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doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/35402494>

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Cultural Parenting: Igbo Mothers Raising their Children in the United States

by

Anene Emodi Onwuka

Under the Direction of Akinyele Umoja, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2023

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explore the challenges Igbo women face when raising their children in 21st century American Society. The study will also explore how Igbo women are able to maneuver through two cultures and raise their children simultaneously. This research explores the occurrence of being an African woman dealing with cultural differences, race identity and gender in a Western society and how it relates to parenting. Interviews will be conducted to get real lived experiences of participants. The goal is to bring forth knowledge and awareness on African women, particularly Igbo women and what they ultimately grapple with when raising their children but told through their lenses giving them a voice.

INDEX WORDS: Mothering, Igbo, Parenting, Nigeria

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2023

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by

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Georgia State University

May 2023

DEDICATION

To my late grandparents, Okiddo Onwuka, Nneigwe Onwuka and Michael Emodi, your spirit lives through the fruits of your labor....I am that fruit. I am thankful and appreciative to have known you physically and spiritually. To my Dad Cyril Onwuka, my twin flame and my heart, Daddy I miss you so very much. Please know that you are my favorite forever guy! My heart really belongs to you Daddy. I wish you were here to wipe my tears. To my Aunt Sista Rose Emodi and Uncle Nnamdi thank you for your love and kindness, I miss you both. Priscilla Mason, my Godsister I still remember your voice, high pitched and profound, thank you for being my guardian angel. Auturo Peaks my brother, you were always my cheerleader, a man who encouraged me always, I truly miss you. To my two other amazing older brothers lost, Victor and Eben may your spirit live on forever, I cherish the love you gave and I miss you all so much. Last but certainly not least, Dr. Jacqueline Rouse, thank you for your love, kindness and stern demeanor, I needed you during this academic journey, and you showed up in more ways than one, and for that I love you and thank you. I dedicate my scholarly work to each and every one of you, Okkiddo, Nneigwe, Daddy, Michael, Sista, Nnamdi, Priscilla, Victor, Eben, Auturo and Dr. Rouse, I love you and thank you.....may your spirit transcend across all generations and beyond this earth, with the guidance from God Himself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is no me without God. I could not have achieved anything in this life without the love and guidance of my Father. God, You have sustained me, You have kept me, You have carried me, You have protected me and You have shown me grace, mercy, favor and an abundance of love that is unconditional. I am forever indebted to You. I will always honor and lift Your name wherever I go. It is only because of You that I am. Thank you for loving me and continuing to shape me as I grow.

I would like to thank my committee members for their aide in helping me craft my theses and guiding me into the right direction. Dr. Gayles, thank you for taking on the responsibility of being my chair, I am grateful. Dr. Davis, our conversations and phone calls, have always uplifted me and brought me a sense of peace, I am forever thankful and grateful for your guidance throughout this graduate journey. Your heart is so pure, and you are such a caring and loving person, thank you for sharing your heart with me. Dr. Akinyele, you have always kept me on my toes and you have made me face some writing challenges, and looking back, I am thankful for you. You never let me settle for anything less, thank you Dr. Akinyela (Dr. A).

Dr. Umoja, I have admired you since I took your Political Thought class in undergraduate. You are extremely phenomenal to me and I am always in awe of you. You exemplify Black Excellence, and I am truly honored to have been your student and that you agreed to be my chair. Over the years I have learned so much from you. Your support and love means the world not just to me, but to the entire AAS department. Dr. Umoja you are an amazing mentor and a great professor, and we are all blessed to know you. Thank you for your encouraging words, thank you for guidance, thank you for your support, thank you for always caring about my mind (mental), thank you for your genuine care for my future, thank you for the

words of wisdom you poured into me over the years, and thank you for being a role model to all of us. Dr. Umoja, your love and fight for our community inspires me and others, every day.

It's not easy carrying the weight of life all by ourselves so I am thankful to have you as my husband Maino. You are truly my best friend, my cheerleader, my protector, my voice of reason, my true love, my soulmate, you are just my everything. I thank God for you, and I appreciate everything that you have done for me. I am grateful, humbled. You make me feel amazing. You held me through this academic journey, by moving out of the way to let me pursue my dreams, while on the side line rooting me on. I am just in awe of how you love me unconditionally. You work so hard to provide and financially take care of us. I am able to wear wifehood and motherhood with grace and style. Thank you Maino, I love you.

Shanel, the moment I laid eyes on you, I knew there was a love that I would not be able to control.....that unconditional love. You were meant to be the oldest child, because of the way you nurture and love your two younger siblings. You know the importance of education, because we have instilled it in you from the moment you started recognizing your first words. I am so proud of you and the young lady that you are becoming, and I am truly honored to be your Mommy. As I watched you the other day, as we dropped you off at school to start your first year in college, I didn't shed a tear, because I knew that you would be just fine. Over the years while getting my associate's, bachelor's and master's you have taught me perseverance even when I didn't think I wanted to continue school. Looking at you gave me purpose. I knew I couldn't quit because you needed me to achieve my goals. Thank you babygirl, thank you for reminding me the sky is NOT the limit, our goals and achievement goes past the sky. I love you.

Layla, my heart, you have no idea what you mean to me. You have given me so much joy and happiness. You are a reflection of everything good in this world. Thank you for allowing me

to bring you to campus with me, you have always been my calm before the storm. You have inspired me more than a million times. I have literally learned how to uplift my confidence because of you. When I look at you, I smile because I see God working in and on you. I am honored to be your Mommy. Thank you for teaching me how to love myself in a world that is chaotic and noisy. There is peace and love that exudes from your heart and I am thankful to receive it from you. You are the middle child that is the glue that binds the siblinghood between your sister and brother. You are my turkey sandwich.....I love you.

Kameron, my one and only baby boy. You are the completion of my womb.....(I hope for now). You are busy, nosey, inquisitive, disorganized, opinionated, direct, fearless, and over all just all over the place. I was pregnant with you when I received my Associate's degree, so you are my academic learning baby. Kameron, your hugs and vocabulary/dictionary words have helped me through this journey. Thank you for also reminding me that quitting is never an option. I am so thankful to God that I get to be your Mommy. My Baby Bear...I love you.

Shanel, Layla and Kameron, where would I be without my children? You three have given me purpose that goes beyond this world. I love you three with every fiber in my heart and soul. I thank God for the three of you.

Mommy, you are the best parent anyone could ever ask for. You have pushed me above any limit. You challenge my thoughts, and you guide me through my mistakes. Going back to school was not easy, but your support literally helped me conquer any obstacle that came towards me. You remind me that God is able, and that prayers work. The way you pray over me and love me helps me in more ways than you could possibly imagine. I know that I am your heart, and you are mine. This world is a better place because you grace it. You are the good part

of this world. You are my role model and you mean the entire world to me. I am always in awe of just you. I love you so much Mommy.

My Grandmother, Priscilla Agebu, God hears you when you pray for me. The love you have for me and my family is unmeasurable. Thank you so much for giving me all of your heart and pouring so much love into my heart. Thank you so very much. Nkem, it is true that God hears our prayers, because you tell me every chance you get that you prayed for me! Well here I am! Thank you for that prayer, because He answered them. Thank you for being my protector and heart. A sister's love is always pure and solid. I never have to question your love for me. Thank you for always having my back, I am forever grateful. Auntie Amaka, Uncle Ike and Uncle Chuka, the amazing siblings of my Mother. You all had your hand in raising me. The saying, 'It takes a village to raise children', rings true in our family. I am forever grateful for the encouragement and talks we have had over the years. I am blessed to have you in my life. I thank you for loving me unconditionally.

To my Godmothers, Iyom Susan Okuzu, and Mary Mason, you two have NO idea what you mean to me. One thing I know for sure is that you women pray so deeply for me and it shows. The advice, phone calls, heartfelt messages, and encouraging words always melts my heart. I love you two with my entire heart.

Outside of my immediate family and elders, there have been women that I have grown up with that I am indebted to because of the love they consistently shower over my heart and soul. I would be remiss if I didn't mention them. In no particular order, my Best friends are the sisters God gave to me. Dr. Yvonne Umezurike, Attorney Jillian Williams, Rashawndra Mason, Therese Moreland and Nitisha Page. This journey would have been completely boring without the humor and late-night texts, phone calls and visits. The times that I wanted to give up, you all

never let me slip, I am forever grateful. You ladies love me so much that I feel it deep down in my soul. Thank you for over 30 years of solid sisterhood!

To my older and younger sisters, I thank God for you ladies! I love you guys so much. You have absolutely no idea what your support and love meant to me during this academic journey and would have also been stale without it. My dearest Dr. Wendy Osefo, Dr. Nathalie Fox, Kristiana Cox, Keebie Morris, Myinn Colden, Ashley Evans, Linda Foster, Angelica Vasquez, Nelly Rivera, Jackie Hackett, Michelle Calhoun, Siana SmithVasiny Long, Khadija Rodney, Sania and Chanel White, God knew exactly what He was doing when He placed you women in my lives. Lashawna Brown, my Goddaughter and academic buddy, you made this ride easy and you helped me along the way with every step. I love you so very much babygirl! This degree belongs to both of us! (smile). To my other Goddaughter, Shamiyah, the baby doll me and Muffin kept and played with, 25 years later you still bring us so much joy! Thank you for your love and support always.

To my brothers, what would I do without your love? Countless hours on the phone talking about absolutely NOTHING! (smile). Isitua Onwuka, Steven Riley, Detric Morris, Currie Chandler, Hiram McReynolds, Bryson Mills, I am so grateful and humbled by the love and grace you men have always displayed towards me. Thank you for your heart and conversations but I am mostly thankful for our bond.

I want to thank everyone in the African American Studies program, starting in no particular order, Dr. Shannon, Dr. Morris, Dr. Asante, Dr. Hobson, Mrs. Futrell, Dr. Robinson and Ms. Tiffany Bullock, thank you for all you have done for me and the support and love given to me over the years. Our conversations over time have kept me sane through it all!

Oh, and before I forget, my participants! This would not have been possible without you wonderful amazing ladies! Your voices and experiences helped create and shape my work. I am forever indebted to you all! Thank you ladies so much.

To every name I have mentioned, I love each and every one of you with my heart, this work doesn't just belong to me, it belongs to each and every name in this section.

