandans.

Similarly, Four, a graduate student from Kenya who was confronted with several questions about the violence that occurred following disputed elections in Kenya in 2008 emphasized how he presents a positive image of the situation by dwelling more on the peace and reconciliation processes that occurred afterwards:

A lot of people have asked me about what happened in Kenya, and honestly, yes, sometimes you might not want to wash your dirty linen in the public but yet sometimes it is a common knowledge, so the best thing is to explain the circumstances as they were before the violence, during the violence, and after the violence to the best way you can. It will be naive on my part to attempt to cover it up, so my approach is; you remain factual but positive, that is my approach. Within the stories of the negatives, I feel that I should take an opportunity to bring in the positive aspects of Kenya, you see, it does not really hurt.

The last group of participants, whom I categorized as the *avoidant critics*, acknowledged the ills of Africa but avoided conversations about the negative events. For example,

Sixteen, who reported being asked to shed light on the religious conflicts that claimed several of lives in Nigeria in 2011 had this to say:

. . . Do people expect you to have the information on your fingertips to tell them what is happening? Yes. And how much comfortable are you to talk about those catastrophes? Well, to be honest, I do not feel at all comfortable talking about that, so I just give such people the general without going into the specifics, and if possible, I would change the subject because this in itself is a tragedy, so I do not feel comfortable at all talking about that.

In line with this perception, Ten reportedly avoided discussing the negative events happening in Africa due to perceived denigrating motives behind some of the questions:

A lot of people ask almost ignorantly, there are a few people who ask because they want to get educated but a lot of people when they ask, they want to justify what they think about Africa; that African people are less civilized. . . so they gear the question towards you answering that indeed Africans are not civilized. . . Like someone would ask, “But why are Africans always fighting each other?” so, when I see that motive, I do not want to engage in those kind of discussions.

As highlighted in some sections earlier, African students are also confronted with perceptions that the African continent is marred with problems such as famine, civil wars, diseases, and high levels of illiteracy. In reality of this, I went on to investigate how African students reacted to such views. Interestingly, most of the participants felt that it was up to them to eliminate these notions by providing the true picture of Africa. These views are well captured in the words of Six and Eight, respectively:

Well yeah, there was a colleague whom I showed a video about Accra [the capital city of Ghana] and he said, “I did not know that Ghana was this beautiful.” I showed him the video because I was trying to make him understand a little more, so, once he is well informed, then maybe he could change the statements that he always says to me. . . So, in that case I took an opportunity to show it [the video] for him to see. I actually take it upon myself to counteract the negative beliefs that people have about Africa whenever an opportunity comes.

The other time there was this Black gentleman who was so phobic about going to Africa and so, I went through the same process of explaining. And also, there was a time when some people, I think they were not even Americans, and they said they imagined Africa as a place full of flies all over, so I told them that some of those pictures are isolated cases. I showed them some pictures of my own home

and I said, “Where do you think a home like this is found?” “Probably in Europe, probably in America,” and I said “This is Africa.” So, the misconceptions are there and we need to correct them.

The quest to counteract the negative image of Africa was apparently evident during my observations of the Miss Africa beauty pageant, a recently introduced event at University of A. According to one of the organizers, the pageant was introduced as an attempt to counter the stereotypic views that a lot of people seem to have about Africans, “The whole point of the pageant is to eradicate all stereotypes that a lot of people have about Africans with our talent, beauty, intellect, poise, and gracefulness.” (Interview recorded in a local newspaper).

African students’ efforts to counter perceived stereotypic views about Africa were also evident from several documents that I analyzed. For example, on the website of the African Students Association at University of A, there was a link dubbed “Africa Spotlight” that highlighted notable ‘achievements’ by Africans. For example, in recognition of the successful soccer World Cup tournament held for the first time in Africa in 2010, the first image on this link was that of a *vuvuzela*, a loud plastic horn-like device that became an unofficial symbol during the tournament. As explained in an interview I had with Ten, a board member of the association, a picture of the vuvuzela on the website was a symbolic representation of how South Africa, on behalf of the African continent, had projected a positive image and removed negative perceptions that Africa is socially, politically, and culturally backward as compared to the rest of the world.

Inscribed below the vuvuzela picture was a quotation from one Pan-Africanist legend, Patrice Lumumba; ‘*Africa will write its own history, and it will be, to the north and to the south of the Sahara, a history of glory and dignity.*’ Evidently, one of the main goals of the association was to present a positive image of Africa through ‘writing their

own history.’ This motive was apparently evident from browsing through the articles that were published in their newsletter, that were authored by members and former members of the association. With headlines such as ‘The Invisibility of Africa,’ ‘African Victor,’ and ‘Can the West Really Save Africa?’, most articles were about the ‘glory’ and ‘dignity’ of the African continent, with very few mentioning some of the ills that were happening in some African countries.

Negotiating racial identity. In addition to negotiations of a continental identity, participants in this study reported being confronted with the need to affirm a racial identity in a pluralist American society. For most participants, the state of being Black but not African American posed a complexity to their construction of a racial identity. Moreover, most of them were raised in racially homogenous societies as mentioned earlier, which implies that they came to the United States with very little or no understanding of the dynamics of race. As highlighted by Eleven, African students suddenly find themselves belonging to one end of the polarized racial divides that takes center stage in most spheres of life in the United States:

When I was back home, I never really thought of the fact that I was Black, but I remember when we used to see a White person coming to Nigeria, we would be like, “Oh yeah, look at that,” and then coming down here, I realized it is all about race, the kind of feeling I had never experienced when I was back home, I had never really thought about that. We do not consider race as anything but then, coming down here, you see there is a lot of emphasis on race, “Oh yeah, she is Black, she is Asian.” Ok, I understand because America is a diverse country and there would be cases like that.

In addition to the realization of a ‘new’ racial identity upon sojourning to the United States, participants in this study reported identifying themselves as a minority group and for some; the minority status was quite overwhelming. For example, Seventeen and One expressed their struggles with the minority status:

I usually feel like an odd one out because in all my classes, I am the only Black, out of 20 people or so, I am the only one there, so it stands out sometimes, but I always try to make my presence felt by asking and answering questions. But to be honest, most places I go, I feel like I am the odd one out. It is not like I have self-confidence issues; no, I can work in any place but I just sometimes I feel odd, but I do not allow that to get to me, so to speak, yeah.

Well, growing up in Zimbabwe where everyone you see is Black and when you see White people you see they are different and now when you come here it is the other way round, you are now the different one, it might be a little uncomfortable.

Despite the overwhelming feelings of oddness as a result of their minority status, it appears that some participants developed a broader sense of Blackness because of the newly affirmed Black racial identity. This is in agreement with findings from an earlier study by Vasquez (2001) who contends that most Africans develop a Pan-African identity upon sojourning to the West as they collectively resist entrenched views about Blackness. These sentiments are captured in the words of Seven, a graduate student from Kenya:

I have started to have a picture of a Black person as viewed from a different angle when I learn more about slavery and the difficulties of the other Black people outside Africa; how the Black person is disadvantaged in the world. So, when I look at it now, what I see is a world in which the Black person is, either through circumstances or through the conditions they find themselves in, have sort of encrypt in difficult situations. Even when I look at the Black person outside Africa, like you look at the Caribbeans, you hardly see a Black country that is really doing very well and I wonder whether the Black race was born to be in difficulties or to remain in difficulties even if the situation looks like it can be improved. So, I have begun to question myself whether the Black person has the capacity and the willingness to emancipate themselves from their problems.

Despite the globalized perceptions of Blackness expressed by some participants, it was, however, interesting to note that some African students in this study reportedly found it difficult to fit into the contemporary Black identity as conceptualized by their native-born Black counterparts. Such sentiments were articulated by Ten:

I did not know that there was a certain way in which Black people were supposed to act and a certain way in which White people were supposed to act, so when I saw Black people [in high school] and went ahead to speak to them, one of them asked me, “Do you know [Cheng??]?” and I am like, “Who is [Cheng??]? And

they are like, “How can you be a Black person and yet you do not know who he is?” . . . he was singer back then. And throughout my high school, they would tell me, “You are such a White girl” because I did not act Black and I think by Black they mean Ghetto, if you are not Ghetto, you cannot be Black, you must speak in a certain way, dress in a certain way.

Given the globalized perceptions of Blackness expressed by some participants, it was surprising that there appeared to be very little solidarity between African students and native-born Blacks in pursuit of racial equity. Instead, most participants reportedly dissociated themselves from pursuits of racial equity, with the hope that Whites would perceive them as racially non-aggressive, something captured by Sixteen:

I feel that I am cleared [of the racial tension between Blacks and Whites] because when I first speak and someone hears my accent and he asks, “Where are you from?” I am quickly to say, “I am from Kenya.” In other words I am telling the person, “Please do not drag me in those [racial] issues, I am an outsider.” And it actually works in my favor because they say, “Well this is an outsider, we do not have to drag him in the issues.” Because I have seen that the White person and the Black person have very little patience between each other; tempers flare very fast, but they [Whites] are a more patient when they talk to Africans.

Given that most participants chose not to be involved in racial issues between Black and White Americans, I further investigated participants’ perceptions of the prevalence of racism in the American society. While acknowledging the prevalence of racism, participants in this study opined that the issue was often exaggerated and blown out of proportion. Eighteen had this to say:

Well, to be honest with you I know that Blacks were slaves and all that stuff, but it is so annoying because any small thing that happens, “Oh it is because I am Black, oh it is because I am this.” Meanwhile, it might not be because of that [race]. So, to me, yes I know racism exists and I am aware of that but the whole issue is, if it could be reduced a little bit, yeah, because it makes things sometimes awkward; where there is no racism, the issue is brought in and I think it brings bad feelings between people of different ethnic groups.

Given that there seems to be little solidarity between African students and African Americans, I was interested in the perceptions and attitudes of African students on Black

student organizations and events such as the Black History Month celebrations which are usually dominated by Black Americans. My findings revealed that a significant number of the African students were negatively critical, suggesting that the organizations tended to self-discriminate Black students from the mainstream, as opined by Seven below:

The Black person should consciously try to push down the feeling of being discriminated against and get themselves out of that cocoon and show their strength and capabilities, just come out. So, when I see those [Black student] organizations, I think they are actually segregating themselves from the rest of the people. Somehow I feel like these organizations bring us back to being cocoons.

On the contrary, however, some participants felt that the Black student organizations as well as the Black History Month were a worthy cause for Black people, given their history of oppression and prejudice. These sentiments are well represented in the excerpt below from Fourteen:

I think it is good; the Black History Month is just something that reminds us of the past and let the young ones know about the negatives that have happened in the past so they can actually strive to make something out of themselves. It makes Black Americans to be aware of themselves and to be able to see the negatives and the positives so they can focus on the positives.

I further investigated the affiliation and level of involvement of those students who held positive perceptions of Black student organizations and events such as the Black History Month. My findings showed that even though they endorsed the events, there was minimal participation in these events by African students, as Nineteen expressed, “Well, I would say I do not take any part in the Black History Month but we are informed about it and I have an understanding of what it is all about.” Similar sentiments were shared by Three, who stated that even though she had been invited to some of the events, she preferred to attend events organized by the African Students Association. This minimal involvement was well corroborated with the numerical representations of African students in Black student organizations at University of A. For

example, out of a membership of about 65 in the Association of Black Graduate and Professional Students, only two were Africans. Similar trends were also evident with undergraduate Black student organizations.

It also emerged from this study that a significant number of African students are not acquainted with the history of African Americans; as a result they did not fully appreciate significant events such as Black History Month. In addition, as mentioned earlier, a number of African students showed a complete lack of interest in these events.

When asked about the Black History Month, this is what Thirteen had to say:

Well, I have never heard of that, maybe it has something to do with the history of slavery or something like that but I actually do not even know what they do or talk about there, whether its awareness or advocacy I do not know. We learned some bits of American history in school though, but maybe this is in the African American context and so, I do not find myself very much interested in learning about that. What is there that may attract me to be part of it? Maybe I need more information beyond just saying the Black History Month. In fact to be honest, I do not pay any attention to that, sometimes I have to value what I have on schedule.

Six, an undergraduate student from Ghana expressed similar ignorance when I asked for her opinion about an incident that had taken place at her campus in recent months that had sparked a lot of controversy (seen by many as a reference to slavery) in which cotton balls were scattered in front of the Black Culture Center:

When I heard about it, it did not really get to me because I did not think of the implications, but after I was told about the African American history, the history of working in cotton plantations, that is when I began to realize what it might have meant to the African Americans, but then, it still did not make sense to me why it became such a huge issue, maybe I will never understand.

Apart from ignorance, it appears African students in this study also lacked an empathetic understanding of the legacy of legalized racial segregation on contemporary African Americans. This was not surprising, given that most of them grew up in their countries during post-independence eras when institutionalized racial discrimination had

been eradicated. It is also possible that the legacy of colonial racism was not as far-reaching to Black Africans as it was in the United States, thus, explaining participants' reported lack of empathy. The excerpts below from Seven illustrate this lack of empathy:

Those organizations for Black people attempt to emancipate or seek equality or recognition of an African-American as an equal partner like any other person in the United States, and given that my history does not entail being discriminated against or being pushed down, I feel like I will be pushing my energy in the wrong direction, so when I see Black organizations, it does not click like I actually belong there, that is partly why I do not even want to join. Even if I go there, I am still not part of them. There are a lot of the things that they [African Americans] go through or hold on to that I do not necessarily hold on to, I do not share the same struggles that they feel; even now, once in a while I get [racially] discriminated against, but I do not feel it as strong as they do.