In March 2020 (during the pandemic) I was accepted into the History Ph.D. program at Georgia State University. Although I am currently in my 3rd year in the History PhD program I had one more thing to do to complete my Master's Thesis, I kept dragging my feet but my committee pushed me through, and I am thankful. As I continue my Doctoral studies in History I look forward to one more step into starting my Dissertation.....the future Dr. Anene Onwuka-McReynolds in 2025 by the Grace of God!!!

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

There has been a wealth of research done on immigrants in the United States, but when it pertains to Africans, the research is limited. African immigrants have been largely excluded from research on issues confronting immigrants (Kamya, 1997). Immigrants have been calling the United States home since the 'first' explorer 'discovered' America. Within the past twenty years, there has been a significant increase in new immigrants (Kamya, 1997). Immigrants face many challenges; to which natives of the United States is not subjected. Immigrants from transitional communities bring their cultures to the host countries and then are subjected to the culture of the host society with immigrants moving to the dominant culture (Ette, 2012),

African immigrants, along with other immigrants, deal with acculturation. Acculturation occurs when one has assimilated to a different culture, which is usually the dominant one. At an interpersonal level, immigrants must reorganize interpersonal relationships (Kamya, 1997), which may affect how they assimilate and parent. Immigrants hold on to their native country by holding on to their customs and traditions. Nigerian immigrants coming from their homeland have personal beliefs and conceptions about the immigrant experience, and it is from their experience and interpretations that we can better understand immigration, settlement, (Ette, 2012).

African women who have migrated to the United States as mothers bring on a whole new perspective with their experience. Mothers bring with them their culture, customs, traditions, and beliefs with them. In a society where gender, racism, and identity matter to American minorities, how are Igbo mothers raising their children? Their way of life can be different to the way African American mothers raise their children.

1.2 Purpose and Significance

My focus on this research is to bring a voice to the experiences and perceptions of Igbo mothers. As they are using their mothering practices from their native country, how does American culture shape the way they are raising their children, and what are their experiences? My purpose in doing this work is to hopefully add to an existing body of work that highlights the preservation of culture and mothering practices of African women living in the U.S. This work is significant because it will examine the experiences of Igbo mothers who negotiate two cultures, while raising children. What childrearing customs will they keep, which practices will they infuse in their parenting and what are the factors that inform their mothering decisions?

1.3 Nature of the Study

The research that I plan on conducting will use a Qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research allows the researcher to go deep into the experiences of Igbo mothers and discover common themes. Using the Qualitative approach allows me as the researcher to understand cultural parenting through the lens and experiences of Igbo mothers. Within the qualitative approach, I will be using the narrative approach. Creswell defines the narrative approach to qualitative studies as: “a specific type of qualitative design” in which the “narrative is understood as spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions chronologically connected.” (Creswell, 2007). This research will focus on the mothering practices of Igbo mothers and how it may shape the way they parent, rear, or raise their children outside of their native country. Through their parenting experiences I will be able to provide in-depth information.

1.4 Research Question

This research study aims to explore the following questions:

1. What are the parental experiences of Igbo mothers as they navigate through the spaces of Western culture in the United States?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Africana Womanism is a term created by Clenora Hudson-Weems, who felt that womanism and feminism did not fully relate to an Africana Woman globally. As a result, she created a term that would only center Africana women and keeping Africa as the foundation. The purpose of the Africana Womanist theoretical framework and scholarship is to identify and examine the Africana women's different experiences through their struggles, needs, and desires (Hudson-Weems 1997). Eighteen components make up Africana Womanism. Of the eighteen, I chose to use, Adaptability, Nurturing, Black Sisterhood, Strength, Self-Naming, Respect for the Elders, Mothering, Spirituality, and Authenticity to my research. I chose these components because in my experience, Igbo women already possess the components mentioned above. Hudson contends that family centeredness is demonstrated by African woman who put their family first at all costs and never puts herself before her family. Hudson further believes that being authentic allows for her to be honest and sincere to her cultural roots and how that helps her to adapt to a new environment and not forgetting who she is. The Africana woman can believe in God with no restrictions, and she looks to her Creator for peace and understanding without hesitation. Elders are revered as unique, so it is no surprise that the Africana woman gives honor and respect to her Elders, who came before her

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Africans for centuries have reached America's coastline; however many were introduced to America during through the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade that brought them here against their will to become enslaved humans. As time progressed and slavery no longer existed, voluntary migration became an option for people globally. Africans, particularly West Africans, took advantage of relocating to America. Nigerians have been migrating for a long time, which is no surprise that they are the leading African country that migrates to America. According to the 2009 U.S. Census Bureau, along with the American Community Survey, the top five countries of origin for the 1.5 million African immigrants in the United States were Nigeria (209,908, or 14.1 percent of all African immigrants).

This literature review examines who Igbo people are through their history, reasons for migrating to America, and their mothering practices. Each aspect of my study will provide context on the concepts of their identity, culture, traditions, and experiences that Igbo mothers navigate through in the United States.

2.1 Womanhood and Parenting in Pre-Colonial Igboland

To understand the mothering practices of Igbo women in America, I will collect information on the ethnic group's culture during three-time periods, pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial in Nigeria. The literature researched will discuss the traditions, culture and mothering practices of Igbo women and their culture and how it is used within their parenting skills in America.



Table 1.

Nigeria is a diverse country with hundreds of ethnic groups, dominated by three groups of tribes, Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. The Igbo society claim the Igboland, located in the Southeastern region. It took centuries and decades for Igbo people to formulate their culture and traditions, and within those years, they established a kindred society. “Igbo enwe eze!”- The meaning of this saying is the Igbo society has no king. During the precolonial era, the Igbo community was an autonomous group of people who did not rely on a chief or a king to handle their social or political affairs (Ebbe and Onyeozili, 2012). The Igbo governing system was in complete opposition from the Hausa and Yoruba and this is due to Igbo people being autonomous in their social and political communities. Although they had an Eze, a leader, decisions made within the Igbo tribe consisted of an assembly where men and women participated together with respect. The assembly came from the fact that they were free to formulate their own associations in their village. “Men and women alike possessed the right to life, property, freedom of association and the right to freedom of speech” (Egboh, 1973-74). Women had their organizations and received the exact respect as the men did. Their organizations included women's courts, market authorities, secret societies, and age-grade

institutions (Chuku, 2009). Women were collective and wielded individual power as members and heads of these organizations, respectively (Chuku, 2009). During the pre-colonial era Igbo women had economic and reproductive roles that was fundamental to the progression of their community. The women were independent in their agricultural duties and were separate from the men which allowed them to have authority and dominion over their monetary gain and were not obligated to share their income with their husbands. In Igbo society, women were vital to motherhood, significant in marriages and were representatives for the people in their community. In these organizations women addressed the affairs of women, and what they were affected by in the community. During these meeting pregnant women and lactating mothers were not permitted to attend. The organizations allowed them to promote morality within the community by training young girls the proper use of the tongue, how to be gentle, how to exercise self-control, establish healthy peaceful relationships, learning about labor force, charities and women leadership and child care (Ukagbe et al., 2010).

In traditional society Igbo women were very important to the growth of the community which contributed to the size of a family, which in the Igbo culture determines the wealth of a family. Having children in the Igbo community plays a role providing labor that gives the family an economic advantage that develops wealth within the family (Ekpe, 1983). The moment an Igbo woman becomes married, motherhood begins. Igbo society views marriage as a start of child bearing, that is why early marriage is encouraged to younger women (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1995). The younger the woman, there is a possibility of her bearing a lot of children, so therefore marrying at a young age is encouraged. Igbo people had their own cultural beliefs when dealing with a woman's pregnancy, so when she finally becomes pregnant, she would comply to them.

As I did my research there were a set of rules and customs regarding pregnancy that stood out the most during the pre-colonial era.

In the Igbo society a pregnant woman is not supposed to enter into a place where a child has recently been born; if this action not obeyed, the belief is it will promote a miscarriage (Basden 1966, 171). In the first trimester of her pregnancy, it is frowned upon to carry loads. She is forbidden to fight or even stretch her hands up high against walls. It is regarded by the community that if she engages in the acts as mentioned earlier that she "does not care for her unborn child" (Basden 1966, 171). As an Igbo woman prepares for the birth of her child, it is against tradition to give birth within her home. When a mother gives birth, it is done outside with a midwife and the pregnant woman's mother. Many Igbo women with pregnant daughters try to reside at their daughter's houses during the later stage of pregnancy to ensure that they are present during and after the birth of their grandchild.

Any group of people who are engrossed in their culture, take their beliefs, seriously. Igbos take their beliefs seriously from birth to death, following rules set aside in their culture which can determine the type of pregnancy, delivery, and child the woman will have. If a woman experiences miscarriage, birth deformity, or issues with the child, in the Igbo culture, it is because she did not follow the strict rule of her culture. In the case of a miscarriage up to five months, the fetus is placed in a clay pot and thrown away (Basden 1966, 173). There is little regard for saving a child to the mother of twenty-eight weeks, so the child is left to die and not be protected by anyone in the community. Igbo mothers who experienced mishaps during pregnancy or after the birth of their child blamed themselves for the corrupt omen that fell upon them, all in the name of tradition that they believe

A birth of a child is a celebration for all parents and giving birth to multiple children is an extraordinary celebration. In the Igbo community a woman who births twins is considered a to possess animalistic behavior and not considered human or part of the ethnic group. (ACHEBE). Their belief is that because animals give birth to multiple babies at one time, it is frowned upon when a member of their society does and therefore sent away from the village. The only way a mother can redeem herself back into the community with respect, regard, and dignity is if she gives birth to a healthy single baby.

"Breastfeeding is one of the oldest child rearing practices known to mankind" (Okeahialam, 1986). Once a healthy child is born (according to pre-colonial Igbo health standards), the child is given to the midwife or maternal grandmother to breastfeed. During the pre-colonial era, the Igbo infants were not given breast milk until a few days after birth. A mother is not permitted to give her breast milk until it is tested. It must be approved before she can allow her infants to consume her breast milk. Due to the first milk which is the colostrum being bitter it is considered not safe for consumption (Basden 1966, 173).

Having children is joyous and exciting, and in the Igbo community, births are celebrated in increments. After a child is born and before circumcision, there is a naming ceremony that occurs which is called, *Ikuputanwa* or *igu nwa' aha'*. It is an Igbo child's birth rite to have a naming ceremony to welcome and introduce them to the world. The event takes place on the 8-12th day after the child is born. According to Chinwe Nwoye, the ceremony is celebrated days after the birth because the Igbo myth states that it gives a baby time to decide if they want to remain on Earth as a member of the Igbo society or go back to where they originated from (Nwoye, 2014). Naming a child with two names is common during the naming ceremony. A child is named according to the situation or events during the birth of the infant (Asomugha,

2010). There is a process in naming Igbo children, first a child is given two names, within the two names given, one is usually the name of a deceased relative. “Igbo people believed that all children are reincarnations of beings who have already passed through a lifetime; hence a man will point to a little girl and gravely inform you that she is his mother reborn into the world” (Basden 1966, 60).

“The rite of circumcision is practiced globally and rigidly regarded, but nobody knows why” (Basden 1966, 176). Circumcision is a ritual performed on children around the world, and it was widespread in the Igbo community. In many parts of the world, Jew, Arabs, Australian Aborigines, Indonesians, Malaysians, and many people of sub-Saharan Africa are known to practice circumcision in their culture (Myers et al., 1985). Depending on the region of Igboland, when a child is circumcised, it can be around infancy or during puberty. It is solely because of culture that female circumcision is practiced in the traditional society (Gwarzo, 2018). Any young girl will have the thought of death being greater than the thought of circumcision pain. The ones who made the decisions regarding circumcision to the bodies of young girls was her father which alluded to women and girls having no voice or control over their bodies when it came to circumcision.

Igbo parents were known to be very affectionate and loving to their children during the pre-colonial era, when a child did survive, they were considered to be aesthetically beautiful, healthy and full of life. “In Nigeria as in all Africa, children are still considered as very important. They are a sign of blessing on the marriage and on their parents. They are a factor of social prestige and status. They are a sign of the fulfillment of the parents” (Ekpe, 1983).

Igbo women were found to religiously practice her culture’s beliefs because she belonged to a community that depended on her. It is noted that regardless of how she may have

felt about her culture her loyalty and allegiance to her tribe as a member, was another reason why she was obedient to her traditions and customs. Women always knew how important they were to the Igbo society. Women were vital to motherhood, significant in marriages and were representatives for the people in their community.

2.2 Womanhood in Colonial Igboland

Just like many countries in Africa, Nigeria came under effective colonization around the 19th century (Duke, 2011). British colonizers arrived in Nigeria with the mindset to conquer their civilizations, claiming that Africa was uncivilized and barbaric. Colonialism came with the intent to change one's culture, traditions and customs. Governor Frederick Lugard was appointed by the Queen of England to take charge of Nigeria during colonialism. Lugard's focus was occupied with draining Nigeria's resources for Britain that he could not fully commit to directly ruling Nigeria, so he adopted an indirect ruling system (Anoba, 2018). Indirect rulers were employed with using the colony's resources to industrialize Britain; the warrant chiefs grew powerful and despotic (Anoba, 2018). They extorted their subjects by imposing unreasonable fines and charges and seized private properties and brutalized anyone who opposed their authority (Anoba, 2018). The leaders were not in favor of achieving unity amongst their own people; instead, their actions portrayed that they were far more interested in being corrupt and dishonorable.

“Ogu Umunwanyi”- Women's War ensued in 1929 due to the erratic leadership behavior the warrant chiefs displayed. Rumor spread rapidly that a warrant chief was given orders to tax women who worked in the market. Generally, Igbo women were not taxed on their goods and crops, because it was a rule customary in their community. “Counting of women and their property raised fears that women were to be taxed, particularly because the Bunde District

Officer had lied when the men were counted for tax purposes and had told the men they were not going to be taxed (Allen, 1975). Due to that occurrence, Igbo women did not believe that they weren't going to be taxed, which resulted in them believing in the rumor. They began to galvanize and congregate with other women from different cities and air out their dissatisfaction of colonialism. Igbo women were able to successfully get the attention of 10,000 women who were on board to be protest against the ill treatment of women by the British Administration in their native country. Protesting in the Igbo community was anything but new and somewhat mimicked the precolonial protest of Igbo women. "Sitting on a man" was a traditional act against patriarchal oppression towards Igbo women. If a woman was abused, disrespected or treated awfully, they would chant around him, harass him in the most unsettling way by disrupting his daily activities causing him to reflect on his unacceptable behavior (Hagen, ND). "The authority and indemnification given to women while undertaking these punishments, shows the feeling of respect that the Igbo's had for their women. Men used to dismiss some of the offence committed by women with the phrase 'obu umunwangi nwe anyi' (It is the women who own us) which implies that it is the woman who give birth to men, feeds and looks after them. Therefore, injustice to a woman was not permissible" (Ghosh, ND).

While protesting at the doors of the British Administration women rallied and protested for their demands. To the surprise of the women, their demands of no tax assurance and the removal of a tyrant warrant chief was granted by the British Administrators. However, this motivated the women to demand more, because now the colonizers were listening to them. The British Administrators were annoyed and decided to put an end to this war, out of 10,000 women, 50 were killed and 50 were wounded, which put a complete halt on the war and ended it. Although plenty lives were affected by the deaths and injuries it made the British Administration

understand that Igbo women have voices and are willing to go to war to be heard. It was their action that made them realize that Igbos should have their own judicial system controlled by them, they were back to some form of self-governing their society through their political affairs..

Of all the Nigerians, the Igbo people resisted colonialism more tenaciously than any other ethnic group (Isichei 1976, 119). The colonized may assimilate or reject the imposed culture or change, but eventually they must always face the reality of change (Falola, pg. 18). Igbo people are known to be very attached to their culture and were not keen to assimilating to another culture without resistance. What the colonists did to the Igbo community was weaken the bonds between family, promote monogamy in marriages, suppress the so-called, 'barbaric' practices and introduce Igbos to formal education, and modern medicine (Allen, 1972).

Before colonialism, Igbos took pride in following their religious beliefs, which involved a Supreme Being named Tshukwu or Chukwu. Their religious philosophy was primarily based on the ideology of animism and a belief in a High God-Chukwu or Chineke and their religion served as support for law and order in their society (Nzimiro, pg. 3). It is known that in the traditional African religion, Igbos believed that the explanation of all things belongs to God, and that He holds all the answers to human life (Igboin, 2011). They enjoyed the peace of love and faith they displayed amongst themselves. During colonialism, Igbos displayed resistance towards the British, however, there were Igbo people in the community that were easy to convert into Christianity. The bulk of the first Christian converts were drawn from the poor, the needy, and the rejected (Isichei 1976, 162). Igbo women who had been ostracized and were considered 'undesirables' because of birthing twins, and being diseased, found Christianity.

Conversion to Christianity eliminated some of the beliefs Igbo people had become accustomed to in their culture and it took a while for Igbos to convert to Christianity as a whole.

Not all converts were inferior, several wealthy and prestigious chiefs sacrificed their standing, and their family ties to become Christians (Isichei 1976, 163). Colonialists conquered them through using missionaries to convert them into Christians and were expected to disregard their religion and certain beliefs from their culture. Early missionaries and latter-day fundamentalists and Christian leaders wanted the total conversion of Nigerians to Christianity, which meant that the indigenous religion could not be used as a point of reference in any way (Falola 2001, 42).

Christianity introduced Western education to Igbos and they were intrigued by it. To the missionaries, the system was part of the conversion process: Being a good Christian was expected from Nigerians, and they were also encouraged to be ‘civilized people’ (Falola 2001, 46). Igbos who converted to Christianity were exposed to Western education. In “Effects of Colonialism in Nigeria mission, Allen Olatunde (2011) he quotes Dian Stewart (2005) “embracing Christianity provided African captives with opportunities for leadership, education travel and social mobility, which were unviable to them as adherents African religious traditions” (Olatunde, 2011). There were Igbos that wanted to hold on to their indigenous culture and infuse it with Christianity. The rituals and traditions that they learned as part of their culture passed down through their mother and father, and ethnic group was hard to give up. The practices and customs that Igbos performed were considered uncivilized and inhumane to the British, and because of that it was known that Nigerian religious leaders made many successful attempts to indigenize Christianity (Falola 2001, pg. 47).

During the colonial era, the roles of women were reduced to domestic household responsibilities of wives and mothers. Before becoming colonized, Igboland, women were able to exercise their voices and be heard and participate in social and political affairs. “Igbo women when compared with women from other Nigerian ethnic groups, were more vocal in political

matters. This was illustrated by their reaction to the colonial government when their rights and freedom was threatened” (Uchendu 1995, p.58). “Women planted their crops, sold their crop surplus including their husbands, woman also had exclusive control over their operation and management of the commerce in the village market” (Derrickson, ND). Igbo women were more than just mothers and wives in precolonial Nigerian they had political and agriculture power that gave them autonomy.

Once colonialism conquered, their power diminished. It is thought that western influence was a great thing, but in fact, for Igbo women, it chipped away at their autonomy and destroyed their traditional ways without colonizers giving them something to replace it with. Colonizers did not respect the political and economic entities of the Igbo society and transitioned them to women who ascribed to a more patriarchal society and were exclusive to just being mothers and wives.

2.3 Womanhood in Post-Colonial Igboland

“Colonialism can destroy one’s culture, customs and identity and can be seen as problematic. Even though Igbo people resisted colonialism there were parts of the change that appealed to them such as Western education, modernization, a profitable economy and Christianity” (Ihekeonye & Ngoddy, 1985, p.231). When Nigeria gained its independence from Britain in 1960, there was a shift in the Igbo culture and noticeable changes occurred. Within those changes all traditions, customs, and culture were not all completely lost. Although, Christianity took over the bulk of the Igbo community, a small fraction of African religions remained in some parts of Igboland. Their indigenous religion produced values and morals that were the standard in the Igbo culture, which shaped their way of life. Godwin Sogolo (1993,

p.119) wrote in his book that, “African values may be taken to mean a set of institutionalized ideals which guide and direct the patterns of life of Africans.”