Given the reluctance by African students to align in solidarity with native-born Blacks in pursuit of racial equity, it was quite interesting that some of them were still eager to take advantage of the affirmative moves that have been put in place to redress historical racial imbalances. For example, Sixteen and Three expressed how the newly acquired Black racial identity and the subsequent minority status had provided some opportunities for them, regardless of their non-citizen statuses:

There is a saying that goes like: if a lizard comes from Nigeria and to the US; that same lizard becomes an alligator. So coming here as a Black person, I have come to experience most of the things that Blacks here in the US experience. Also, I think being Black has some unique advantages, let me give this example, in my country there is a department that deals with women and gender affairs because historically they had been underrepresented.

Well, I feel like being Black here in the US has given me opportunities, everything comes my way. When I applied for an internship with the United Nations, they knew I was Black, so it is an opportunity that makes me feel very proud to be Black because it has worked in a positive way for me.

It was quite evident from the findings of this study that the racial identity of African students is inextricably interwoven with that of native-born Blacks. Nonetheless, despite their racial homogeneity, the cultural distinction between the two groups of

people posed complexities to African students' affirmation of a 'true' Black identity. This was further complicated by the inherent racial struggles between Blacks and Whites.

Cultural identity. In addition to negotiating a racial identity, participants in this study had to negotiate a cultural identity, given that there are significant differences between their heritage and the host culture. Arthur (2009) attests that Africans in the United States are usually easily identifiable because of their cultural distinctiveness. Consistent with Arthur's views, some participants in this study expressed a keenness to maintain basic traits of their heritage culture. For Nine and Three, female undergraduate students from Nigeria and Kenya respectively; clinging to the cultural values was a means by which they represented positive aspects of their culture:

Even though we are in America, our house is an 'Africa' itself [laughter], so being here and having to learn their [American] culture is something I would never get used to because I have been raised in this 'Africa,' being taught that way, like when we go for parties, me and my sisters, no matter how many adults there are at the party, we kneel down at every single one of them, to the point of like, "Good morning, good afternoon, good morning," because it is the stuff we are used to.

I always make sure that I am dressed appropriately and in a decent manner, so I have remained that African girl, because I know I am representing my culture and my country, because the way you dress, people can say a lot about where you come from and your culture, so it gives you some respect.

Despite the high regard for their heritage culture, Nine and Three also identified 'flaws' in their heritage culture as a result of their exposure to a different culture in the United States, for example, the interactional gap between them and their parents:

Well, I talk to my mum sometimes but I do not really tell her [about dating]. She asks me sometimes, "Who are you talking to?" Well, yes I am talking to someone but I do not really tell her everything because these African parents have created so much a barrier and now she is trying to destroy that barrier but it is already there, and so with my dad. I do not talk to them about anything like boys, but there is that part of me that really longs for my father to come along and say to me "Hey you better be careful with that boy," how much I want that. But our culture has created so much of a barrier for children to the extent that you are not free to tell your parents that stuff. Maybe this is the way they were brought up too.

Here people are very open when it comes to talking about sex, and everything but most of the times in Africa, it is a taboo, you cannot even talk to your mum and your aunts, and even friends, whoever. Even for me, it is still very hard for me to talk to my friends, let alone my parents, because it is so embarrassing and we feel that we should keep this as a secret when you really should not.

While some participant identified ‘flaws’ in their heritage cultures, others reportedly became more tolerant to some aspects of the American culture, as summarized by Four:

There are some things that I have come to accept as norms that I would never have, if I was at home; I would say that is very shocking. I have come to accept American way of life to say, well this is the way they live and if they were to come to Africa, they will probably be shocked in the same way. Like I have come to accept the way they dress, which is normally bizarre like for me when I first came it was summer, everybody ‘half-naked,’ that was absolutely shocking.

Gender roles in and outside the family was another crucial aspect where some participants in this study were critical of their heritage cultures. Having been born and raised in relatively patriarchal societies, some participants, both male and female, attested that the United States provides a relatively more egalitarian environment than their heritage cultures. For example, Eight a male graduate students from Kenya expressed how his perspectives of gender roles had changed:

Let me put it this way, where I come from, men are in charge; where I have come, many woman are in charge. But when I reflect, I now think sometimes when I was still at home, I was very radical, in fact there are so many things I have learned about gender issues, I think I am more tolerant than I used to be, like if I am an extreme, I am not saying I was, but probably I was moderate I am not sure, but I think I have seen that I need to be more tolerant because in Kenya the man is more dominant than women most of the time. I have been at home recently and this is another extreme end that I have just begun to see.

Ten, a female participant, who sojourned to the United States as a teenager was also very critical of the rigid stereotypical masculine gender roles in her heritage culture:

I have dated a Nigerian boy and that did not end very well because even though I am a Nigerian girl, I am, to some degree, Americanized and I cannot follow typical oppressive Nigerian gender roles anymore and yet the boy was typical Nigerian boy, so it did not work because, to be honest, I cannot work with

someone who is purely stereotypical Nigerian male because coming over here, I am no longer a stereotypical Nigerian woman anymore.

With regards to gender roles, a few male participants, however, perceived the US culture as being at odds with their expected subordinate position of women especially in the family, as shown here in the words of Twelve, a male graduate student from Ghana:

We have always been told through informal sources that in the Western world, in marriages, the woman has an upper hand and we never understood how that really works, but coming to America, even the movies I have been watching, the woman can tell the husband to get out of the house, that is crazy.

Over all, exposure to a new culture influenced African students to develop intentionally or unintentionally, new identities in many spheres of life. Their negotiation of an identity undisputedly related to other psychological processes, for instance, the extent to which they feel accepted by the host. The following section presents findings with regards to participants' perceived acceptance.

How do African Students Perceive the Level of their Acceptance by the Host?

Previous studies have shown that the well-being of international students is, to some degree, influenced by their sense of acceptance by the host (Lalonde, 1992; Moghaddam et al.1994; Spoonley, et al., 2005). It is highly possible that these meta-perceptions could potentially impact on international students' perceptions of themselves. In light of this, I investigated African students' convictions about the general attitudes as well as the level of acceptance of African students by the majority of host members. My findings showed that most participants felt generally accepted as illustrated below from my interview with Fifteen who narrated how accommodating he found Americans to be:

Americans are fairly accommodative, they are very compassionate. When we were here, there was a group of Americans who visited our hostels. These families had collected some items that they thought international students could use as a way of settling; they had blankets, kitchenware, and lots of assortments. So they came to our apartments and there is a lobby, and most international

students came down and collected; they had pots, and even bedding. One family had children, so I got to chat with them and I had a very interesting conversation with the kids; they were interested to know about Africa, “So do you live with animals in the same roof?” and whatnot, some of these things.

While acknowledging that Americans were generally accommodating, a significant number of the participants expressed concerns about some notable negative ways in which they, as Africans, are sometimes perceived. The following sections present findings about these negative aspects.

The image of Africa and its effects on hosts’ perception of African students.

Manguvo (2012) attests that the general acceptance of international students is, to some degree, contingent with the attitudes and beliefs that host members have upon different ethnic and racial groups of international students. Consistent with this argument, some participants in this study felt that stereotypical views of Africa (discussed in earlier sections) sometimes influenced the way in which they were perceived and subsequently accepted. Such sentiments are demonstrated in the words of Seven and Two respectively:

Ok, initially I was worried of what they would think of me as an African. So I am worried about the image they have of Africa and then immediately associate it with me, the failures that are associated with Africa, and then associate them with me, immediately. But having lived in the United States for a while and knowing that I can do anything that everybody can do, this is no longer an issue, but sometimes it sort of comes back, sort of an evolving feeling, yeah.

They [Americans] perceive Africa as a very impoverished society and the people there are still living in huts. I actually came across someone who was asking me if we have some rugs in our homes, so you meet someone like that, so the way many people perceive of Africa is that of some crude people and the way sometimes people look at you, you think they are looking at some crude villager, so to speak, this is what I believe, they perceive me to be a crude guy.

The belief that stereotypical views of Africa impacted negatively on how African students are perceived was well corroborated with findings from free-writings.

Participants were asked in a survey to write down words or phrases that best represented

Americans' views of Africans in the United States. A total of 92 responses were recorded and responses were classified as positive, negative, or neutral. Interestingly, a considerable number of responses were negative with descriptive words and phrases such as "ignorant," "backward," "inadequate technologically," "not as superior intellectually" and "speak good English for someone from Africa." Other responses expressed Africans in the United States as disadvantaged by circumstances but diligent to improve their lives, with descriptive phrases such as "disadvantaged but hardworking," "hopeful and passionate," and "appreciative of education."

Undermined capabilities. Given the conviction that they were sometimes negatively perceived, it was not surprising that some participants in this study felt their capabilities in the academic arena were sometimes questioned and or undermined. These findings were in agreement with findings from a previous study by Omotosho (2005), which showed that African students often felt that they were viewed as less intelligent.

When asked how she thought her colleagues perceived her, Ten had this to say:

They do not expect me to be smart, when they talk to me; "Wow, your English is so good." And when I do well in class, "Oh, you are very smart!" Do they expect me be speaking broken English? Maybe, they assumed that I could not do as much because I come from Africa, so I need more help in adjusting to everything because I was not exposed to that in Africa, which is not true, in most cases.

Apparently, these beliefs appear to have paramount ramifications on self-efficacy and self-confidence of some of the participants as expressed by Four and Seven:

Subconsciously, I have a feeling that my performance is judged based on where I come from, sometimes I ask myself, am I acceptable, as an African, am I really acceptable? Sometimes when I am asked to present some issue, I ask myself, am I good enough as an African to present this? But if I were dealing with an issue that is African, be it political, then I would be more comfortable, but on other aspects, for instance, with some stuff in the fields of statistics, I sometimes think they are saying, "Ah, is there anything good that can come out from an African?" It is a subconscious feeling; maybe by the end of my 5 years here, I probably might have been able to work on it, or maybe it would have been gone; maybe.

Coming over here I represent a culture that most Americans are not aware of, so I think they may not really understand me very well because they associate me with a culture that is already in their minds. Many of them believe that Africans are generally living in problems, even in terms of development; we are not able to match the developing world and let me say specifically Americans in terms of education and technology. So, I think the image that most Americans have of me is that of a person who is behind in almost everything; who maybe need a lot of time, and maybe a lot of support to get to where Americans are.

Although majority of the participants felt that their capabilities were undermined because of stereotypical views about their continent of origins, others, however, felt that clinging to such beliefs was self-detrimental. Five, a male undergraduate student from Cameroon shared his resiliency to these stereotypic views.

There is a phrase that goes like, ‘You only give a person the power to bring you down,’ so, for me, it is up to me how I carry myself. I would not say well, ah just because I am an African, it means that I will be defined by these stereotypes. I do not feel that, and I refuse to feel that way, so, I do not feel undermined at all.

Following the popular conviction that Americans perceive African students as “behind in almost everything . . . [and in] need a lot of time, and maybe a lot of support to get to where Americans are,” it was not surprising when some participants attested that they were sometimes treated differently by fellow students and professors in a bid to accommodate their ‘deficiencies.’ In as much as they appreciated the gestures, some participants felt that the gestures sometimes denigrated and singled them out. Such sentiments are exemplified by Eighteen:

There are sometime when people seem to say, “Ah well, this African guy must be accommodated, he must be treated softly because he cannot stand our environment, and he is not mature enough to be like us.” . . . I have this class and this professor, there is a rule that everyone has to participate, so the professor has a list of names and he calls names at random, and perhaps because I am the only African in the class, he has never said my name, he has never pointed on me either. But then, there are some times when I raise my hand, and he quickly says “Yes, yes, go for it,” leaving out the other entire White majority who have also raised their hands. Maybe he thinks if he calls me at random, I might not know the answer and he may embarrass me.

Following the conviction that they are sometimes viewed as less intelligent, African students in this study expressed that they had to work very hard to prove their academic competence. Such sentiments are captured in the words of Twelve:

The initial expectation is; most Americans and even Asians see themselves as academically ahead of Africans. So, at some point you should be able to prove yourself that you are also academically competent, and that comes with a lot of hard work, otherwise the initial assumption is that you are lacking so many ways.

By exerting so much effort and doing well, sometimes exceptionally well in their studies, African students hoped that their academic performance will speak better of themselves; thus, exempting themselves from being judged by the stereotypical views of their continent of origin. Eighteen reiterated:

Yes, I am from Africa, that is where I was born and there is nothing I can do about it. Yes I know Africa is associated with conflict, war, famine; yes, that is what it is, and in any case it is not a lie that some parts of the continent there is war and that some parts of the continent there is corruption but they should look at me as an individual and the quality of what I have to offer; so, that is how they should judge me, because I do not really see myself as less competent.

Hierarchy of acceptance. African students' conviction that their capabilities were undermined as compared to other fellow international students suggests a perceived hierarchy of acceptance. In light of this, I further investigated factors that participants perceived as contributing to this hierarchy.

A few participants opined that the differential acceptance of international students by host members had more to do with race. These sentiments are in consistence with Bashi's and McDanniels (1997) theory of immigration and racial stratification, which proposes a prevalence of a racial stratification in the United States in which White sojourners are at the top, followed by Asians, and then Blacks from Africa and the Caribbean Islands at the bottom. Twelve, a male graduate student from Ghana stated:

Well, the major issue, as I see it, is the skin color, people do not see a Black person as someone who is intelligent, as someone who commands respect, so that is number one attribute, so some attitudes towards you is some kind of cold, yeah.

Related to race are inherent racial and ethnic stereotypes, which render international students from certain regions to be perceived more positively than others. For example, some participants were of the view that Asian international students were perceived as generally intelligent and hardworking; while, on the contrary, African students, as Nwadiora (1996) attests, were sometimes tied inexplicably to the negative stereotypes associated with their native-born Black counterparts. Fourteen had this to say:

Most Americans think that Asians are very smart and hardworking, so the general perceptions is that people from Asia like China and Korea are smart in Core Sciences and Mathematics and that Africans are not as smart as Americans, so that is the perception people have about the people from Asia, which is different from the perceptions they have of Africans.