The traditions and cultures that were lost had a significant effect on how the Igbo community carried onward. One of the effects from the transformation in their culture was during the colonial era where the British implemented powers to the warrant chiefs and the native courts. As mentioned previously, in the pre-colonial era the Igbo community were an autonomous group of people who handled their affairs and grievances through the participation of their community elders, age groups, women and chief organizations. Traditionally Igbo women were immersed in the political and social structure where they exercised power and managed their affairs amongst themselves (Ezeigbo, 1990). British colonizers did not fully accept the cultural traditions from the Igbo community which led to another change; the destruction of Igbo women’s mobility. Igbo women remained loyal to their family and home life, even though they were not afraid to resist change; eventually, they welcomed the change.

2.4 Igbo Women and Mothers- The Parenting Way

Following the independence of Nigeria in 1960 more affluent and educated traveled to UK and the U.S. for educational and professional reason, or to take up administrative positions (Nesteruk, 2015). Many African Immigrants relocate to another country for various reasons. Relocating to America can be difficult for an adult to endure but having to uproot children from their native country is far more challenging. It becomes challenging for both the parent and child. Nigerians operate, whereas everyone is considered family, an extended family. The extended family includes grandparents, host of cousins, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and close-knit

friends. It is common knowledge that when one speaks of the family in an African context, one is referring not to a nuclear family but the extended family (Gyekye 1996; Amos 2013, 68).

Patricia Amos refers to the ideas of Degbey (2012) and Adinlofu (2009) that the extended family provides economic, social, and psychological security to all its members. Amos also refers to another idea of Degbey (2012) who states that the “extended family system defines “social and moral” norms and safeguards both material and spiritual customs and traditions as well as providing a variety of role models preparing the way for adulthood.” Igbo children belonged to everyone in the family and were able to seek guidance from any family member who was considered an elder

The African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child” rings true in the extended family system. Amos (2013) points out another African proverb “a single hand cannot nurse a child.” She contends that the proverb was, therefore, implying that the mother shares the responsibility of raising her child with others. In the African community, the extended family is a vital component in cultural parenting. It helps to develop a strong sense of social responsibility in the child from his early years and learns to be a respectful, responsible, and supportive member of their family and society (Amos 2013, p.69).

In the Igbo culture, elders are revered as sacred. The elders are respected no matter who you are. In the traditional Igbo setting, much honor was attached to old age so that the older people felt privileged while the younger ones looked forward to becoming old (Echeta, Ezech 2017). Taking care of elders, included cooking cleaning their respective areas, making sure the elders were comfortable and administering any other help that would be needed. ‘Nwa bu nwa ora’ - a child is a child of all. Children received correction and discipline from any elderly irrespective of who the child was (Echeta, Ezech 2017). The extended family played a significant

part in ensuring the care of the elderly was done with respect and love, no matter the family relation. Igbo children are raised to not speak when an adult is talking or ask questions to an elder in regard to what they are told to do. Children are reared with the idea that older people including an older sibling is to be respected at all cost, no type of disrespect is to be tolerated. Children who have no respect, no structure or ‘training’ are considered to be lazy, arrogant and disrespectful to adults, which ultimately becomes shameful to the family (Onwujuba et al. 2015). “Respect is a significant expectation for Nigerian children; they are expected to greet elders or ‘seniors’ first, with seniority determined by age, social, educational and/or marital status, and it is considered rude behavior to interrupt or contradict an adult” (Onwujuba, Marks, & Nesteruk, 2015).

Parents usually organize and distribute their faithful caregiving to indigenous cultural belief systems and behavior patterns (Bornstein 2012). Nigerian children are raised in a communal environment and not an individualistic one, where it can pose as a challenge for parents moving outside of their native country. The dominant culture appeals to children more than their parents’, therefore causing a little bit of conflict between child and parent. It could possibly be difficult for a parent to enforce her traditions and customs on her children because her culture may not align with the dominant. African parents face the idea that no matter the efforts they put forth to preserve their homeland and culture, it becomes difficult to keep unwanted American influences from their children because they are exposed to it through media and their schools (Habecker, 2016).

2.5 African Womanism

As a result of my research, I discovered that scholars have looked at African women in Africa in accordance with Hudson-Weems' African Womanism theory rather than just the lived experiences of African American women. Several scholars, including Itai Mawati et al., maintain that for the African Womanist theory to be validated, examples must be drawn from Africa. As a result, they explore the Shona and Ndebele, two large ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, in particular their mothering and or motherhood practices. Additionally, the scholars assert that the notion of motherhood being supreme is widespread across the continent. They give the example of the Igbo people in Nigeria, stating that "the name Nneka underlines both the reverence and supremacy of motherhood and mothering."

A look at Zulu mothers in South Africa is provided by Norma Masuku through the analysis of folklore and proverbs. Motherhood was considered heroic by Zulu women, who were the ones who took care of their families and performed household tasks. Masuka argues that society revolves around the mother. Throughout her research on Zulu mothers, she uses Africana Womanism theory as a theoretical framework. Based on African culture, the theory emphasizes the struggles, needs, and desires of African women in relation to their lived experiences.

The literature is, however, lacking because, although several scholars used African Womanism theory and examined women from the African continent, they did not look at women who had come here through immigration rather than through the Transatlantic slave trade. Despite the fact that this is a theory that I would like to use, most of the scholarship has focused on African American women as opposed to African women in the broader sense of the word. In my study, I examined the experiences of Igbo mothers in the United States by using principles drawn from one

branch of an African family, the Igbo women. Using this theory as a basis for my research, I intend to try and develop a more comprehensive African womanist theory.

In chapter 2, I provided a brief history of Igbo people and the need to understand their cultural norms and how it shapes their parenting in the United States. We can see how Igbo women were in traditional Igboland and how they exercised their political and social powers in their communities. The difference in gender roles and the autonomy of Igbo women was introduced in this chapter. The literature also provided information on the effects colonialism had on the mobility of women, how they challenged British authority through a series of protests, but also how vital women are in the Igbo society. Lastly, Igbo parenting was discussed, as they are key in my research their indigenous mothering practices in raising children was explored.

In the chapter that follows, I demonstrate the methods that were used and taken, to uncover the ways in which Igbo women prefer to raise their children in the United States. What did their experiences look like? Did they infuse their native mothering practices, or choose to use the dominant culture's?

3 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to explore and understand the parenting experiences of Igbo mothers in the United States of America. This chapter will address the characteristics of qualitative research design and discuss why it is the appropriate design for this study. This chapter will provide a discussion on how I will select a sample, including the criteria that will be used in the sample section. A discussion of the primary data collection strategy for this study and individual interviews will be provided. Lastly this chapter will address the validity and reliability as well as the researcher's bias.

3.1 Research Question

This study aims to answer the following research question:

I. What are the parenting experiences of Igbo mothers in the as they navigate through the spaces of Western culture?

3.2 Qualitative and Design

The purpose of this research is to explore and understand the mothering practices and parenting experiences of Nigerian Igbo mothers in the United States. Through qualitative research, I will be able to explore how they experience parenting in the United States. Michael Patton (2005) offers that a qualitative research analyzes data from direct field work observations, in- depth open ended interviews and written documents. They will have the opportunity to share their experiences with me during our in-depth interviews. Creswell (2007) suggests that “a narrative approach is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals” (p.53).

I decided to use the narrative approach for this research. Narrative approaches come in a variety of forms and one of the forms I will use is the biographical study. Creswell (2007) states that a “biographical study is a form of narrative study in which the researcher writes and records the experiences of another person’s life,,,,,” (p.55). My intent to use the bibliographical study is to share the lived experience of the participants by recording and transcribing the interviews Roberts (2002) states that “biographical research seeks to understand the changing experiences and outlooks of individuals in their daily lives, what they see as important and how to provide interpretation of the account they give of their past, present and future” (p.1).

3.3 Sampling and Recruitment

The sample consisted of six Igbo mothers, who were between the age group of 39-71 and who had raised children or were currently raising children in the United States. In addition, participants identified as a Nigerian mother from the Igbo ethnic group and identified as cisgender female. The participant can also be born in America and raised by an Igbo woman. The women were all from the Igbo women organizations Anambra Women’s Association in Raleigh, North Carolina and People’s Club of Nigeria in Baltimore, Maryland.

I emailed the President of both organizations and gave a detailed account of the study that I will be conducting. The goal was for the presidents to give the information to their members to assist in recruitment. Requests for participation extended through several Nigerian African diaspora community groups in Raleigh, NC, and Baltimore, MD. The intent was to create a snowball approach to sampling. This was a type of convenience sampling where I made an initial contact with a small number of research participants, which I used to gain more participants

(McDougal, 2014, p. 158). In order for the women to participate they met the requirements mentioned.

3.4 Procedure and Analysis

Participants who agreed to participate in this research were informed that the purpose was to explore the parenting experience of Igbo women parenting in America. The participants signed an informed consent that detailed the study but also the risks that could occur. The consent form indicates their willingness to agree to sign and participate in the study.

Once a participant agreed to all terms, I scheduled an interview. The interviews lasted no more than 3 hours and included questions that were open-ended. Interviews were through a phone call, due to Covid-19. Interviews were recorded by an electronic recording device, and notes were taken during the interviews to provide context for the transcriptions. To get an in-depth perspective on my narrative interviews I used coding. McDougal (2014) states that, “researchers do coding by looking for patterns in data that provide understanding and meaning...” (p.275). Coding will help center my participants’ experiences. According to Saldana (2011), “Values coding is the application of codes onto qualitative data that reflect a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview..... and is particularly for those that explore cultural values and intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions” (pg. 89-90).

3.5 Reliability and Validity

To ensure the reliability and validity of data, Creswell (2007) advises researchers to provide an audit for findings. For this, I had my transcription and codes reviewed and cross-referenced by two of my peers, who kept me honest. As the researcher, my study must be valid, by doing that I ensured that the Igbo mothers' account of their experiences in cultural parenting was accurate.. Participants were informed and invited to review recordings, transcripts, and subsequent codes to confirm the integrity and accuracy of their words and my representation and findings. My sample is relatively small, and so external validity was not necessary for my research study.