Given that race was highlighted as a potential factor to account for the perceived hierarchy of acceptance of international students, I further investigated participants' encounters of racial discrimination at their institutions of learning and society at large. Contrary to the racial connotations suggested earlier, most participants testified that they had not experienced any direct racism, as summarized by Two:

Apart from drunken college kids at night talking rubbish, I have not experienced any direct racial discrimination, maybe it is because I do not really go out off campus to relate to people. I have heard people talk about going to White communities and they feel uncomfortable because they are Black, but I have not personally had such an experience.

Interestingly, although most participants attested that they had not encountered direct racial prejudices, further investigations revealed that they had been victims of racial microaggressions, which, according to Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) refers to subtle insults delivered through looks, gestures, and tones (verbal and nonverbal) towards

persons of a different race. Below are narratives from Twelve and Eighteen, which illustrate their encounters with racial microaggressions:

For me, it is more of the body language. . . For instance, I was going to the washroom, the laundry is about five meters away from my apartment and there is a playground, and when I was walking towards the laundry room, I saw a man [White] playing with his daughter on the playground. As I was approaching, he quickly rushed to grab his daughter as if I was going to do something; so, the feeling that I got was that he was suspicious of me, that I could do something.

I was visiting one of my professors at his house and then I got lost and knocked at a wrong house and this elderly White woman comes out to open the door, the moment she saw me, she screamed and almost fell down. At that time, I did not understand why she reacted that way, but after understanding the dynamics of race in this country, when I look back, I understand, she did not expect a Black male knocking on her door at that time of the day. If it was a stranger of another race, probably she would not have reacted that way.

As it turns out, most of the reported encounters of racial microaggressions were interpretations of ambiguous situations, which, if looked from another angle, may contain no overtones of racial prejudices. In a study that examined perceptions of ambiguous racist behavior among college students, Johnson, Simmons, Trawalter, Ferguson, and Reed (2003) found that Black students at institutions of higher learning were more likely than their White counterparts to attribute racist connotations to ambiguous situations; a scenario that the researchers attributed to prior beliefs among Blacks that White people harbor anti-Black biases. It was, however, interesting to note that some participants who shared their encounters of racial microaggressions acknowledged the possibility of misinterpreting the ambiguous situations. One had this to say:

. . .it was actually in church, I think I am the only one Black, maybe two, but the other one is an old-timer, and so, we were waiting in the queue [line] and there is this couple, White couple, and they get up for a communion, so they pack all their belongings; everything, gloves and stuff, because that was in winter, so I am like “Why are they going to sit somewhere, is it because of me, maybe they do not trust me, they think I might do whatever.” I do not know but it is just some of the things you think when you sit on the desk and someone moves immediately. Yes I know people want their personal space but you think, well maybe they do not

want to sit close to someone who looks crazy, giving someone like a mile distance. And yet when I look at it now, maybe they just changed their mind and decided to sit somewhere.

Seven, a graduate student from Kenya shared similar sentiments, expressing how he sometimes wrestled with interpretations of racial prejudice in ambiguous, and even clear non-racial situations:

It is a subconscious feeling, which has nothing to do with other people, by the way. Ask me why I no longer to read in the library? . . . It is because I will be the odd one out [laughter] so that is a natural feeling, but has anyone stopped me to go to the library? No. So that is the feeling part of it. Nobody has stopped you from using facility A, but subconsciously, you feel that you are not entitled to using facility A, and unless you have overcome the feeling part of it and go ahead and use facility A, nobody is going to change it for you.

Given the reported encounters of racial microaggressions by some participants, I went on to investigate how they reacted to racial microaggressions. Several ways of dealing with racial microaggressions have been reported in the literature. Following categorizations proposed by Holahan, Moos, and Schaefer (1996), most participants who reportedly had encountered racial microaggressions adopted avoidant coping mechanisms which involve psychological distancing of oneself from the stressor and its effects. For example, when asked how he reacted/coped, Twelve gravitated towards an inner acceptance of the realities of racism than an outward reaction to it:

I cannot change those people's attitudes, a lot of people, a million plus, but I can change the way I respond to it. So, I always, tend to ignore it and never allow it to have a negative effect on me; that is how I respond to it. So, I cannot change the environment but I can change the way I respond to it.

Over all, this study showed that African students perceived a hierarchy of acceptance of international students and they perceived themselves as occupying the bottom part of the hierarchy. In light of this, I went on to investigate the perceptions of African students on levels of acceptance by different ethnic groups in the US society.

Differential acceptance by ethnic groups. Most participants in this study reported the White community as most accepting of Africans as compared to other ethnic groups. This concurred with findings from an earlier study by Moikobu (1981) who reported that White people tended to be friendlier to African immigrants possibly because they found them to be less hostile as compared to African Americans. Participants in this study shared similar sentiments as represented by Ten:

I think they prefer to talk to an African than a [native-born] Black person, because many Whites do not want to look like they are racists. This other person said, “I am glad that I have a Black friend; it is not like I do not like Black people but I do not understand them, but you, you are so different but I can still call you a Black friend” [laughter]. So, I think they like Africans because they assume that we are more like them. They seem to gravitate more towards Africans because they are exotics, because the more exotic you are, the less racist you are perceived to be.

Interestingly, African students in this study reported that they experienced the worst reception from African Americans. This was quite unexpected considering the historical cord that ties Africans and African Americans as well as their common history of White oppression and struggles against it. Four had this to say:

Let me be honest with you, I think they [native-born Blacks] are the most unaccepting people. I have tried my best to form relationship with them but each time I try to make some connections, they create some circumstances that it is not easy to interact. When you walk to Wal-Mart, for instance, naturally when you see [native-born Blacks], oh that one looks like me, that one is of my kind, and you move towards him to ask where you have a problem. I have done that several times and I have come to the conclusion that you better ask a White person. Maybe they already have some preconceptions that we come from not that of a good place, no one has said that to me but they make it in such a way that it is difficult; one or two sentences into the conversation, you just realize they are probably saying either I am too busy or I have no time for you. Maybe they think we are unschooled, uncivilized, or maybe it is just a xenophobic feeling.

Over all, although participants in this study perceived the host to be generally accommodative, they also highlighted notable negative ways in which they as Africans are perceived. It is possible that perceived level of acceptance by African students has a

bearing on their sociocultural adjustment process. In subsequent sections, I will present findings on the sociocultural adjustment experiences of African students.

What are the sociocultural adjustment experiences of African students?

This section presents findings about the various challenges that African students experienced as they navigated into the new social and academic environments, the psychological effects that possibly resulted from the difficulties, as well as some strategies employed to hasten the sociocultural adjustment process.

Participants in this study encountered multiple challenges as they navigated into the social and academic new environments. Commonly reported challenges include communication styles, adjusting to food, and fostering friendships and relationships. For example, Two and One expressed their struggles with cultural discrepancies in relationship to maintenance of hierarchical structures:

In my culture, when you are talking to someone who is older than you, you do not look at them in the face, it is a sign of disrespect and you are challenging their authority. So when I came here, whenever I am talking to my boss, the professor I work for as a research assistant, I am always looking down but when he explained to me, he said it looks like I am uncomfortable or I could be hiding something or I am not being honest. So, he tells me, “When I talk to you, look me into the eye.” So, whenever I am talking to him and I am not looking at his face, he taps the table and I look at him, but that is very hard because I have not been brought up that way because when you are talking to a person who is more powerful, you bow down, so, this is hard to adapt because it is something I do unconsciously. Maybe this was the first time he has had a student from a different culture.

In the culture where I come from, respect is the most important thing but here you can see a kid calling an adult by his first name. Up to now, I do not call any of my professors by their first names, although my boss has told me a couple of time to call him by first name but I told him I cannot, he just has to bear with me. Yes, I may compromise later on, maybe when I get older, but for now, no.

Similar conflicts in communication styles were also reported in informal settings.

Some of the participants reported that they were perplexed by Americans’ “direct and straight talk” communication styles, as expressed by Four:

When you ask an African something like directions, he will give you a whole paragraph. They will tell you do this and that you go to this site and do ABCD, and they ask, "Have you tried ABCD, how far did you go? Here is where you are getting it wrong." Now Americans will simply tell you, "you move this way, you move this way," so, that kind of thing really took me aback, some responses were too broad and brief and more or less not very helpful.

Some of the participants in this study especially those from Francophone countries reportedly experienced difficulties with language. In an earlier study, Robertson, Line, Jones, and Thomas (2000) reported that of all adjustment problems that international students are confronted with, language is the most critical for their social and academic life. Five, a male undergraduate student from Cameroon (a former French colony) narrated his struggles with English:

When I first came, my English was not very good, I spoke French. So people see me struggle with English and they ask, "So, what language do you speak?" and when I say, "French," they are surprised. They do not know that French is spoken in Africa and yet only a small part that is close to Nigeria speaks English; the rest of the country speaks French, We only take English just as one of the subjects.

Although the vast majority of the participants in this study originated from Anglophone countries, they reported that most Americans found their accents too difficult to understand. Six, an undergraduate student from Ghana said:

I remember going to class, and I had to say a word like, 'gang' and the first time I said it the way we pronounce it, nobody knew what I was talking about. I had to say the word more than three times, so I ended up spelling it for the teacher, and she was like, "Oh, gang." So, situations like that, at some point in time, I feel embarrassed to be repeating myself before someone understands what I'm saying.

In addition, some participants reported being ridiculed for their accents. Derwing and Munro (2005) argue that accents are associated with certain stereotypes; as such, they are an integral part of how people are perceived. In this study, some African students reported long-lasting effects of being ridiculed for their accents, for example, Nine, a female undergraduate student from Nigeria who was poked at by colleagues for her

“thick,” “funny,” or “African” accent in high school had difficulties in participating in class even after high school:

When I first came here, I was shy because I had an accent, so that gave them a chance to boo me. But until I stood up and I said, “You know what; enough is enough. I am not going to have this stuff anymore. You need to stop all this” and then it stopped, but then there were some effects that were left behind, because up to now, I am still not very confident in class because I am afraid about what people would say. Sometimes I am so afraid to participate in class because there are some things I cannot say, although my accent is dying and coming back.

Because of the ridicule she experienced, Nine worked hard to ‘Americanize’ her accent:

I used to sit in front of a computer on You-Tube and mimic exactly the same way they would say because I did not want to be made fun of, because many people would say, “Why do you say things like that?”

While ‘Americanizing’ their accents was a major concern for undergraduate students who sojourned to the United States as teenagers, the same was not true for graduate students, who, instead, were concerned about effective communication:

When I pronounce a word and they do not get it, I try to pronounce it in their own way and if they still do not get it, I spell it . . . there are some times when I make a presentation, and my teachers would go like “Well everything was good except for the . . .,” they try to put it mild, but they will be talking of the accent. But to be honest, I do not really care because I believe that I am clear enough and I do not have any problems communicating with many people [Thirteen].

In addition to difficulties posed by their accents, African students also expressed difficulties in understanding jokes and metaphors because the context was in most cases unfamiliar. Seventeen narrated his experiences with American humor:

Sometimes I just see everyone laughing and I wonder, and when I ask someone next to me, they say, “Did you not hear the joke?” and I am like, “What joke?” but then it is so embarrassing; so now when they laugh, I just laugh along with others but to be honest, I do not get the jokes most of the times.”

Probably stemming from their interactional difficulties, participants in this study also expressed difficulties in fostering friendships and relationships with host members. From a study that investigated stressors for international students, Olivas and Lee (2006)

reported that establishing friendships with American students was a major cause of concern for international students. Seven attributed the difficulties in fostering friendships to the 'restrictive' American culture:

In Kenya, if you are walking and you meet someone, no matter where you are rushing to, you wait and you chat with them for at least two minutes, but now Americans, they just say hi and they keep going. If you want to see an American friend, you need to call first and get to know if they want to see you, but in Kenya, you can just knock at the neighbor's door and you can chat for the next two hours. So, this makes it difficult to foster any meaningful friendships.

Some students reportedly stated that it was even more complicated and difficult for them to get involved in more intricate relationships such as dating, something that is well captured in the statement by Twelve, a single male graduate student from Ghana:

Something I have found a hard time with is going out to make a date; dating, uh yeah, I struggle on that one, because there are not so many African girls around. Sometimes you go for a date with African Americans, but then, the style is very different, at the end it is an embarrassment."

For Ten, an undergraduate student from Nigeria who sojourned to the United States as a teenager, the complexity behind dating was complicated with the dualities of her level of acculturation with the American culture and her inability to fit neatly to the contemporary Black identity in the United States:

I have dated a Nigerian boy and that did not end very well because even though I am a Nigerian girl, I am, to some degree, Americanized and I cannot follow typical oppressive Nigerian gender roles. . . I dated a Black guy and it did not work either because I cannot stand it when people speak Ghetto. I gravitate towards people who are classy, and unfortunately, those people happen to be White. So, people say, "Oh, so you like White boys?" When my mama knows that I am dating someone, her first question is, "Is he African?" then "Is he Black?" And if I say no, she is like, "You and these White boys." . . . I started to have a passion for White boys in High School. But sometimes the boys would not be very much interested in me, so to lessen my loss, I told myself to hate White guys because I told myself, "Even if I like a White guy, I will never be able to date one, he is White and I am Black." But going through that has actually helped me realize that race does not matter, if that White guy does not like me because I am Black; then obviously he is not the kind of person I should be dating.

Another recurring challenge mentioned by African students in this study was adjusting to American food, which most found completely different from what they were used to. As Brown, Edwards, and Hartwell (2009) pointed out, food habits are inseparable from the culture that a person inhabits; as such, it was not surprising that food shock was widely reported in this study. Seven and Fifteen narrated how much they struggled to break away from their habituated food choices:

It will take me a long time to take bread for super. I have to cook *ugali*. The other thing, raw vegetables, I cannot say I will never get used to that, but maybe it will take a very, very long time. So my cousin, once every two months, there is an African vegetable that they grow in Minneapolis, we call it *chizaka*, it is a very delicious African vegetable, so she cooks them and packs them in zip locks and she sends them to me, so at least I have vegetables here.

Going to restaurant is very difficult for me because there are very many kinds and many choices, and you do not even know what kind of food is there in that choice, because some American food, some of it is cooked and some is uncooked. Now, getting familiar with that is a challenge because you order something and realize the food is uncooked, because even if you read the menu, you do not get anything.

Psychological effects of the adjustment problems. The sociocultural adjustment challenges encountered often culminate into serious psychological problems including depression, anxiety, loneliness and homesickness, fear, confusion, helplessness, and fatigue (Thurber & Walton, 2012). An excerpt below from Four summarizes some of the psychological challenges faced by African students in this study:

You try to understand yourself and your environment and there is a feeling of getting lost and trying to find your way round. So it goes through stages of self-doubt, a bit of stress, depression, anxiety, and fear. Like for me, at first I was phobic about everything, I was phobic about touching anything, I was phobic about touching computers, even getting in offices, and sometimes when you are phobic, you do not even know who to ask for help and how to ask for help.

Interestingly, despite the availability of several support structures on and off campus, most participants in this study; like Four, reportedly never sought professional assistance. Rather, some participants reportedly found some aspects pertaining to student

life emphasized during organized campus programs as alien to them as a result, they took it upon themselves to be proactive and find ways to hasten their own adjustment. In the section below, I will discuss some of the strategies employed by African students in this study in their endeavors to adjust to the American social and academic environment.

Sociocultural adjustment strategies. Most participants affiliated with student bodies as a way of connecting with other fellow students. For example, affiliation to the African Students Association facilitated smooth transition of newly enrolled students through provision of support services such as helping with understanding norms, values, and other codes of behavior relevant for their adaptation. Nineteen, a female graduate student from Malawi testified, “They taught us a lot about the American culture, like I now know the things to say and what not to say, how to say them and to whom.”

Although the three universities engaged in this study had campus-wide peer mentoring programs, most participants in this study reportedly benefited from peer mentoring from fellow Africans. As Pires et al. (2006) point out; ethnic-based mentoring is usually effective because it is done by people who relate to one another; as such, they become more accessible and less threatening. Eight had this to say about the peer mentoring he had received from a fellow African:

I had struggled to understand the concepts, because, for me, I can only understand better, when in the first place someone tells me, “This animal is this and its purpose is this,” and then when I appreciate the concepts, I can now make the mathematical calculations. This is exactly what she [peer-mentor] has done and then everything for that class began to open-up.

African students in this study also hastened their sociocultural adjustment through civic participation such as involvement in volunteering. In some cases, they volunteered as a group, although a number of them volunteered as individuals. From a study on the

integration of African students in the United States, Manguvo, Whitney, and Chareka (2012) concluded that promoting and facilitating volunteerism among international students may combat their social exclusion. In this study, volunteerism fostered social networks that potentially aided sociocultural adjustment, as expressed by Seven:

Recently, we worked with people from Myanmar; I think that is the new name of Burma. We were working with them, they do not speak English, but we were working with them setting up a house and I was so impressed. Now I have friends from Burma. Some of them when we meet, we feel that there is that personal touch. And then about Caucasian Americans I had ever worked with, they all became friends.

In conclusion, it was evident that sojourning to the United States for most African students in this study was a multilevel process embedded several dualities. Against their background, African students negotiated various forms of identities in different spheres of life. They also experienced challenges and employed several strategies to ease their sociocultural adjustment. Their sojourning experiences were embedded within their self-perceptions and meta-perceptions of their host society.

Results: The Quantitative Phase

This study utilized a sequential model approach in which the qualitative phase was conducted first, results of which were used to inform and guide the quantitative phase. The quantitative analyses of data were done in several sequential steps. This section presents findings of descriptive analyses and single-factor CFA, which was done to assess the psychometric properties for the scales. The section also presents the hypotheses test results obtained from bivariate correlations and path analyses. Lastly, statistical differences on the study variables as a function of demographic, pre, and post-migration variables are presented.

Preliminary Analysis

Prior to performing statistical analyses, data was examined for violations of normality as required by the statistical analysis methods employed in this study. The distribution of scores for all study variables was first tested for normality using Shapiro-Wilk test. Results showed that scores for only two of the variables (Representation and Perceived Personal Acceptance) did not violate the normality test ($p > .05$) whereas all the other variables were found to be non-normally distributed ($p < .05$ level). The Shapiro-Wilk test statistic is, however, considered a stringent test for normality (Zar, 1996). As a result, other tests for normality based on skewness and kurtosis indices were employed for the variables that had failed the Shapiro-Wilk test. As recommended by Kline (2005), normality of distribution was tested by dividing unstandardized skewness and kurtosis indices by their corresponding standard errors to obtain the z-scores. None of the z-scores for all the variables were greater than 1.96, indicating a non-significant skewness or kurtosis in the data. Based on this, an assumption was made that the scores for all the study variables were fairly normally distributed.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were analyzed and findings are presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for the Measurement Instruments

Measure	# of items	Scoring Range	Mean	SD.
Ethnic Identity				
Pride	8	8-40	28.285	7.509
Belonging	7	7-34	18.707	5.153
Representation	6	6-30	19.520	5.214
Perceived Acceptance				
Personal	7	7-35	27.399	5.826
Group	4	4-20	11.740	3.246
Sociocultural Adjustment				
Impersonal	9	9-45	17.049	6.185
Cultural Empathy	6	6-30	11.38	4.66

The mean scores for ethnic identity factors (Pride, Belonging, and Representation) were relatively high, above .05, suggesting that in general, participants had higher levels of ethnic identity. Interestingly, the mean score of Perceived Personal Acceptance (27.4 out of 35) was higher when compared to that of Perceived Group Acceptance (11.7 out of 20), implying that participants felt more accepted as individuals than they perceived their group (Africans) to be. The mean scores for both Impersonal Endeavors (17.0 out of 45) and Cultural Empathy (11.4 out of 30) were relatively low, below .05, implying that in general, participants experienced significant difficulties in their sociocultural adjustment.

Quantitative content analysis. Perceived acceptance was also investigated by asking participants to express their beliefs about impressions of the host about Africans in the United States. Generated data was analyzed through quantitative content analysis, as described by Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998). Emergent coding was adopted in which words and phrases from a few participants were analyzed to determine emerging categories upon which data from remaining participants were coded. Four main categories of meta-perceptions were identified and found to be distributed as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Categories and Examples of Participants' Responses Reflecting Meta-perceptions

Category	Examples of Individual Response
Positive (38%)	Determined, Outstanding, Loving, Friendly, Culturally rich, Smart, Strong, Hardworking, Determined people, Amazing languages, Bold, Energetic, Hopeful and passionate, Polite, Appreciative of education, Focused, Forceful, Layback, Respectful, Nice, and Non-aggressive.
Negative (43%)	Backward, Struggling, Poor, Desperate, Refugees, Slow and inefficient, Uncivilized, Uninformed, Lower class, Ignorant, Lazy, Cursed, Rural, Difficult to understand, Slow thinkers, Not as exposed, Naive, Needy, Inadequate technologically, Inarticulate, Not forceful, Irresponsible, Not as superior intellectually, Timid, Barbaric, and Lack sophistication.
Negative/ Positive (7%)	Disadvantaged but determined, Deprived but hopeful, Speak good English for someone from Africa, Underprivileged but diligent, Unfortunate but hardworking.
Neutral (12%)	Interesting, The same, Black, Different, Eccentric, Traditional.

Majority (43%) of the words/phrases revealed negative meta-perceptions; 38% revealed positive meta-perceptions, 12% were a mixture of positive and negative meta-perceptions, while 7% were considered as neutral (See Table 9).

Differential acceptance. Perceptions of differential acceptance were investigated by asking participants to rank the level of acceptance by different ethnic groups in the United States on a scale of 1-5 (1=most accepting, 5=least accepting). Results showed that most of the participants (43.1%) considered White Americans as the most accepting, 17.1%, rated Blacks from the Caribbean islands as most accepting; while 15.5% and 13.8% rated native-born Blacks and Latino Americans respectively as most accepting. Interestingly, Asian Americans were rated the least accepting with only 6.5% of the participants rating them as most accepting. On the other hand, 36% of the participants rated native-born Blacks as the least accepting ethnic group as compared to 20% who rated Latino and Asian Americans as least accepting and 10.6% who rated White Americans as least accepting (See Table 10).

Table 10

Participants Rankings of Perceived Acceptance by Different Ethnic Groups

Ranking	1-N (%)	2-N (%)	3-N (%)	4-N (%)	5-N (%)
Black Americans	19 (15.5)	28 (22.8)	28 (22.8)	14 (11.4)	36 (28.3)
White Americans	53 (43.1)	26 (21.1)	13 (10.6)	13 (10.6)	13 (10.6)
Latino Americans	17 (13.8)	12 (9.8)	26 (21.1)	35 (28.3)	25 (20.3)
Asian Americans	8 (6.5)	28 (22.8)	26 (21.1)	35 (28.3)	25 (20.3)
Caribbeans	21 (17.1)	26 (21.1)	27 (21.7)	18 (15.7)	21 (17.1)

Notes

Rankings: 1=Most accepting; 5=Least accepting

Bivariate Correlations

Bivariate correlations were determined as an initial step to examine the extent to which data in this study supported or refuted the study hypotheses. Based on the analysis, bivariate correlations provided partial support for the general hypothesis that ethnic identity is related to perceived acceptance and sociocultural adjustment. Table 11 below shows the correlation coefficients for the study variables.

Table 11

Bivariate Correlations for All Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Pride						
2.Belonging	.782 ^{***}					
3.Representation	.494 ^{***}	.437 ^{***}				
4.PA Personal	.446 ^{***}	.426 ^{***}	.430 ^{***}			
5.PA Group	-.214 ^{**}	-.290 ^{**}	.019	.472 ^{**}		
6.Impersonal Endeavors	.202 ^{**}	.180 [*]	.020	-.016	-.181 [*]	
7.Cultural Empathy	.121	.032	.040	-.194 [*]	-.207 [*]	.656 ^{***}

Notes

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Pride was correlated positively with both Perceived Personal Acceptance ($r = .446$, $p < .000$) and Interpersonal Endeavors ($r = .202$, $p < .05$) but negatively correlated with Perceived Group Acceptance ($r = -.214$, $p < .05$). On the other hand, Belonging was correlated positively with Impersonal Endeavors ($r = .180$, $p < .05$) and Perceived Personal Acceptance ($r = .426$, $p < .000$) but significantly negatively correlated with Perceived Group Acceptance ($r = -.290$, $p < .001$). Significant positive correlations were also found

between Representation and Perceived Personal Acceptance ($r=.430, p<.001$). All the three factors of ethnic identity (Pride, Belonging, and Representation) were significantly positively correlated ($p<.001$).

A significant negative correlation was observed between Perceived Personal Acceptance and Impersonal Endeavors ($r= -.194, p<.05$). Another significant negative correlation was observed between Perceived Group Acceptance and Impersonal Endeavors ($r= -.181, p<.05$) as well as with Cultural Empathy ($r= -.207, p<.05$). On the other hand, Perceived Personal Acceptance and Perceived Group Acceptance were positively correlated ($r= .472, p<.001$) while Impersonal Endeavors and Cultural Empathy were also positively correlated ($r= .656, p<.001$) (See Table 11).

Structural Equation Modeling

The two main objectives for the use of SEM were to examine the psychometric properties of the developed scales as well as to examine the relationships among the variables. The analysis was done in two sequential steps, as recommended by Fornell and Yi (1992). Validating the measurement model, as detailed in the methodology, was accomplished primarily through single-factor CFA, while fitting the structural model was accomplished through path analysis with latent variables.

Confirmatory factor analysis. The measurement models were explored based on the factor structures extracted through EFA using data from the pilot study, as outlined in the methodology. A series of single-factor CFA was then performed to validate the relationships among the factors and their indicators. Maximum likelihood was used as the estimation method. The reliability of each factor was assessed by examining the composite coefficient alpha, while internal consistency was evaluated by examining the statistical significance of standardized factor loadings, as recommended by Anderson and

Gerbing (1988). Factor loadings above .40 for each item were presumed as adequate for internal consistency for the measures. Table 12 below presents the model fit indices for the initial models produced through single-factor CFA.

Table 12

Model Fit Indices for the Initial Models

	# items	Chi-square	Stats		CFI	NFI	RMSEA
		X^2	DF	p			
Pride	9	119.2	14	.000	.853	.831	.202
Belonging	7	119.3	14	.000	.776	.670	.208
Representation	6	13.1	8	.154	.978	.934	.067
PA Personal	7	82.4	14	.000	.842	.817	.200
PA Group	4	.388	2	.824	1	.996	.000
Impersonal Endeavors	9	77.0	27	.000	.867	.821	.123
Cultural Empathy	6	70.3	8	.000	.815	.822	.118

As shown in Table 12, the estimated measurement models for only two factors (Representation and Perceived Group Acceptance) yielded non-significant Chi-square values ($p > .05$), suggesting good model fit. Other model fit indices for Representation and Perceived Group Acceptance also implied a good fit. Factor loadings of the items ranged from .46 to .95 and were all significant ($p < .05$). The coefficient alpha for Representation was .797, while Perceived Acceptance Group yielded a coefficient alpha of .743. This suggested some relative consistency; as a result, no modifications were needed for the indicators of the two factors. On the other hand, estimated measurement models for the remaining five variables all yielded significant Chi-square values ($p < .05$), implying a poor model fit. The other fit indices also showed poor model fit (See Table 12).