3.6 Opportunities and Limitations

To participate in this study, a participant must be an Igbo woman from Nigeria. The participant can also be born in America but has to have been raised by Igbo parents. This excluded Yoruba, Hausa, Calabar, a host of other ethnic groups, and all other Africans from the continent. Also, no male could participate in the study. It was crucial for me to know my position as a researcher and the biases I may bring into my research. As an Igbo woman myself who is a parent raising children of my own in Western society, I had to be cognizant not to allow my experience and perspective to lead my interview sessions to ensure the voice that is primarily highlighted was that of the participant. Lastly, given the small sample size and qualitative nature of the study, results do not generalize to all Igbo mothers in the United States..

4 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to understand the mothering practices of Igbo women who are raising their children in the United States. The research study aims to explore the following question:

1. What are the parental experiences of Igbo mothers in the United States?

My research utilizes a qualitative design and was conducted from June 16th, 2020 to July 3rd, 2020. Igbo women were recruited through two Igbo Association groups located in Washington D.C. and Durham-Raleigh N.C. I utilized “word of mouth” using the snowball method, mentioned in chapter 3 to recruit subjects for this study. Initially, I had plans on attending the meetings of the Igbo groups, but due to COVID-19 pandemic, I was unable to meet with them on a face-to-face introduction about my study. In May 2020 I attended a Zoom call meeting, where I introduced myself to the Raleigh Durham Igbo Association, where I informed everyone about my study. Later that week I had a woman reach out to me via phone, who was interested in my study, and stated that she would get two of her friends to agree to participate. I did not attend the meeting for the Zoom video call for the Washington D.C. Igbo association, however I did converse with the President of the Igbo association who I gave all my information to for her members. A participant from Washington D.C. reached out to me via phone call stating that she was interested in my study as well. A colleague in Atlanta Ga. who knew about my study informed me that she knew two women who would be interested in participating in the study. My colleague reached out to them via email and I was able to communicate with them, and they agreed to participate in my study.

4.1 Participants

I recruited six Igbo mothers, who currently reside in Washington D.C., Raleigh-Durham, N.C. and Atlanta, G.A. who all agreed to participate in the study. All women identified as Igbo mothers who have raised or are raising their children. The women were diverse and varied from ages and place of birth. Their ages ranged from 39-71 years of old. Two of the younger women were born and raised and grew up in United States while the other four women were directly from Nigeria. The participants all successfully completed their formal education and have obtained bachelor's, master's, doctorate, and medical degrees, as well as having different socioeconomic statuses.

I will provide a brief introductory description of each of the participant:

Afulenu- who is 71 years of age, came to the United States in 1970 on a college scholarship in South Carolina. She later transferred to Durham, North Carolina where, she received her Business degree. Afulenu worked in the medical field for a few years until she started her own successful business that has been up and running for more than 20 years. Although she had older children in Nigeria whom she raised, she solely raised her two younger daughters in the United States and gives a detailed account of her parenting/mothering experiences.

Uchenna- who is 62 years old, came to the United States at the age of 19 and received her college degree. She furthered her education and gained her MBA. Uchenna is a successful business owner who specializes in Interior decorating. She is married with 7 children whom she raised here in the United States.

Dr. Amaka- is in her late 50s, she went to college in Nigeria but also received several degrees in the United States. The highest degree she received was her Ph.D, in Education, and wears a multitude of hats in her successful career. Dr. Amaka raised six children and was excited to talk about her experience raising them here in the states. She is currently has her own psychotherapist firm and resides in Durham, North Carolina.

Dr. Ifeoma- is 53 years of age, married with children. While she didn't disclose how many she has, it was noted that her children were raised in Nigeria, U.K. and the United States. She currently resides and practices optometry in Atlanta, Ga.

Obim- is 39 years of age and married with children. A first-generation Nigerian-American she was raised in an Igbo cultured home and tries to raise her own children the same way. Obim has her Bachelors' and master's degree and is currently pursuing her Ph.D. Obim expressed the joys and challenges she experiences while raising her children in Atlanta, Ga.

Dr. Adanna- is 39 years of age and lives in Washington D.C. with her husband and 2 small children. She is also a first-generation Nigerian-American raised in an Igbo home. Dr. Adanna is a surgeon and has a successful medical firm in Maryland. Outside of her accolades, her children are her greatest accomplishments.

4.2 Migration and Education

Igbo people are known to migrate all over Nigeria, so it is no surprise that Igbos are comfortable with moving all around the world. During and after colonialism, western education was highly regarded in Nigeria especially among the Igbos. I would be remised if I didn't mention that Africans have always been educated people before they were colonized by Europeans. Their version of education may not have been accepted by the Europeans, but Igbos

made sure it was supreme in their culture. Traditional African education was inclusive, holistic, integrated lifelong and culturally based (Omolewu 2015, p. 273). Education is seen as a means of success in the African community and is viewed as upward mobility to achieve high status and to obtain a stable life that is beneficial. According to Marilyn Halter and Violet Showers-Johnson, education is viewed as an effective avenue for success and because of that it is embraced by African adult immigrants who transfer that ideology to 1 ½ and second generations (p.214).

There were two participants who were seeking education and better living accommodations in the United States. In 1967 Afulenu was offered to attend college in the United States but declined due to the Biafra War. After the war in 1970 she was offered a scholarship to attend a community college in Rock Hill, South Carolina, which she accepted. When asked what her reasons were for migrating to United States, she stated:

My reasons for coming to America was to acquire a quality education and go back home and use that knowledge and go back home and use that knowledge and work for the government.”

Amaka decided to come to the United States for greener pastures, seeking better opportunities than the ones afforded to her in Nigeria. Her reasons could vary between the workforce, economy, health conditions and or structure of home living, she didn't specify. Other reasons could also be economies that were traumatized caused an influx of Africans to relocate to developed countries such as the United States (Togunde, and Osagie 2009).

I moved for greener pastures, because I felt that coming here would give me more opportunities, more financial opportunity, and more opportunities for my children.

Once they migrated to the United States, participants took education seriously and included the importance of education within their mothering practices. Afulenu stated that education was something that could not be taken away: “With education you can go anywhere in the world, and you can face the world because of your knowledge you know, but nobody can take your

knowledge away from you.” From Ifeoma’s perspective she felt as though her children were stronger academically in Nigeria opposed to being educated in the States. She mentioned:

Academically they were stronger in the Nigerian culture, especially the Igbo culture academics is a bragging right. People would say, oh my daughter is doctor, oh my son is a this..... You need to have your degrees; you need to fight for it.... the fight my kids have brought from home (Nigeria), the fight in them, the desire, the activation, not just be good but be the best is the Nigerian culture, the Nigerian value, and the Nigerian fight.

Obim was raised to know education is a stepping stone towards success in life, and one cannot go anywhere in life without laying the foundation of some sort of education. Her parents stressed to her that she and her siblings must obtain a degree or two. Obim is currently a Ph.D. candidate and speaks about her thoughts on education:

Growing up in America my parents embedded in my siblings and I that we can be whatever we wanted to be, but we better have a degree behind us. My mother more especially, told us that knowledge was the key that opened the door to opportunities and success. If we wanted to achieve success, we must go to school. The Igbo friends that I grew up with are all college graduates with medical and doctorate degrees and are flourishing in their field of interest. I don’t only think that education is embedded in just Africans, I really believe that African Americans are raised to know the importance of education and have successfully received degrees in all fields imaginable. As a parent currently raising my children, I find myself stressing education to my children almost exactly how my parents did me. So, to answer your question, yes education is important to Igbos, but African Americans as well.

The interviews made it clear that education is vital in the Igbo culture but in the Nigerian culture as a whole. Often times Africans are able to obtain their education and go back to their countries and spread the knowledge hoping to expand in areas that may be stagnant. All mothers interviewed expressed how education was a key to unlock the overflow of access to opportunities. In their mothering practices, they infused getting good grades, being the best in academia and working hard to be at the “top of their class”. In the United States, African immigrants are by far one of the most educated immigrants and are more likely to hold a graduate or a Ph.D. degree (Winter, 1999-2000).

4.3 Respect and Discipline

Traditionally parents are supposed to be respected, revered and obeyed. In the Igbo culture respect is golden. Children and adults are taught to treat elders with the utmost respect. Respect is automatically given to adults and elders, with no questions. In a typical Nigerian household, a child is to be “seen and not heard.” In Chapter 2, respect was mentioned as part of cultural values that Igbos have for adults and elders. Hudson-Weem’s African Womanism has a respect component. A historical African practice of reverence for the elders is rooted in a tradition of respect for the elders. A form of ancestral reverence is the habitual act of caring for elderly people who will eventually become ancestors. Respect was always facilitated by children towards adults and elders and is one of the values that play a significant role on how Igbos appreciate and honor life that is given to them (Anuolam 1993, pg. 314).

Upon examining my interviews further, the responses given by my participants led me to conclude that respect is still a very cultural value taught to Igbo children, no matter where they are raised. Afulenu tells me that her children had respect:

Well my kids had respect.... in the place of....they respected me the best way they can about 90 percent and disrespect about 10 percent. They upheld the respect I have in Nigeria because they saw the way I respected my elders, and they have related that very well.

Obim talked about the importance of respect and how teaches it to her children:

Although I was raised in the United States my Igbo values are very strong within my parenting skills. Respect is extremely important. My children speak to adults first, and do not call them by their first names. My children know to give adults and their elders with the utmost respect. Elders in my home are considered treasures and we treat them as such.”

Dr. Ifeoma values respect in her household and mentioned to me: “I do uphold my Nigerian culture over the U.S. culture, we have culture of discipline, respect..” Whereas when I interviewed Dr. Adanna, she equally felt the same about respect, stating, “We respect authority and elders, we do not believe in talking back to when spoken to, these are more of the Nigerian

culture.” However, Uchenna raised her children to respect her authority even after the age of 18. She stated. “Most American kids, once they are 18, they don’t think they need to answer to anybody. I answer to my parents until I got married, even after I got married, I was still answering to them.”

Dr. Amaka’s idea of respect in the household aligns with Uchenna’s, she stated:

I have rules in my house, the rule is that if you are in my house, you are under my roof you are under my rule. If you are not going to comply with my rule, get your own house and get out. And also, I do call my family or children and let them know, this is the rule, this is what I don’t like, you’ve done this, I don’t like it, don’t do it again, if you do it again, this is what is going to happen. So, I have my own let down rules and boundaries that you have to maintain, as long as you are living in my house. We have a rule because in my culture, unmarried people don’t bring boyfriends or girlfriends to the house. I am proud to say none of my children violated those boundaries.