In seeking a good model fit, factor loadings were examined for all items. Items with insignificant factor loadings were removed and the models were re-run. Although the revised models for Belonging, Perceived Personal Acceptance, and Cultural Empathy still yielded significant Chi-square values ($p < .05$), other model fit indices improved and fell within recommendations for good model fit. It was, therefore, presumed that items in the revised models provided good measurement for the constructs. Moreover, the factor loadings of the revised models ranged from .32 to .94 and they were all significant ($p < .05$), indicating a relative consistency in the strength of the items. The composite coefficient alpha for the sub-scales ranged from .718 to .905. Table 13 below presents the model fit indices that were yielded after the models were revised.

Table 13

Model Fit Indices for the Revised Models

	# items	Chi-square Stats			CFI	NFI	RMSEA Indices			Rel.
		X^2	DF	p			R	C.Int.	Pclo	
Pride	5	11.2	5	.047	.987	.978	.081	.011-.181	.122	.718
Belonging	4	10.1	2	.006	.946	.934	.083	.043-.210	.081	.905
Representation	6	13.1	8	.154	.978	.934	.067	.000-.180	.000	.797
PA Personal	5	11.4	5	.044	.978	.961	.098	.016-.183	.116	.871
PA Group	4	.388	2	.824	1	.996	.000	.000-.107	.866	.703
Imp. Endeavors	6	13.9	9	.126	.974	.932	.067	.000-.132	.300	.808
Cul. Empathy	4	6.6	2	.037	.980	.972	.081	.046-.178	.053	.847

Notes

R=RAMSEA, C.Int=Confidence interval; Pclo= PCLOSE, Rel=Composite reliability

Models fit indices for Representation and PA Personal were maintained from the initial models.

Figure 3 below presents the factor loadings for the final models for all the factors.

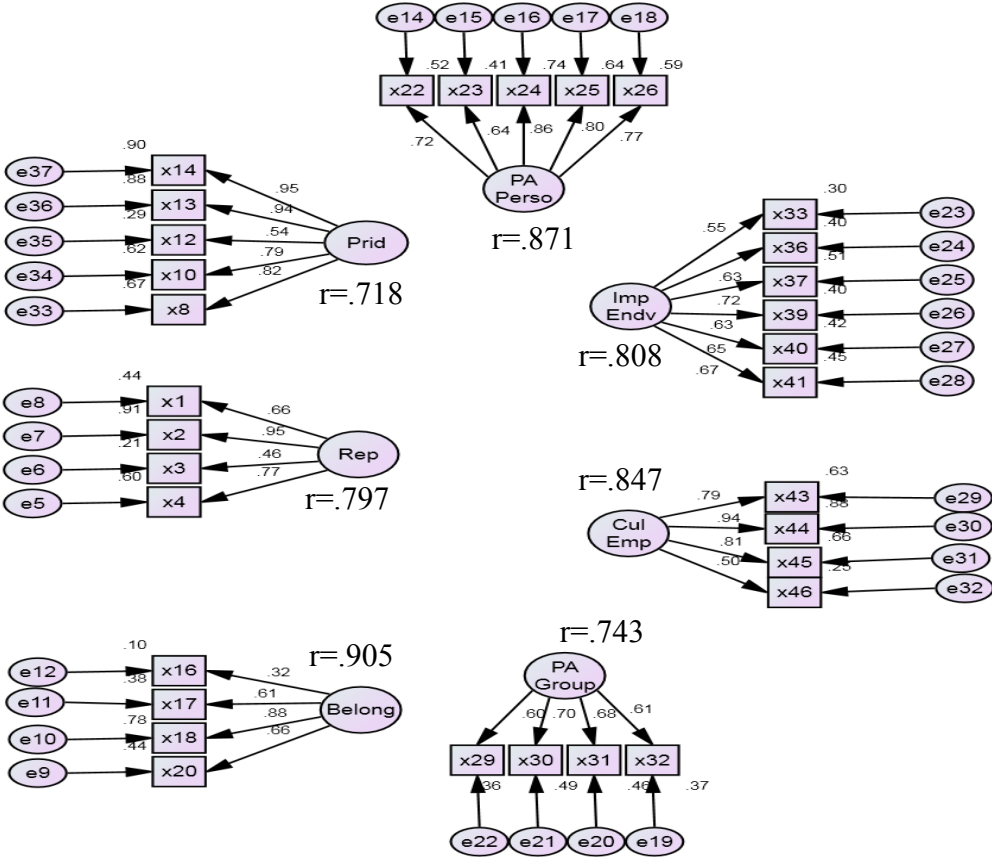


Figure 3. Final models from single factor CFA.

The structural model. Following the validation of the measurement models, hypothesized structural relationships among the constructs were tested using path analysis with latent variables. Based on the hypothesized conceptual model shown in Figure 2 under quantitative methodology, ethnic identity factors (Pride, Belonging, and Representation) acted as exogenous variables. Perceived Personal Acceptance and Perceived Group Acceptance acted as both exogenous and endogenous variables, while Impersonal Endeavors and Cultural Empathy were endogenous latent variables that were considered as outcome variables. Path analysis was performed to determine the fit of the hypothesized model.

The estimated structural model yielded a significant Chi-square statistic ($X^2(5) = 6.204, p = .000$), implying poor model fit. Other indices also showed a lack of fit (NFI = .877; CFI = .883). The RMSEA was .123 with a 90% confidence interval ranging from .178-.453 and a PCLOSE value of .000, implying a poor model fit. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, modifications were made through model trimming. The following insignificant paths were removed: Perceived Personal Acceptance to Cultural Empathy; Perceived Group Acceptance to Impersonal Endeavors; and Belonging to Perceived Group Acceptance. In addition, modification fit indices were also utilized to suggest paths to be added to improve the model fit. A covariance between E3 and E4 was added. The revised model yielded an insignificant Chi-square statistic ($X^2(7) = 2.033, p = .958$) with much higher comparative fit indices (NFI = .998; CFI = .996). Furthermore, the RMSEA decreased to .000 with a 90% confidence interval ranging from .000-.153 with a PCLOSE of .982. The revised path model shown in Figure 4 below was, therefore, presumed to serve as a useful representation and a parsimonious explanation of the data.

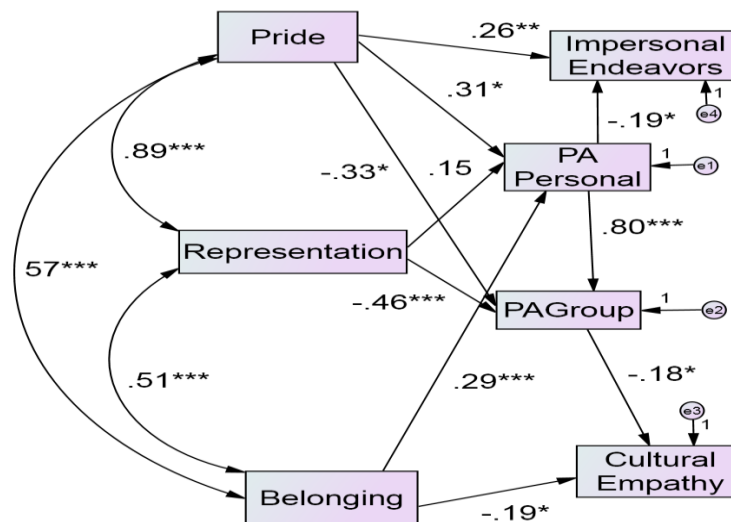


Figure 4. Final path model (* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$)

Hypotheses Testing Findings

Study hypotheses were tested based on the theoretical conceptual model shown in figure 2. Hypotheses 1a-c stated that Pride is positively correlated with Perceived Personal Acceptance, Perceived Group Acceptance, and Impersonal Endeavors. These hypotheses were tested by examining the significance of the path coefficients between the constructs. Concurring with the hypotheses, the path from Pride to Perceived Personal Acceptance ($r=.31, p=.049$) and to Impersonal Endeavors ($.26, p=.007$) yielded positive and significant coefficients. This suggests that participants with higher levels of pride in their Africaness held relatively positive *individual* meta-perceptions and also experienced fewer difficulties with regards to their impersonal endeavors. However, contrary to the initial hypothesis, the paths from Pride to Perceived Group Acceptance was negative and statistically significant ($r=-.33, p=.026$), implying that even though participants with higher levels of pride in their ethnicity held positive *individual* meta-perceptions, their *group* meta-perceptions were likely to be negative.

Hypotheses 2a-c stated that Belonging is negatively correlated with Perceived Personal Acceptance, Perceived Group Acceptance, and Cultural Empathy. Data from this study supported the hypothesis that Belonging is negatively correlated with Cultural Empathy ($r=-.19, p=.049$). This suggests that participants who associated more with members of their ethnic group experienced more difficulties in understanding the host's cultural values. Similarly, the path from Belonging to Perceived Group Acceptance also yielded a negative coefficient as previously hypothesized ($r=-.13$), although the coefficient was slightly insignificant ($p>.05$). However, contrary to what was previously hypothesized, the path from Belonging to Perceived Personal Acceptance yielded a

positive and significant co-efficient ($r=.29$, $p=.000$), implying that participants who had a stronger sense of belonging to their ethnicity had positive *individual* meta-perceptions.

Findings from this study supported hypothesis (3a) that Representation is negatively correlated with Perceived Group Acceptance ($r=-.46$, $p=.000$). This implies that participants who spoke positively about Africa held negative *group* meta-perceptions. On the contrary, hypothesis 3b, which proposed that Representation is negatively correlated with Perceived Personal Acceptance was not supported as the path yielded a positive but insignificant coefficient ($r=.15$, $p=.170$).

Data from this study further upheld hypotheses 4a that attested that Perceived Personal Acceptance is negatively correlated with Impersonal Endeavors ($r=-.19$, $p=.050$). This suggests that participants who held negative *individual* meta-perceptions experienced more difficulties in their impersonal endeavors. The path from Perceived Personal Acceptance to Cultural Empathy (hypothesis 4b) also yielded a negative coefficient as hypothesized ($r=-.11$); however, the coefficient was insignificant ($p>.05$).

The last hypothesis (5a) stated that Perceived Group Acceptance is negatively correlated with Impersonal Endeavors and Cultural Empathy. This hypothesis was supported by the data ($r=-.19$, $p=.050$), implying that participants who held negative *group* meta-perceptions were likely to experience more difficulties in understanding the local cultural values. The path from Perceived Group Acceptance to Cultural Empathy (hypothesis 5b) also yielded a negative coefficient as hypothesized ($r=-.11$), but the coefficient was insignificant ($p>.05$).

Effects of Demographic, Pre-, and Post-migration Variables

Independent t-tests and ANOVA were conducted to test the differences in scores of the study variables as a function of demographic, pre-migration and post-migration variables. Table 14 summarizes results from data analyzed using t-tests.

Table 14

Differences in Mean Scores Based on T-tests (N=123, df=121)

		Gender	M/Status	Family in US
Pride	MD	1.665	4.795	8.332
	t-value	2.240	3.314***	7.370***
Belonging	MD	1.554	1.364	4.584
	t-value	1.66	1.313	5.405***
Representation	MD	2.094	5.148	2.629
	t-value	2.301*	5.659 ***	2.912*
PA Personal	MD	1.775	-.461	2.166
	t-value	1.698	-.392	-2.085*
PA Group	MD	1.429	.937	1.379
	t-value	1.284	1.458	-2.400*
Imp. Endeavors	MD	1.429	1.407	1.853
	t-value	1.280	1.136	1.677
Cultural Empathy	MD	.852	2.174	1.438
	t-value	1.012	-2.369*	1.721

Notes

*MD=Mean Difference, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.*

As shown in Table 14, gender differences were observed on Representation (t=-2.301, p<.05), with male students representing themselves as Africans more than females. Significant differences were also noted as a function of marital status. Married students scored higher on Pride (t=3.314, p<.001) and Representation (t=5.659, p<.001) while unmarried students experienced more difficulties with Cultural Empathy (t=-2.369,

p<.05). Significant differences were also observed between students who had families in the United States and those who did not, with those without family members scoring higher on Pride ($t=7.370$, $p<.001$), Belonging ($t=5.405$, $p<.001$), and Representation ($t=2.912$, $p<.05$). Those with families scored significantly higher on Perceived Personal Acceptance ($t=-2.085$, $p<.05$) and Perceived Group Acceptance ($t=-2.400$, $p<.05$).

One-way ANOVAs were done to test for differences in scores of the variables as a function of age and length of stay in the United States. Results are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Differences in Mean Scores Based on One-way ANOVA

	Length of Stay			Age		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Posthoc</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Posthoc</i>
Pride	5.709**	.004	3>2;1	3.616*	.015	3;4>1;2
Belonging	2.169	.119	n.s.	2.472	.065	n.s.
Representation	2.535	.083	n.s.	10.636***	.000	3;4>1;2
PA Personal	1.741	.180	n.s.	.930	.420	n.s.
PA Group	2.897	.046	3>2;1	1.286	.282	n.s.
Imp. Endeavors	2.725	.070	n.s.	2.779*	.045	3>2
Cultural Empathy	2.891*	.047	3>2;1	2.216	.090	n.s.