Although respect is vital to the upbringing of Igbo children, so is discipline. Discipline usually takes place when a child is out of line according to Igbo standards of rearing a child. Also, discipline serves as a guide to keep a child(ren) reared in the right direction of what the parent feels is appropriate for their for their children. According to Alfred Bassey (2016), it is customary for boundaries between parents and children to be firmly set, parents are meant to instruct, guide and protect their children while the duty of the children is to obey and respect their parents. My participants responded in a way that lets you know what’s best for their child. Dr. Ifeoma stated, “We as parents make the rules and groom our kids the way we know culturally. Instead of letting society dictate what the child should be doing at 18 or not.” Dr. Adanna mentioned that whenever there is a conflict with her children, they are spanked because it was how she was raised in her childhood household. Amaka discussed with me the challenges and complexities of what her youngest child was experiencing as a kid with African parents:

For my youngest son, that was born here, he sees how other American children are raised, as opposed to how Igbos raised their children, so some of the things we do, some of the upbringing we practice here for him, he feels that that is abuse for him. He feels that is an encroachment on his rights, where as it is not.

That is our traditional way. So, at times it can be challenging, trying to practice on culture in another culture.

Uchenna was adamant about her children adhering to the path that she created for them in regard to their educational career:

The sky is your limit if you listen to me, go to school, get your education and then get a good job. That was it, and they followed my instructions. It took years for them to get it, but you know in other words, you don't do what everyone else is doing, you have to listen to me.

Afulenu explained what discipline was like in Nigeria growing up and how it impacted her mothering practices in the United States. She proceeded to tell me:

With my parents, that is an abomination. You stand right there and listen to them, even if you know they aren't making sense, you look at them. You do what they ask you to do because they have a roof over your head. But right here in the United States there is a way that you talk to your child and they call it verbal abuse. We don't know what is called verbal abuse in Nigeria. It is for your own good.... The conflicts that I had here with my kids here would not be condoned in Nigeria, where I come from.

The saying goes, "Spare the rod, you spoil the child". Child abuse has different meanings in different cultures. How children are disciplined in Nigeria can be misconstrued as something negative, when in fact the basis of disciplining their children is to keep them aligned and structured in a way that is part of their upbringing and culture. Due to the contrast in culture and the meaning of 'discipline' the Igbo mothers, still raise their children within their culture. They remain respectful to laws that are set in place to disciplining children in the United States.

4.4 Extended Family

'Ezin aulo di ezigbo'-Family is the foundation of communal support, it is very important in the Igbo culture. Family does not start or end with your immediate kin, it extends far into in-laws, uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents, and everyone else that is connected to your family. In the Igbo culture, extended family provide the support that is needed to survive everyday living. Support comes in so many different forms, that it creates a very solid foundation for individuals

to not fail or fall on the waist side. Leigh Swigart (2001) states that, “Family members act as both an economic and emotional network and provide individuals with a sense of who they are and where they belong.” Moving to another country can be difficult all on its own, but not having your family present can cause one to have to seek that communal support in close proximity to them.

Uchenna found it quite difficult to maintain the extended family tradition while raising her children. As a working mother she didn’t have the natural support she knew she would have received in Nigeria. It became more of a challenge being an immigrant in a foreign country when there are no family members to turn to for care. In the interview she expressed the ways in which she coped with no extended family in the United States.

The greatest challenge actually is, being a mother and going to work fulltime, and having the children take care of themselves when you are not there. Do you understand what I am saying? That was a big challenge. So that means I had to.....at breaktime I had come out and call them to know if they were doing their homework. At home in Nigeria its different, there are tutors, there are people housekeepers, nannies to make sure that you can live in structures. Here in America when you are gone you are gone; the kids are on their own. But the only thing is that I didn’t let my children take in visitors when I am not in the house

Growing up in the South, Obim brought to my attention the Southern hospitality her neighbors displayed that formed a network of African American and African women. She didn’t have any family here in Atlanta, Ga, but was able to create an extended family through her valued friendships.

My children call all of my friends with an Aunt and Uncle title. At times I would feel as though I was in this parenting role by myself since I was a stay at home mom at the time. My friendships with other women and men allowed me to reach out to them in forming a village to raise my children, because this was how I was raised as a first gen Nigerian, we take extended family hood to another level. The cool thing now is with the technology in place, I can facetime my blood relatives and the family support is still there in terms of advice, encouragement and love, so in essence I’m really never alone.

When moving abroad, because family members are not with them, immigrants tend to replace their absent extended family with “fictive kin” who are likely members of the same ethnic or national community who play the role that family would at home (Swigart, 2001). Afulenu

immersed herself in an African and African American community in Durham, N.C. in the 70s and 80s. It was there that she befriended several Nigerian and African American women who helped her raise her children within the community. Afulenu referred to the support she received.

Yeah, they were African American women, yes, yes, uh in that community we raised our children like we were in Nigeria, because they watched over my two kids, even when I'm not there. If they do something wrong, they would come to me and let me know and they would chastise them before I come back and call me on the phone and let me know this is what they did, and this is what they didn't do. So, I was thankful for those mothers, you know, and I still keep in touch...I kept in....I'm still keeping in touch with those mothers till today. Also... I like their value of.... they are very family orientated, Black folks. Yeah, their values go all the way....I think it is in their DNA, goes right back to African values, they value brother and sisterhood, and cousinhood and they value being together, having a good time together, communicating together, to having fun, having family fun together, African Americans are so good at it you know. Going through their struggle with their family, sharing their ups and downs with their families, being their brother and sister's keeper, those are one of the values that I love about African Americans, more especially the love that they have for their mothers, it's just about the same love that we have for our mom back home. It's one of the values I really love.

Dr. Ifeoma is well traveled and has lived in Nigeria, Europe and the United States. In traveling her children were already exposed to the European culture but found it to be a bit of a challenge with the United States culture. Upon conversing with Dr. Ifeoma, it was noted that America was now her home, and going back to Nigeria, was unnecessary for her and her family.

I think my kids would have had a higher standard of living there (Nigeria) over there, really because.... When we were there because of the culture of nannies, drivers and maids and extended family and everything, I know for a fact, my kids took tennis lessons, swimming lessons singing lessons, guitar lessons. I wasn't overwhelmed, because I had help. No, I'm not going back, yeah because I see my kids struggling here, we moved around a lot, more than most people. We've gone from the U.K to Nigeria to back here. And every move is difficult, because you break up with friends, family and all of that. So, I think I see them pretty much settling here, and I have to be where the kids are. The closest family members I have are here. I have five siblings, and they are all here. Their kids are here, my mom is here, my dad is here, so there is really nothing there for me. The nuclear, immediate and extended are all here. This is home now.

Amaka, raised her children to know that people back home are each other's responsibility and that you care for people outside of your immediate family. As her children obtained jobs and careers, they were instructed to send money back to Nigeria to extended family members that were in need of more financial support. She began to say:

Our culture is very rich, and we want our children to learn that culture, especially the connectedness we have. We are connected. You go, and you find that this is my friend, friend, so everybody is a sister, everybody is a brother. When you have a problem, it becomes everyone's problem. If you are rich it becomes everybody's richness in that way, you don't suffer anxiety, you don't suffer depression. When you

have a problem, you are not a loner, and the culture expects you when you are rich, richness is not by yourself. So that sharing, that connectedness and caring of somebody is in my culture. I want my children to be part of that and learn that so that they are not a loner. There is internal family who is taking care of you and then there is the external family who will be monitoring the care.”

Dr. Adanna has a big family here in the United States, her family includes her mother, aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings. Her husband comes from an even bigger family, making the communal support readily available to all family members. Dr. Adana’s mother is the matriarch of the family and is extremely involved in all family functions. With majority of her family here in the United States, her family is very close and supports her in the same ways that she would have received in Nigeria.

In the Igbo culture, as mentioned before, extended family is very important. Everyone plays a role in the development of a child. It is where a child is introduced to traditions, teachings and way of life through several family members outside of their parents. The saying, “It takes a village to raise a child” is a factual statement. What I found interesting with all of our conversations, Afulenu and Obim, made reference to African American women being a part of their kinship network and a part of their family, which however is what They found they could extend their communal support with people in close proximity to them that essentially became family. More importantly all the participants made it clear that having family whether blood related or not, was an important factor in raising their children in an environment that promoted mutual dependence, social structure, trust and a safe net.

4.5 Acculturation/Assimilation

It becomes difficult or even a bit of a challenge to maintain one’s native culture in a foreign country that holds the dominant power. Assimilation begins to be a little easier to fall into place where another culture is dominate. In talking with my participants, I found that this

was quite familiar to them. The strategies used to adapt to the dominant culture made life for them less complicated, especially when raising their children. For example, Obim mentioned,

Even though I was raised in America and Nigeria. I found it a lot easier to adjust to the American culture because this was where I lived longer. However, there are certain aspects of my Igbo culture that I refuse to compromise, especially in this society, and day and age in America. For instance, a half kneel when greeting our elders was infused in me and now I infuse those teachings into my children. Indigenous traditions I hold on to and pass them down to my children. In the American way though, I have raised my children to voice their thoughts as long as it is respectful. My parents actually took on that American culture of children not only being seen but children being able to voice their thoughts and opinions.

All participants in this study used some American cultural values as well as their native's to navigate their way through parenting. Out of the few of Uchenna had to say:

Another thing I did with my children was that I had end of the month meeting. Every end of the month, we have a family meeting, and I say if you have any issue with anybody, both inside the house, both outside the house, let us know so we can help you know how to solve it. Believe it or not it worked, things will start coming out that you don't know. Sometimes their siblings know. I say, 'Do you have any problem?' He says, 'No I don't, I think Nnenna may have something to tell you.'

In addition to what Uchenna previously stated, Afulenu talked about the advantages of raising her children in America:

The advantage of this country is that (inaudible) they have the freedom of speech which we don't have back at home where we come from, so that is an advantage for them. So, I respect that. My kids had no qualms telling me how they feel, and they don't have any, any resentment letting me know that their feelings are hurt if I do something that they don't approve to, respectfully you know, so that is one of the advantages.