Notes

*Length of stay: 1=<2yrs; 2=2-4yrs; 3=>4yrs. Age: 1=<25yrs; 2=26-30yrs; 3=31-35; 4=>35. Note * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$. NS=Not significant*

As shown in table 15, significant differences were observed on group mean scores as a function of length of stay in the United States on Pride ($F(2,120)=5.709$, $p=.004$), PA Group ($F(2,120)=2.897$, $p=.046$), and Cultural Empathy ($F(3,119)=2.891$, $p=.047$), with Group 3, who had been in the US for more than 4 years, scoring significantly higher than the groups who had been in the US for less than 4 years (See table 15).

Similarly, differences as a function of age were also noted on Pride ($F(3,119)=3.616, p=.015$) and Representation ($F(3,119)=10.636, p=.000$). Groups 3 (31-35 years) and 4 (>35 years) scored higher on both variables than Groups 1 (<25 years) and 2 (25-30 years). Significant differences were also noted on Impersonal Endeavors ($F(3,119)=3.616, p=.045$), with Group 1 (<25 years) scoring higher than the other three groups.

Pre-migration characteristics also had a significant impact on some variables as shown in Table 16 below.

Table 16

Differences in Mean Scores Based on One-way ANOVA

	Parent education			Residential place		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Posthoc</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Posthoc</i>
Pride	1.110	.355	n.s.	1.101	.352	n.s.
Belonging	2.169	.119	n.s.	1.681	.175	n.s.
Representation	2.487*	.047	1<2;3;4	.785	.505	ns
PA Personal	.348	.845	n.s.	2.103	.104	n.s.
PA Group	.211	.932	n.s.	3.303*	.023	3;4>1;2
Imp. Endeavors	2.459*	.048	1<2;3;4	2.548	.046	2>1;3
Cultural Empathy	2.544*	.043	1<2;3;4	.943	.422	n.s.

Notes

Parent education: 1=<Primary; 2=Secondary; 3=>Certificate/Diploma; 4=University degree. Residential place: 1-<Rural; 2=Urban; 3=Both.

** $p<.05$. ns=not significant*

With regards to pre-migration characteristics, as shown in Table 16 above, significant differences between group mean scores were noted as a function of parental education on Representation ($F(3, 119)=2.487, p=.047$), Impersonal Endeavors ($F(3,$

119)=2.459, $p=.048$), and Cultural Empathy ($F(3, 119)=2.544, p=.043$). Group 1 (< primary) scored significantly less than Group 2 (secondary education), Group 3 (diploma/certificate) and Group 4 (college degree) on all the three variables (See table 16). Notable differences were also observed as a function of the place of residence. Participants who grew up in rural areas scored significantly higher only on Representation ($F(3, 119)=3.303, p=.048$) as compared to those who grew up in urban cities and those who lived in both rural and urban areas (See Table 16).

Over all, most of the findings from the quantitative phase endorsed the trends and patterns that had been observed earlier during the qualitative phase.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study investigated the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of African students in the United States in relation to their ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment as well as the relationship among the constructs. In order to have a comprehensive investigation of the afore-mentioned constructs and their relatedness, the study utilized an exploratory mixed methods research design. The first three research questions of the study sought to qualitatively explore ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment, respectively, while the fourth research question sought to examine the interrelationships among the constructs.

This chapter presents an integrated discussion of the findings from the qualitative and the quantitative phases of the study. The approach of integrating findings from two different research paradigms was used in order to develop a better overall understanding of constructs than when the findings are discussed separately (Wolley, 2009). This chapter conceptualizes and theorizes the findings by showing how they provide answers to the research questions and how the findings support and add to existing literature on immigrant and sojourners' experiences.

Research Question 1: The Identity of African Students

Sojourning to the United States for African students is a multilevel process that involves a search for an identity in the context of two relatively incompatible cultures, their heritage and the host cultures. Their exposure to a new culture influenced them to develop, intentionally and unintentionally, new identities in many spheres of life. Similar to what Awokoya (2012) reported, this study revealed that African students negotiated two main identities; the African identity and the Black racial identity.

The African Identity

African students in this study stated that they were viewed as a monolithic group of ‘Africans’ and not identified by their national or tribal ethnicities as they were accustomed to. To the surprise of some participants, the term ‘African,’ as used in the American context does not just represent sojourners from continental Africa; rather, it is also conceptualized as a marker of a monolithic ethnic group within the multi-ethnic society. Interestingly though, most African students, as Ten reiterated, solidified their ‘new’ identity and began to also view themselves as Africans. This embracement of the African identity was further reflected through their formation of African Students Associations; a common feature at all the universities that were studied. In agreement with an earlier study by Manguvo (2012), despite acknowledging their apparent ethnic and national differences, it appears that their ‘new’ identity; Africans, brought them together and enhanced their mutual understanding.

The affirmed African identity served two main functional purposes for African students in this study. First, concurring with Arthur’s (2009) assertion, the African identity provided some participants with a prism from which to explain issues affecting the African continent. Second, the African identity provided a buffer against the general negative stereotypes associated with the Black identity that they perceived to be inherent in the United States. These two functional purposes are discussed in detail below.

The embracement of an African identity, for most participants, led to an adoption of an ambassadorial role of representing the entire continent. This ambassadorial role was reflected in different ways, categorized as the: *outspoken critics*, *avoidant critics*, *dignifiers*’ and *objective engagers*. This categorization is in line with Nesbitt’s (2003)

categorization of African intellectuals in the West, who used the terms, *comprador intelligentsia*, *postcolonial critics*, and *progressive exiles*. According to my categorization, the *outspoken critics* represented African students who were very critical of post-colonial African governance. For example, Twenty perceived Africa as better-off under colonial than post-colonial regimes. Outspoken critics were possibly represented by more than a third of the participants who indicated in the survey that they always spoke frankly about the ills of Africa. African students categorized as outspoken critics are quite aligned to Nesbitt's (2003) *comprador intelligentsia*, who were observed to be infamous for condemning Africa to the West.

On the other hand, participants whom I categorized as the *avoidant critics* chose to disengage from the discussions that focused on African affairs. Some avoidant critics, like One, chose to disengage because of the embarrassment they felt in discussing African 'failures,' while others, like Ten, disengaged because of perceived denigrating motives in the discussions by some host members.

In contrast to the afore-mentioned groups, participants categorized as the *dignifiers* sought to project a dignified image of Africa by presenting a positive image. For example, even when discussing known African catastrophes such as the Rwandan genocide, Thirteen stated that he would concentrate more on the peace and reconciliation process that followed, rather than atrocities themselves. Nearly half of the participants in the quantitative study revealed that they *always* spoke positively about Africa. The notion of concentrating on projecting a positive image of Africa was also evident in documents belonging to the African Students Association at University of A that I analyzed. As Mazrui (1978) argues, it is possible that the dignifiers deliberately adopted this approach

to subvert Western views of Africa through counter-penetration and promotion of African values.

The last group of participants whom I categorized as *objective engagers* realized that representing the African continent accurately is not synonymous with glorifying it. As Manguvo (2012) reiterates, writings accurately about Africa should combine both realism and optimism. Objective engagers expressed that they did not necessarily always speak positively, but accurately about unfolding events in Africa. Objective engagers are aligned to Nesbitt's (2003) *postcolonial critics*, who were considered as expert interpreters of the African experiences to the West.

As mentioned earlier, the second functional purpose for the embracement of an African identity, as revealed by the findings in this study, was to buffer against the perceived inherent stereotypes of the Black identity. Earlier studies by Nwadiora (1996) and Rong and Preissle (1998) reported similar findings, showing how African immigrant students solidified the African identity in anticipation of dissociating from the global Black identity. Such tendencies were also observed among Blacks from the Caribbean Islands in a previous study by Kasinitz (1992).

Of significance is the fact that not all participants in this study embraced the African identity. Some interviewed participants stated that they were offended by the imposition of the African identity. This was further captured in the quantitative study when 30% of the participants reported that they were offended by being referred to as Africans instead of their nationalities. For participants like Two, the resentment of the African identity stemmed from the perceived badge of inferiority and denigrating overtones entailed in the term 'Africa,' as previously revealed by Mwakikagile (2006).

The resentment of the continental identity was, possibly, a means by these African students to dissociate themselves from their perceived negative image of Africa.

Racial Identity

African students in this study were confronted with the duality of being Black but not African American (Arthur, 2001). In view of this duality, it is possible that Du Bois' concept of double consciousness, though formulated in reference to African American intellectuals, was quite applicable to African students in this study. Inevitably, their formation of a racial identity was intertwined within larger contexts of US race relations. However, having been raised in relatively racially homogenous societies, most African students, as Nine reiterated, were perplexed by the racially polarized American society where manifestations of racial consciousness were rife in many spheres of life. Moreover, it appears the American society at large does not appreciate the distinction between the African identity and the African American racial identity; as a result, by American construction of race, they were considered Black (Alba & Nee, 2003; Traore, 2006). Additionally, their understating of blackness as a mere phenotypic expression was at odds with the contemporary meaning of blackness that carried some social and political overtones. In view of this discrepancy, it was not surprisingly that about three quarters of the participants in the quantitative study stated that they did not view themselves as members of the Black racial group in the United States.

In view of their conceptualization of blackness, it was not surprising that there appeared to be very little solidarity between African students in this study and native-born Blacks. In agreement with previous findings by Moikobu (1981) and Nwadiora (1996), some of the participants in this study, while acknowledging the intermittent

prevalence of racial issues in the American society, felt that racial issues were often exaggerated. As a consequence, a significant number of them deliberately dissociated themselves from the Black racial identity, anticipating to be perceived as racially neutral.

African students' conceptualization of blackness may also explain the reluctance by some participants to participate in events considered to be of fundamental importance to contemporary native-born Blacks such as the Black History Month. Results from the quantitative study further confirmed this lack of solidarity, with a majority 80% of the participants indicating that they were not active in Black related events. It appears African students in this study lacked an empathetic understanding of the legacy of legalized racial segregation on African Americans. This probably stems from the fact that most of them grew up in their home countries during post-independence eras when institutionalized racial discrimination had been eradicated.

The difference in the conceptualization of blackness between African students and their native-born Black counterparts probably explains why participants like Ten failed to navigate into the contemporary Black identity during her high school years. Ten realized that in order for her to be accepted into the 'true' Black identity, there were certain social behaviors that she should exhibit and these behaviors were supposed to be vetted by her peers. Because Ten deviated from the expectations, she was considered not 'Black enough' and was accused of acting White. Similar findings were reported by Okpalaoka (2009) from a study of first-generation African immigrants at a high school in the United States.

Despite their lack of participation in Black-related events, some participants still exhibited a global perspective of blackness upon sojourning to the United States. For

example, Seven expressed concern for the plight of Black people outside continental Africa. This notion of a global perspective of blackness is in agreement with findings from an earlier study by Vasquez (2001), who contends that most Africans develop a Pan-African identity upon sojourning to the West as they collectively resist entrenched views about blackness.

In context of the Black racial identity development models discussed in Chapter Two, it is apparent from this study that the racial identity development of African sojourners is complex and should not necessarily be contextualized in the same way in which the racial identity development for native-born Blacks has been conceptualized.

Research Question 2: Perceived Acceptance of African Students

Another goal for this study was to investigate African students' sense of acceptance by the host. Perceived acceptance was measured by examining their beliefs of the impressions of American society of Africans in the United States. Although findings from both the qualitative and the quantitative phases of this study revealed both positive and negative meta-perceptions, this discussion focuses more on identified negative meta-perceptions because of their potential relevance for societal rectification. Moreover, findings from the free-writing exercise showed that about half of the participants expressed words and phrases that depicted negative meta-perceptions. Guided by Vorauer et al. (1998) categorizations of meta-stereotypes, the meta-perceptions of African students in this study were classified into three main categories, namely: *contextual*, *behavioral*, and *cognitive* components.

As Vorauer et al. (1998) describe, the *contextual* component of meta-perceptions stems from inherent stereotypes about ethnic groups of different social positions. This

contextual component was exemplified by Twelve, who believed that by embracing a Black racial identity, he consequentially inherited society's impressions about Blacks such as 'Blacks are lazy and unintelligent.' In complement of this view, data from the free-writing exercise revealed that the stereotypes expressed by the participants were quite aligned to those expressed by Black Americans in Sigelman and Tuch's (1997) study. Other negative meta-perceptions stemmed from participants' perceived negative evaluations of their continent of origins, which they believed impacted on how they are evaluated. Okpalaoka (2009) and Traore (2006) reported similar findings from a study with second-generation African immigrant students in high schools, who expressed that they were often perceived as ignorant, primitive, and less competent.

In line with Vorauer et al.'s (1998) view that meta-stereotypes vary as a function of specific out-groups, participants in this study revealed varied meta-perceptions for different ethnic groups. Interestingly, most interviewed participants held relatively more positive meta-perceptions for Whites as compared to other ethnic groups. This was further confirmed when 43% of the participants in the quantitative study rated White Americans as most accepting as compared to other ethnic/racial groups (See Table 10).

In line with Vorauer et al.'s (1998) categorization of meta-stereotypes, the second category of meta-perceptions is the *behavioral* component, where meta-perceptions begin to shape one's behavior. Gomez (2003) classifies behavioral components into: *avoidance*, *selective interaction*, and *hostile reaction*. Most participants adopted *selective interaction*, by associating most with fellow Africans. In complement, about half of the participants indicated in the survey that they associated most with Africans. On the other hand, other participant like Fifteen, who reportedly encountered occasional racial microaggressions,

adopted *avoidant* behavior, which, according to Gomez, entails psychological distancing of oneself from the act and its effects. None of the participants in this study exhibited *hostile reactions* probably due to the fact that most of them considered their admission to American institutions as a privilege; as a result, they did not adopt hostile reactions to their negative experiences.