Adanna expressed her thoughts about the relaxed parenting environment America has and how she does a lot of explaining to her children:

I have definitely assimilated to a few things from the American culture. I have two small children and technology is extremely important here in America. I let my kids have tablets and watch a lot of t.v. where the Nigerian culture is more strict on that kind of stuff. Also, I am growing my daughter's hair and I have never cut it. In Nigeria, usually a child's hair cut several times before they start high school, to give them a 'fresh start.' I rarely spank my kids. I do more discussions and understand what went wrong sessions with them. That is definitely more of an American style of raising kids.

On the other hand, Amaka valued listening to her children, which as a child in Nigeria she wasn't exposed to:

I value listening to the child, listening to what....I believe the child has an opinion to say, even though you are going to overrule, which in my culture we don't have that. They are just to be seen and not to be heard. I like that idea of listening to the child.... engaging the child in issues that concern the child.

The primary purpose of listening to children is to define one's self, which is an aspect of Hudson-Weems African Womanism. By doing so, one discovers their identity through their own perspective of their world that might go against their tradition or even the dominant culture in which they live. In all of the interviews, the Igbo mothers did not want to raise children who were voiceless and didn't have an opinion on matters that were concerning to them, as long as the children displayed respect at all times. Some native traditions stayed along the way despite the influence of American culture. It was not a problem for them to adapt to the American culture they felt benefitted their children. Even though the parents were adamant about certain traditions, I found it interesting that they did not push the idea of their children speaking the native tongue, Igbo.

I can imagine how difficult it must have been especially while raising school age children. Dr. Adanna and her husband speak Igbo fluently but have found it challenging to teach her children the language. She was born and raised in the United States and her mother spoke Igbo to her and all the surrounding family members who were around did the same. As we know it times have changed and even though her and her husband's families are big, and all speak Igbo, it is difficult to maintain and teach it 3rd generation Nigerian Americans. Being a surgeon and her husband a lawyer, requires a lot and makes them very busy parents. Dr. Adanna stated:

Yes, we speak it at home. It is very important for them to know the language to maintain the culture. It's very difficult to teach them the language because we are so bus, but children overall are very smart and learn easily.

The other participants, all stated similar responses to their children speaking Igbo:

I speak Igbo semi fluently. I only speak it to my mother and occasionally to my children, To communicate on Facetime with my grandmother who is still in Nigeria, I speak Igbo to her. Now with teaching my children it is really hard to teach it to them. I just have to work a little bit harder with them. I figure if my

mom can semi teach us and we can hear and understand the language 100 percent and speak it 90 percent I think I could work a little harder in teaching them.

According to Afulenu she didn't teach her children the Igbo language but they completely understand Igbo, and to her surprise, one of her children speaks the language fluently:

I never did teach them that language. To be very honest with you, we spoke more fluent English. The only time I spoke my language is when I am mad at them. Or like if I wanted to curse them out in my language I did that. They always understood my curse words in my language. They picked up bits and pieces when I'm talking on the phone with my brothers, and plus my kids, my brothers and I and my children lived together for about 8 years, so they had the opportunity to understand what we were saying. Some picked it up and some didn't. They understood everything that we said. It was hard to teach them, because I didn't instill that that in them when they came home from school. It was my fault though; it was my fault. I didn't want them, because we are always surrounded by people that are not from my tribe. It was very convenient to speak English for everyone to understand what we were saying. If we were only left alone in the house with my brothers and my kids, we would speak more Igbo language yeah. Could you imagine if I had spoken my language to them at home, they would have been writing letters in my language. They did well, more especially my oldest child. My oldest child really surprised me a lot, because she understands everything, she speaks the language to a point, yes she does. I communicate with her in my language very well, and she responds very well.

Dr. Ifeoma, however wishes that she would've taught her children Igbo, according to her the language would have been easy to learn:

I missed that boat; I missed that boat. Because language isn't difficult if it is taught early. Naturally a child speaks it if you speak it to them., and the people around them speak it. It is a major regret that I have. It's going to be more difficult now because they are older, and they are juggling so many things. Language is easy, if you start from infancy and talk to your child in that language. So, I don't recall growing up thinking my language was hard, because my parents spoke it, I just speak it. So, I missed the boat on that, I lost applying it early enough, and the language isn't hard."

Uchenna felt as though even though she didn't teach her children the Igbo language, that they understood it enough:

We spoke Igbo language at home. My children understand Igbo very well. Once in a while they speak it, but it is not as fluent. I never taught them.... it's just like speaking it every day.

The participants shared with me how they felt about their culture and what it meant to them. It was evident that a few of them had not been asked the question of their experience of raising children in a foreign land. They really took the time to study each question in the interview and gave their most honest responses. The questions allowed for them to delve deeper in thought on their mothering practices and how their decisions, and two cultures have shaped

their parenting ways. What I found in the interview was the pride displayed about their culture and why they infused it within their daily lives outside of Nigeria. Even with all the pride, they expressed their love for some of the American values they have used to parent their children.

5 FINDINGS

This document highlights the experience African mothers, particularly Igbo women's experience utilizing their mothering practices in the United States.. This study aimed to detail the perceptions of the American culture and how it relates to their culture and how did it impact their mothering practice from their native country. The research question I explored was:

1. What are the parental experiences of Igbo mothers in the United States of America?

My intent with the research question was to explore the different aspects of their native parental practices and what were their experiences navigating through the spaces of the Western culture. I asked the participants a total of 19 questions which aided in formulating themes that derived from their responses. Initially my plan was to meet with the participants, face to face in Washington, D.C., Raleigh-Durham, N.C. and Atlanta, Ga. Face to face would have allowed for a more comfortable environment to have a conversation about life and parenting. Covid-19, a global pandemic prevented me from meeting with participants to have a face to face interview. Interviews had to be done through a Zoom call or a traditional phone call. The participants gave detail accounts of their experiences growing up in Nigeria and how it has shaped their minds about parenting, and how they navigate through unfamiliar spaces as Igbo mothers.

5.1 Discussion

All participants with the exception of two stated that education and better living conditions were the chief reasons for immigrating to the United States. In the introduction in of the participants, I gave a brief description of them. All of the participants were highly educated, Afulenu has a degree in Business Administration, and is a successful mental health business owner, whereas Uchenna has her MBA and is a passionate interior decorator. There were two participants who were medical doctors; Dr. Adanna is a surgeon, and owns her own medical firm, and Dr. Ifeoma is an optometrist in Atlanta, Ga. The last two participants, Amaka has her Ph.D. and is a psychotherapist and Obim is a Ph.D student. During colonialism, the way the British and missionaries converted Igbos to Christianity was through giving them a formal education, which was different from their precolonial education. The education given to them through Christianity, Igbos believed that it opened up an array of opportunities in Nigeria and abroad, and that ideology can be witnessed in their responses on education.

The participants were determined to raise their children to understand and know that education is the forefront of being successful and there is no compromise. It creates a pathway to a more stable lifestyle and financial security according to Obim whose first child is in her first year in college. Dr. Adanna made reference to the United States having the better resources to facilitate an efficient and adequate educational environment and she felt her children could

benefit from it. Uchenna is a mother of 7 and four of her children are medical doctors and the others have college degrees and are extremely successful in their respective careers.

Their responses to my questions regarding education led me back to Clenora Hudson-Weems' *Africana Womanism* and the eighteen components she comprised. Of the eighteen, two of them stood out to me, self-determination and ambition. These women personify power and resilience in a world where Black women are often crucified and so their accomplishments should be showcased and celebrated.

Respect and discipline are different in the United States from what the participants were used to and they were adamant about respect for elders and authority. It came as no surprise because according to authors Echeta and Ezeh, elders were sacred and revered and must be given respect at all times. Participants expressed that their children had to display a level of decorum in the presence of adults. One participant, Afulenu stated that, "Respect cannot be compromised, it has to be given to the adults no matter what, it is important that we hold our elders and adults in a high regard." Being an elder in the Igbo community is a rewarding experience. Afulenu is a full-time business owner and director, she gets up each and every day to oversee her company. Regardless of her tenacity to work, she is an elder in the Nigerian community. She is 71 years of age so naturally she is treated like an elder by the African American and African community. Her children and others look after her in various ways. Elders essentially enjoy the fruits of their labor and that is what Afulenu is experiencing. Just as she is looked after, she embodies that same spirit towards her mother who is vastly approaching 100 years of age.

Other participants agreed that respect is one of the few staples in the Igbo society, making it one of the first customs taught to children at an early age. There are different ways of showing respect in the Igbo community. One of the traditional respects is when a child or younger adult,

half kneels in the presence of an adult or elder while greeting them. Regardless of how other children in America were being raised, it didn't matter to my participants because respect was mandatory in their households, and it still currently is.

In the United States children are protected from different kinds of abuse through laws created specifically for the well-being and safety of children. The conversation around discipline alluded to spanking, and controlling the narrative of how a child, should steer the wheel of their own lives. As long as a child is living under their roof they must abide by the rules of the parent. This I believe is across the board in most cultures, so it's not synonymous to the Igbo society. "Parents knows what's best" is what derived from the interviews with the participants on discipline conversing with I discovered that they detest the way the government and social services intervened in the disciplinary of their children. One particular situation occurred with Amaka and her son, which involved the local authorities. Her son Emeka went to bed late on evening past his normal bedtime. He did not adhere to the rules set in place for bedtime, which resulted in him waking up late, missing the school bus. His mother refused to take him to school, because he had to suffer the consequences of missing a day from school regardless if he had a test or not. Emeka, refused to believe that she wouldn't take him to school so he called the local authorities. The local authorities came to the house and informed Amaka of the NC Laws regarding children not attending school and how parents could get in trouble with the law for not abiding to it. Even though "It takes a village to raise children" is a popular adage in the African community, it did not apply to this particular scenario. Amaka felt that her parental rights were violated. Her purpose for not taking Emeka to school laid in the fact a lesson was being taught because he did not adhere to rules in the home, and he would be met with consequences. The participants felt as though the interference of the government felt like an attack on their

mothering, and even though they felt this way it was agreed that they abide by the law of the land wherever they are.