The third characteristic of meta-perceptions by African students in this study pertains to the *cognitive* component, which, according to Klein and Azzi (2001) is related to the adoption of a certain positive mindset in reaction to negative meta-perceptions. For example, despite acknowledging the prevalence of negative stereotypes about Africans, Five consciously embraced positive self-assigned beliefs as a way to protect her self-esteem and efficacy. As stated by Klein and Azzi (2001), individuals like Five disconfirmed negative meta-perceptions by adopting and focusing on positive ones.

Based on the initial findings of this study, I further investigated sources of participants' meta-perceptions. Tajfel (1981) argues that people usually draw accurate awareness of the representations held by members of the out-group about their in-group. This argument aligns with the symbolic interactionist's 'looking glass self' concept, which considers the self as emerging solely as a function of interpersonal social feedback. In view of this perspective, some participants in this study reportedly drew their negative meta-perceptions from the verbal and non-verbal cues manifested in their day-to-day interactions with host members. Similar findings were reported in an earlier study by Constantine et al. (2005), which showed that African students' beliefs about impressions of the host were based on their day-to-day interactions. It also emerged from this study

that the media was a strong source of social feedback from which some participants drew their meta-perceptions.

In keeping with an argument by Kenny and DePaulo (1993), it was evident that some participants in this study gained their meta-perceptions by turning to their own self-perceptions as well as shared beliefs with fellow Africans, than the actual impressions by the host per se.

Consequences of Negative Meta-perceptions

Findings from this study revealed adverse effects of negative meta-perception on academic endeavors. For example, due to the belief that his capabilities were undermined, Four consequently expressed a lack of confidence in leading class activities due to anticipated negative evaluations. A study by Steele (1997) showed that negative stereotypes about an in-group's abilities can undermine performance by members of that in-group; however, Four's behavior has demonstrated that meta-perceptions can even potentially have a greater impact than the actual stereotypes.

This study also revealed notable differences between personal and group meta-perceptions. Whereas a majority of African students in this study generally believed that Africans in the United States were perceived in a negative way, it was interesting to note that the same participants held relatively more positive meta-perceptions of themselves as individuals. For example, Twelve, who viewed race as an underlying factor behind the hierarchy of acceptance of international students, reported no direct experience of racial prejudice. The discrepancy between personal and group meta-perceptions was further confirmed by the results from the quantitative study, which showed a significantly higher mean score for Perceived Personal Acceptance in comparison to the mean score of

Perceived Group Acceptance (See Table 8). This implies that participants perceived themselves as better accepted as individuals than they perceived their in-group (Africans) to be. The tendency of holding more negative group meta-perceptions than personal has also been reported in a study by Taylor, Wright, Moghaddam, and Lalonde (1990) with Haitian immigrant women. The discrepancy observed in this study can be partially explained by the fact that meta-perceptions were mainly drawn from shared beliefs with fellow in-group members rather than real personal encounters.

Research Question 3: The Sociocultural Adjustment of African Students

Another goal of this study was to explore the sociocultural adjustment experiences of African students. In keeping with findings from other studies (e.g. Sumer et al., 2008; Swami et al. 2009), commonly reported challenges included communication barriers, inability to foster friendships, and difficulties in adjusting to American food. Complimentary data from the quantitative study further showed very low scores for both Impersonal Endeavors and Cultural Empathy, suggesting that participants in this study experienced significant difficulties in their sociocultural adjustment.

Participants from Francophone African countries experienced language barriers. Robertson, Line, Jones, and Thomas (2000) present language as one of the most critical adjustment problems affecting international students since it affects both their social and academic performance. Interestingly, even though the majority of participants from Anglophone countries did not experience major linguistic barriers, most of them reported facing challenges relating to their accents. For example, Nine reported being ridiculed in high school because of her ‘funny’ and ‘think’ accent. According to Durwing and Munro (2005), an accent is often perceived as a direct sign that someone is foreign-born, which

potentially culminates in application of stereotypes like ignorance. This perception of accents as a marker of negative stereotypes possibly explains the far-reaching effects of the ridicule that Nine experienced in high school. Possibly, her attempt to ‘Americanize’ her accent was a means to overcome the stereotypes associated with it.

Participants in this study also expressed difficulties in fostering friendships with host members. An earlier study by Olivas and Lee (2006) showed that an inability to foster friendships was a major cause of stress among international students. In this study, it was apparent that some participants like Ten, who came from Africa as a teenager, found it challenging to intricate relationships such as dating because of the cultural barrier with fellow Africans who were just coming from Africa. In a similar fashion, Ten experienced a cultural barrier with native-born Blacks and a racial barrier with White Americans.

Another recurring challenge reported by African students in this study was adjusting to American food. As Brown et al. (2009) point out, food habits are inseparable from the culture a person inhabits; resultantly, it was not surprising when half of the participants in the quantitative study expressed difficulties going to coffee shops/food stalls/restaurants/fast food outlets.

Thueber and Walton (2012) attest that adjustment challenges encountered by international students can potentially culminate into serious psychological problems like depression, anxiety, loneliness and homesickness, fear, confusion, helplessness, and fatigue. Surprisingly, despite the availability of several support services at the studied universities, none of the participants who reported experiencing transitional difficulties sought professional help. Moreover, some aspects pertaining to student life such as Greek

organizations were found to be alien by some participants. This possibly explains why African students in this study proactively initiated alternative culturally-responsive ways to hasten their adjustment. Some of the adopted strategies are discussed below.

Sociocultural Adjustment Strategies

One strategy adopted by African students was affiliation to cultural organizations. There was an African Students Association at all the three universities that were studied in the qualitative study. Through these associations, fellow members helped to introduce the new culture and other relevant information to incoming students. Pires et al. (2006) attest that ethnic-based orientation of new members is effective because new members do not readily embrace information that comes from unfamiliar sources. That being said, African Students Associations were like a family unit that facilitated transition of newly enrolled members by providing a variety of support services including teaching of norms, values, and other codes of behavior relevant for adjustment.

Another functional role served by the cultural organization was to provide peer-mentoring services to fellow African students. Despite the availability of campus-wide peer-mentoring programs, Eight expressed preference to mentoring by fellow Africans. Devereux (2004) and Muldoon (2003) outlined numerous benefits fostered through ethnic peer-mentoring programs, arguing that students find these structures more accessible and less threatening than formal peer-mentoring programs.

Findings from this study also showed that a majority of African students engaged in civic activities as a means of integrating into their host society. They volunteered in various institutions such as health centers, refugee centers, church organizations, as well as campus events. A study by Manguvo et al. (2012) showed that volunteerism fosters

positive feelings of belonging, inclusion, self-validation, and recognition among African students, which potentially facilitates their adaptation to the host culture. In this study, Seven testified that his volunteer endeavors provided opportunities for widening his social and professional networks, which, undoubtedly, helped his social integration.

Research Question 4: The Relationship between Ethnic Identity, Perceived Acceptance, and Sociocultural Adjustment

The general hypothesis for this study postulates a relationship between ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment. Findings generally supported this hypothesis. A negative correlation was found between Pride and Perceived Group Acceptance, implying that participants who held negative group meta-perceptions tended to have higher levels of pride with their Africanity. Negative correlations were also found between Representation and perceived acceptance factors, implying that participants who felt negatively perceived tended to speak more positively about Africa. As Doosje and Ellemers (1997) argue, some participants in this study may have adopted an overly positive representation of Africa as a psychological response to the threat posed by their negative meta-perceptions. From a study of Ethiopian students in Israel, Kurman et al. (2005) observed that those who perceived themselves as lowly accepted adopted an overly defensive attitude of their in-group. In a similar fashion, it is possible that a positive representation of Africa by some participants in this study was a form of resistance to their perceived negative impressions by the host.

In this study, Belonging was found to be negatively correlated with Perceived Group Acceptance, implying that participants who believed they were perceived in a negative way tended to interact more with fellow Africans. This implies that the way in

which people think they are perceived by others may have an influential effect on inter-group interactions. Previous studies have shown that when in-group members believe that they are perceived in a negative way by members of the out-group, their interaction is dramatically affected (Vorauer, et al. 1998). This potentially explains the negative correlation between Belonging and perceived acceptance that was observed in this study.

Negative correlations were also observed between Belonging and sociocultural adjustment factors, implying that participants who associated more with fellow Africans experienced more difficulties in sociocultural adjustment. This was not surprising, for research has shown a positive association between establishing relationships with host members and sociocultural adjustment (e.g. Ye, 2006).

On the contrary, Pride was positively correlated with sociocultural adjustment factors, suggesting that the more pride participants had in their Africanity, the better their sociocultural adjustment. Similar findings were reported from a study by Berger-Cardoso, and Thompson (2010), where pride in one's ethnic identity was believed to foster a sense of emotional protection in the face of adversity, trauma, isolation, and stress related to migration among Latino immigrants.

Finally, negative correlations were found between perceived acceptance and sociocultural adjustment, implying that participants who believed they were perceived in a negative way experienced more adjustment difficulties. Findings from a study of Aboriginal and White Canadians by Vorauer et al. (1998) showed that negative meta-stereotypes were associated with negative emotions and lowered self-esteem. In this regard, it is arguable that negative meta-perceptions by some African students inhibited them from taking roles in social activities that could help to ease their adjustment.

The Effects of Demographics, Pre- and Post-Migration Variables

Findings from this study showed that the sojourning experiences of African students were, to varied degrees, influenced by pre-migration (rural/urban dwelling and parental education) and post-migration variables (length of residence and family in the US). Significant differences were observed as a function of length of stay on Cultural Empathy. Students who stayed longer in the United States had a greater understanding of the American value system than those who had just sojourned. This in line with previous findings by Wilton and Constantine (2003) where greater length of stay in the United States was associated with less cross-cultural adjustment difficulties among Asian and Latin American students.

Rivers (2012) argues that the longer Africans stay in the United States, the more they immerse themselves in the prejudicial beliefs against Blacks. This possibly explains why participants who had stayed longer in the United States felt more negatively perceived than those who had just sojourned. This was further confirmed by the results from the free-writing exercise where the bulk of the negative words and phrases were expressed by participants who had stayed in the United States longer.

Even though all participants in this study had lived in Africa, notable differences pertaining to sensitivity to accents emerged. Participants who sojourned as teenagers reportedly encountered some form of ridicule as a result of their accents whereas those who sojourned as adults talked only of difficulties to be understood. Not surprisingly, ‘Americanizing’ the accent was a major concern for African students who sojourned to the United States as teenagers, while effective communication was a major concern for those who sojourned as adults.

Significant differences were noted in this study as a function of having family in the United States on ethnic identity and perceived acceptance. Unmarried students scored less on ethnic identity factors and expressed more negative meta-perceptions. However, contrary to what is reported in literature (e.g. Summer, 2008), no significant differences were noted in this study on sociocultural adjustment as a function of marital status.

According to Fischer (2012), sojourning experiences are, to some degree, influenced by pre-migration characteristics of the sojourning individual. In this study, significant differences were noted as a function of parental education on Representation and sociocultural adjustment factors. Not only did participants with highly educated parents represent themselves stronger as Africans, they also scored significantly higher on sociocultural adjustment factors. In a similar fashion, participants who grew up in urban cities experienced less adjustment problems as compared to those who grew up in rural areas. Considering rural-urban dwelling and parental education as markers of socioeconomic status (SES) in sub-Saharan Africa (Fotso & Kuate-Defo, 2005), it is possible that participants from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (urban-dwellers and those with highly educated parents) possessed the cultural capital that helped to ease their adjustment. Fischer (2012) reported similar findings from a study with Ghanaian students in the United States, identifying participants' SES prior to sojourning as an influential factor on their attitudes, expectations, and, subsequently their adjustment.

Given that the effects of demographic characteristics such as age and gender yielded insignificant differences on most of the study variables, it was concluded that pre and post-migration variables had a greater influence on the sojourning experiences of African students than demographic characteristics.

Summary

This study investigated the feelings, perceptions, and experiences of African students in the United States in relation to ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment as well as the relationship among these constructs. An exploratory mixed methods research design was utilized in which a qualitative study was conducted first, results of which were used to inform and guide the quantitative phase. The first three research questions of the study sought to qualitatively explore aspects that characterize ethnic identity development by African students upon sojourning to the United States; beliefs that African students hold about the impressions of the host about them; and the sociocultural adjustment experiences of African students, respectively. The fourth research question sought to explore the relationship among the constructs.

Findings showed that African students negotiated two main identities. First, they consolidated their ethnic and national differences to embrace a monolithic 'African' identity, which provided a prism from which to explain African affairs. African students also negotiated the Black racial identity. However, their conceptualization of blackness appeared to be at odds with the contemporary meaning of blackness; as a result, they displayed little empathy and solidarity on pertinent issues for native-born Blacks.

The study also explored perceived acceptance by African students through examining their beliefs about the impressions of the host about them. Findings revealed both positive and negative meta-perceptions. Interestingly, participants perceived themselves as better accepted as individuals than they perceived their in-group to be.

The study also explored the sociocultural adjustment challenges encountered by African students. Commonly reported challenges included communication barriers,

inability to foster friendships, and difficulties in adjusting to food. Despite facing these challenges, African students rarely sought help through conventional university support services, preferring to get support from fellow African students.

In terms of the relationships among the constructs, findings revealed that ethnic Pride was positively correlated with sociocultural adjustment. The converse was true for Belonging, with data showing that participants who associated more with fellow Africans tended to experience more adjustment difficulties. Similarly, participants who held negative meta-perceptions tended to speak more positively of Africa, associate more with fellow Africans, and experience more sociocultural adjustment problems.

In this study, pre- and post-migration factors had a greater influence on the sojourning experiences of African students than demographic factors such as age and gender. Participants who stayed longer in the United States held more negative meta-perceptions, despite exhibiting a greater understanding of the American value system. Furthermore, participants from higher SES (urban-dwellers and those with highly educated parents) represented themselves stronger as Africans and also scored significantly higher on sociocultural adjustment factors than those from lower SES.

Conclusions

Findings from this study corroborate previous studies that examined African immigrants' negotiation of racial identity and Africanity as a monolithic ethnic identity (e.g. Awokoya, 2012). Findings from this study also reveal the multidimensionality of ethnic identity and how the different facets relate differently with perceived acceptance and sociocultural adjustment. In light of this multidimensionality, extrapolation of the overall relationship of ethnic identity and other psychological constructs should be done

with caution. This potentially explains the conflicting findings prevalent in literature with regards the predictive effects of ethnic identity on sociocultural adjustment.

Based on the findings of this study, the sojourning experiences of African students are inevitably embedded within their meta-perceptions. Evidence from this study has shown that holding on to negative meta-perceptions can have adverse effects on sociocultural adjustment. Regardless of accuracy, negative meta-perceptions potentially have more adverse effects than the actual stereotypes.

Practical Implications

Given the limited research on sociocultural adjustment of African students, this study provides a basis for the formulation of policies and strategies to assist this group of students adapt to the US social environment. Currently, universities sometimes consider international students as a homogenous group with similar needs, yet as revealed in this study, African students experience unique stressors, worries, and aspirations. For example, they were concerned about projecting a positive image of themselves and their continent of origins, aspects that might not be of major concerns to international students from other regions. Universities must provide more vehicles through which international students' home cultures and identities can be validated and celebrated. While available programs and social services at most universities are beneficial for all international students at large, targeted culturally-responsive programs are potentially more effective.

Drawing from the widespread negative meta-perceptions that emerged from this study, programs specifically designed to encourage sojourning African students to be positively-minded could be formulated. Adopting positive attitudes and meta-perceptions would, undoubtedly, help African students adapt to the US social and academic

environment faster. One way to foster a positive perspective is to bear in mind that a majority of host members have little knowledge about other cultures, and therefore, African students should not take offence at the general lack of understanding of their cultural backgrounds.

African students in this study reportedly interacted more with fellow Africans; not surprisingly, the bulk of their meta-perceptions were drawn from their shared beliefs. As shown in this study, this impeded their sociocultural adjustment. It would be beneficial if African students expanded their networks to foster relationships with host members. This can be achieved through participation in available campus-wide social events.

Limitations of the Study

Findings of this study, however, should be considered in light of potential limitations. For convenience, participants in this study were drawn from six universities in the mid-Western region of the United States. The studied universities are White dominated and located in predominantly White communities. Moreover, the sample size (123 participants) for the quantitative phase of this study was relatively small. Given that the United States is so big and diverse, extrapolation and generalization of data from this study should be done with caution.

Despite these notable limitations, findings from this study provide a significant insight into sojourning experiences of African students in relation to ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment.

Future Directions

Given the negotiation of a Black racial identity revealed in this study, it would be crucial to explore the issue of Black intra-racial relationships in future studies. For

example, the shared beliefs of African students in this study pointed to a visible demarcation within the Black racial identity among native born and non-native-born Blacks. However, it remains to be explored what really characterizes the relationship between the two groups and how the relationship can be bridged.

This study revealed negative meta-perceptions by African students. It is important to explore this issue in future studies and determine some of the factors that might influence these negative meta-perceptions. In particular it would be important to also investigate the actual impressions by the hosts of Africans in the United States. This integrative approach may potentially help elucidate how meta-perceptions by African students compare to the actual impressions. Sigelman and Tuch (1997) conducted a similar study, exploring the accuracy by which meta-stereotypes held by Blacks in the United States compared to actual stereotypes that Whites held about Blacks.

In view of the fact that participants in this study perceived themselves as better accepted as individuals than they perceived their in-group to be, another possible area for future research is the examination of the discrepancy between personal and group meta-perceptions, whether the discrepancy is a result of exaggerated group meta-perceptions or denial of personal negative encounters.

Lastly, this study adds strength to what is already known through previous research about the sojourning experiences of African students. However, further research about identity development, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment of international students from other regions of the world would add important insights to those discussed in this study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Permission to Conduct Observations at the University of A



To whom it may concern,

Please note that Angellar Manguvo, Graduate Student in the Department of Education, School and Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri has the permission of the African Students Association to conduct research with the Africa Students Association and our members for her study, *“The relationship between ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and socio-cultural adjustment of African students in the US”*.

Angellar will provide a copy of the IRB-approved consent document before she begins her observations and recruit participants from the association for the study.

If there are any questions, please contact me at XXX

African Students Association

University of A

XXX President

Appendix B. Invitation to Participate in a Qualitative Study.

You are cordially invited to participate in a study conducted by Angellar Manguvo; a PhD candidate at the University of Missouri for a dissertation entitled '*The relationship between ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and socio-cultural adjustment of African students in the US.*' You were selected as a prospective participant because you are an African international student who has resided in sub-Saharan Africa for at least 15 years.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked some questions/or we will have a discussion about issues related to your experiences as African student in the United States. The interview will be audio-taped; and will not last more than one and half hours.

Potential Risks and Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks to your participation.

Potential Benefits

As an individual, you may not directly benefit from your participation in this study. However, this study may help to inform stakeholders in institutions of higher learning on how to deliver culturally-responsive support programs for African international students.

Compensation for participation

You will receive a \$15 cash gift upon interview completion as an incentive for your participation.

Anonymity

Your name or other identifying information will not be released. It is completely anonymous. No information will be included that would reveal your identity.

Participation and withdrawal

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 573-882-9585 or access their website at <http://research.missouri.edu/cirb/>

Thank you.

Angellar Manguvo
PhD Candidate, Educational Psychology
University of Missouri, Columbia
amd45@mail.missouri.edu; 573 442 2114.

Appendix C. Interview Protocol and Questions

Introductions

- Introducing myself
- Explaining the purpose of the interview
- Reminding that discussions will be anonymous
- Reminding that he/she may terminate the interview
- Asking for consent to record the interview

Background Information

- Home country
- Year in school
- Family
- Education level
- Rural/urban dwelling prior to sojourning

Interview questions

1. How have you come to study in the US?
2. What are your plans at the moment upon completion of your studies?
3. How is it like to be African international student in the United States?
4. How do you identify yourself? Do you perceive any differences between the [name] I am talking to right now and the [name] before sojourning to the United States. If so what are the differences and what do you think might have brought about these differences?
5. How does the way you personally identify yourself compare to the way people identify you here on campus and/or in your society?
6. When you first came to the United States, to what extent did you feel as if you belonged? In what ways did you find host member (un)welcoming? Do you have any striking event(s) you can refer to? Are there any aspects of your personal characteristics you feel might have played a role? Do you still feel the same way today? (If different) what do you think contributed to your change of perceptions?
7. How do you think the majority of Americans perceive of African international students or Africans in general in the United States? How do you compare these perceptions with other international students or sojourners from other regions of the world?
8. What kind of social relations with host nationals do you have? Are there any differences in the way people from different ethnic groups (e.g. Blacks, Whites, and Latinos) relate to you?
9. Are there any specific things that you have had a hard time to get used to? (If yes) why do you think these things are especially difficult for you? Do you make any efforts to improve?
10. What does being Black mean to you? Do you participate in the Black-related events such as the Black History Month, (if yes) what does it mean to you?
11. Have you ever experienced any form of racism? How have you reacted to that?

Appendix D. Invitation to Participate in a Quantitative Study

You are cordially invited to participate in a study conducted by Angellar Manguvo; a PhD candidate at the University of Missouri for a dissertation entitled '*The relationship between ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and socio-cultural adjustment of African students in the US.*' You were selected as a prospective participant because you are an African international student who has resided in sub-Saharan Africa for at least 15 years.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey by rating your feelings and perceptions with a checkmark on a Likert scale. You will also be asked to write down descriptive words/phases for some items as well as to rank some responses.

Potential Risks and Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks to your participation. You may feel some discomfort while completing the survey as some questions ask about negative feelings and experiences.

Potential Benefits

As an individual, you may not directly benefit from your participation in this study. However, this study may help to inform stakeholders in institutions of higher learning on how to deliver culturally competent support programs for African international students.

Compensation for participation

Participation is voluntary.

Anonymity

The survey is completely anonymous. You will not be required to write down your name.

Participation and withdrawal

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 573-882-9585 or access their website at <http://research.missouri.edu/cirb/>.

Here is the link to the survey.

https://umissourieducation.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_380gcRYCc293Sok

Thank you.

Angellar Manguvo
PhD Candidate, Educational Psychology
University of Missouri, Columbia
amd45@mail.missouri.edu; 573 442 2114

Appendix E: Survey Instrument

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. Your participation in this survey will help me understand the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of African students in the United States in relation to their identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment. If you have questions about the survey, please feel free to ask. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Age

<25

26-30

31-35

>36

Gender

Male

Female

Program

Graduate

Undergrad

Year of Study

First

Second

Third

>Fourth

Marital Status

Single

Married

Widowed

Other

Do you have immediate family members in the US (parents and siblings)?

Yes

No

Region of origin

West Africa

East Africa

Central Africa

Southern Africa

Country of Origins

How long have you been in the US?

< 2 years

2-4 years

>4 years

Where did you grow up in your home country?

Rural

Urban

Semi-urban

Other

What are your plans upon completion of your studies (Rank the options by dragging the most preferred option to the top)?

- 1 Seek a job in the US
- 2 Further my education in the US
- 3 Return home
- 4 Not sure yet

Parent education (at least one –parent)

≤Primary	Secondary	College Dip/Cert.	Bachelors	Masters/PhD
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Religion

Christianity	Islam	African Traditional Religion	Other
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My education is funded by

Self (family)	Home government	Scholarship/Assistantship	Other
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do you describe yourself, culturally?

Very African	Somewhat African	Neutral	Not very African	Not at all African
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important is it to you that you are African?

Very Important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often do you consciously search for news about African countries other than your home country?

Once or more times a week	Once in a fortnight	Once a month	Once in three months	Not at all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often do you consciously follow African individuals/countries' performances in international sports other than your country/ countrymen?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite Often	Very Often
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often, on average do you play African music?

Not at all	Once in three months	Once a month	Once in a fortnight	Once or more times a week
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often do you attend African cultural events/festivals?

Very often	Often	Rarely	Not at all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often to you wear traditional costumes at cultural events/festivals?

Almost always	Less than Once a Month	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all	I do not attend
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When people ask about a catastrophe in Africa, how comfortable do you feel to provide information?

Very comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Neutral	Somewhat uncomfortable	Not at all comfortable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following questions relate to how you view yourself in general as an African international student. Please rate the statements as to how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
There are some things about Africa that make me feel embarrassed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most of my friends are not Africans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am always frank to speak of the ills of Africa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not usually talk about African affairs unless someone asks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am often less proud to be an African than I would want to be	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I think I am embarrassed to be African	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When Africans do well in sports I feel very happy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always speak positively about Africa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am active in social groups that include mostly Africans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not mention my African origins unless someone asks me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a lot of pride in accomplishments by Africans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel good about my Africanness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am active in social groups that include mostly Africans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a strong sense of belonging to my Africanness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try not to show the parts of me that are too African	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can talk freely about my culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If incorrect things are said about Africa, I make efforts to correct that	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think being Black has an effect on how I feel about myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see myself much of a member of the Black racial group in the US	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am very active in Black-related events e.g. Black History Month	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It offends me to be identified as 'African' instead of my home country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please write down up to six words/phrases that best describe the way you think most Americans perceive of Africans in the United States.

Please rate the statements as to how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale based on your overall assessment.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I don't feel very much accepted by most Americans	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that Americans relate to me with courtesy regardless of my ethnic origin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that most Americans treat me as an equal partner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think Americans have a negative attitudes towards Africans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that Americans value my contributions in class discussions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that Americans relate to me with respect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes perceive unwelcome gestures among Americans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel ignored most of the times	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People always make me feel I am an outsider	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Although Americans appear nice, I know they do not quite accept Africans as equals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My African origins makes it hard for me to fit in social networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People's gestures make me feel like belong on this campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I perceive international students from other regions as better accepted than Africans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I am denigrated because I am African	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My capabilities are often undermined because of my continent of origins	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which ethnic group do you find most receptive

- Native-born Blacks
- Whites
- Latinos
- Asian- Americans
- Caribbean immigrants

Please rate the statements as to how much difficulty you experience in achieving the following:

	No Difficulty	Slight Difficulty	Mild Difficulty	Great Difficulty	Extreme Difficulty
Getting used to the pace of life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Going to social events/gatherings/functions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding jokes and humor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Following rules and regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing with the bureaucracy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making yourself understood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing with unsatisfactory service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Going to coffee shops/food stalls/restaurants/fast food outlets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the local accent/language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adapting to local etiquette	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the local value system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing with people in authority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding what is required of you at university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the locals' world view	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking a local perspective on the culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeing things from the locals' point of view	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

VITA

Angellar Manguvo was born and grew up in Matsai in Bikita, Zimbabwe. She did her high school at Mashoko High School before enrolling for her Bachelor of Arts Degree at the University of Zimbabwe in 1997. After completing her Bachelor's degree in 2000, Angellar taught in High school for eight years, breaking in-between to further her education. She studied for the Post Graduate Diploma in Education in 2004. She then enrolled for a Master's degree in Educational Foundations (Psychology), which she completed in 2007. In 2008, Angellar moved to the United States to pursue her PhD in Educational Psychology at the University of Missouri. Angellar's research focuses on two main areas: school discipline and classroom management; and multiculturalism, inclusive practices, refugees, and immigrant education with particular focus on Africans and Africans in diaspora.