When interviewing about extended family with the participants, I could hear the excitement in their voices. Afulenu and Uchenna came here at 20 and 19 years of age. They came to pursue their education and came on scholarships. Afulenu's entire family was back home in Nigeria. She knew a few people who hosted her stay. Upon moving to Durham N.C., she immersed herself in the African American culture, but was quickly reminded that she was African, Nigerian. The close friendships she formed were with African American women. Her new friends were similar to the women back in Igboland. They were very familiar to her, which made it easy for her to align and bond herself to them. These women were considered extended family. When other family immigrated to the States, Durham, N.C. they too formed a kinship network with other Africans and African Americans.

Dr. Ifeoma mentioned that she loved the way African Americans loved having family reunions and their love for one another. It reminded her of how her family was back at home. Dr. Ifeoma's entire nuclear immediate, and extended family members are all here in the United States. She stated, "Nigeria will always be in my heart, and I have settled to call the States my home now." Amaka's children and grandchildren are all in the States, whereas the other parts of her extended family is in Nigeria. Providing financial support to relatives is her reason for working hard the way she does. As a psychotherapist, she noted that having communal support is very important for the development of a child and that as long as they have. The support and financial, backing from family members outside of their parents creates a space for belonging and puts a person at less risk of feeling lonely. The participants hold their family in high regard

and credits their family, extended family and kinship network for the success and wellbeing they've achieved. It has helped them create a solid foundation in their daily lives.

Living in a foreign country one can find it hard to maintain their native culture in a dominant environment. I discussed in the interviews about assimilation, and every single participant talked about “a child should be heard and not seen” was not a tradition from the Igbo culture that they wanted to keep. A child should be able to voice their thoughts and opinions, rather than be shunned away and not listened to. All agreed that as long as the child was respectful, the child would be heard, whether or not they (mothers) agreed to whatever the child was discussing. With disciplining, Dr. Adanna mentioned that even though spanking was a part of rearing her children, she prefers to have discussions with them so that they have a clear understanding as to why they are in trouble and it becomes a “full on” session. Everyone gravitated to this American style of mothering.

Another form of assimilation/adaptability that occurred while raising their children was finding that English was easier for their children to navigate through dominant spaces in the United States. Participants found that it was really difficult for the Igbo language to be taught due to the lifestyle and daily activities. All of their children understood the language in its entirety, but speaking it fluently became a bit of a challenge for a few of them. Afulenu's oldest daughter Nneka speaks Igbo fluently, whereas Dr. Adanna who was born in the United States, her mother was adamant about her children speaking her native tongue, which resulted in Dr. Adanna to speak Igbo. Participants noted that if they could do it all over again, they would have made sure their children spoke Igbo fluently.

The nuances of womanhood allow us to observe the different layers that compose it. For women of African descent, race is of major importance, but their experiences in life are often

overlooked and ignored. African womanism theory seeks to address this issue by focusing on Black women's real-life experiences. I analyzed the responses of my participants to my questions and found that they emphasized a few components of Africana Womanism in their responses. It was first important for the Igbo immigrants to meet the needs of the whole family as one, before meeting their own. Immigrating to the United States was not only beneficial to them, it was a decision they made to further create a better space for their family to grow and thrive outside of their native country. Their commitment to their immediate and extended family demonstrated the importance of self-sufficiency. Their self-sufficiency enabled them to sustain and maintain their household. Other aspects displayed by the women were their ability to adapt to their environment and their ability to form sisterhood bonds with the African American women that surrounded them. The idea of sisterhood as Hudson-Weems describes it is to be genuine to one another, and to recognize that they share the same experiences as oppressed women, but with different layers of oppression, allowing them to demonstrate empathy for one another. Respect for elders was another component in African Womanism that the women were so insistent on their children having, both for cultural reasons and also to acknowledge their children's right to be respected. Everything these women did and continue to do was centered around their family.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were due to the methods utilized. Due to Covid-19, there were no face to face interaction which would have given the researcher more of a personal interview. Having a face to face would have created a more personal environment whereas the participants would have been more inclined or comfortable to answer sub-questions derived from

some of the responses given. Covid-19 violated the space that could have been used to physically interact with participants.

More questions could have been asked if more time was permitted. The number of participants in my study was adequate enough to get a detailed account of the mothering experiences of the Igbo women, but not enough to make an overall generalization of them. The study was tailored specifically to a specific ethnic group in an African country, when in fact it could of given a wider range of African women from different ethnic groups and countries.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Human Subject Recruitment Form

Hello, I'm Anene Emodi Onwuka and I am a graduate student in the Georgia State University Department of Africana Studies. I'm currently working on a research project titled, Cultural Parenting: Understanding the challenges Igbo women face while raising their children in American Society. I'm interested in the challenges and lived experiences of these women. If you're interested and would like to give your input, let me know, and we can set up a half-hour interview

To participate in this study, you must:

- Be 25 years of age or older
- Identify as Nigerian and Igbo
- Identify as a parent
- Must have Child(ren) living in the United States with them

If you are interested in participating:

- Call me at (404)-441-0807

- Or Email at aemodionwuka1@student.gsu.edu
- Please leave your name, number, email address, and acceptable times to call.

Thanks for your interest in this study

Appendix B

Georgia State University
Department of African American Studies
Informed Consent

Title: Cultural Parenting: Understanding the experiences Igbo mothers have when raising their children in the United States

Student Principal Investigator: Anene Emodi Onwuka

I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to identify and explore the different experiences Igbo mothers face while raising their children in the United States. You are invited to participate because you are an Igbo female adult over the age of 25 that identifies as a parent. A total of six participants will be recruited for this study. Participation will require 2 hours of your time.

II. Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will participate in a casual interview at an agreed time on the phone or video call. The interview will be recorded for later study.

III. Risks:

In this study, there are no more risks than one would experience in a normal day of life.

IV. Benefits:

Participation in this study may not personally benefit those that participate, although answers provided may enter may offer a feeling of personal satisfaction and strength. This information can add to existing information that considers African/Black immigrant mothers and their experiences and challenges with parenting in the United States

V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time.

VI. Confidentiality:

Before interviews begin, all participants will be reminded to not use any names or identifying information of themselves or others. If any names or identifying information are used, the information will not be included in the transcription. This will also be verbally communicated before interviews begins. Email addresses and telephone numbers will only be used to contact participants to arrange interviews and will not be used in any portion of transcribed materials. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants. No connection will be made between pseudonym and contact information. Participants will only be referred to as their alias in any published or public documentation. The information audio and transcribed interviews provided will be stored in a locked recording device and password protected laptop to be kept in my possession as the researcher. Knowledge of the password of these devices is known solely by the researcher in order to protect privacy. None of the information provided and stored will be stored in a cloud or automatic storage device. Only the principal investigators will have access to written and identifying information. After the qualitative data is transcribed using pseudonyms, audio recordings will be destroyed.

VII. Contact Persons:

Contact Anene at [404-441-0807](tel:404-441-0807) and aemodionwuka1@student.gsu.edu if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study. You can also call if you think you have been harmed by the study. Call Dr. Akinyele Umoja in the Georgia State University Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or aadaku@gsu.edu. You can talk about questions, concerns, offer input, obtain information, or suggestions about the study.

VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Participant:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research and be audio recorded, please sign below.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Principal Researcher

Date

Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire

Date_____

ID#_____

Instructions: *Please answer the questions below as accurately and completely as possible. All answers will be kept strictly confidential and your name will not be attached to this form.*

1) Cisgender Female_____

2) Age:

a. 25-35_____

b. 35-45_____

c. 45-55_____

d. 55-65_____

e. 65-75_____

3) What is your current marital status? (Check appropriate response that applies to you)

a. ___Married

b. ___Divorced

c. ___Widowed

d. ___Separated

4) Child(ren):

a. ___Age ___Gender

b. ___Age ___Gender

c. ___Age ___Gender

d. ___Age ___Gender

5) Where were your children born? _____

6) Highest educational level:

a. ___Less than high school

b. ___High school graduate/GED

c. ___Some college

d. ___College graduate

e. _____(Specify) Advanced degree

7) Do you have your degree from a Nigeria or U.S. University? Please specify University attended. _____

8) Occupation _____

9) How many years have you been residing in the United States? _____

10) What is your family income combined?

Under \$10,000 _____

\$10,001 - \$20,000 _____

\$20,001 - \$40,000 _____

\$40,001 - \$60,000 _____

\$60,001 - \$100,000 _____

\$80,001 - \$100,000 _____

Over \$100,000 _____

Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. What were your reasons for immigrating to the U.S.?)
2. Do you think it is more important for you and your children to maintain your Nigerian cultural heritage, or to assimilate to American culture or to adopt both? Why? Has it been a struggle to do that? (tell me a story).
3. Are you or your children a part of any belong to any American social group? If yes/no, why?
4. Culture is made up of the economic, social and physical way of life of a people; do you think that you or your family had to give up any of your cultural traditions/values to adapt to the American society? If so, what are they? (Tell me a story)
5. What is your idea of childhood from an Igbo perspective (i.e., behaviors, values, responsibilities, expectations, roles?). How does it compare with the image of childhood in the U.S.??
6. What goals have you set for your child/ren? (academic, social/relational, moral) Do you think your goals for your children would be different if you had stayed in Igboland in Nigeria? If so, how? (jobs, inter-family relations, marriage).

7. Do you think there are benefits of having your children grow up in this country? Do you think there are challenges of having your children grow up in the U.S.? (Was there a time when this challenge occurred?)
8. Is there or were there any diversity in or at your child's school, or neighborhood?
9. What are the greatest challenges you face as a parent in this country? (Follow-up: What cultural adjustments do you think you had to make as a parent in the US?) (Tell me a story).
10. What family values do you think a typical American family holds and which do you apply/reject? (Can you tell me a story about your experience of this value?) 143
11. Can you please tell me a story about any conflict you have had between you and your child/ren, and how would you compare that to the conflicts you had with your parents?
12. How would you say "American society" influences your family and your parenting? (If applicable based on the answer - How do you resist negative influences?) (tell me a story).
13. Do you speak your language at home? How important is it to you to have your children know your native language? Has it been difficult to teach them the language?
14. Do you and your children have family members in the US, associate with other Igbo families or belong to an association of Igbos? Why/why not? (Since the extended family in the Igbo culture is important does the extended family or the association help you in your parenting goals?) (tell me a story)
15. Do you and your children celebrate Nigerian/Igbo holidays, watch Nigerian media or Nollywood entertainment? (news, movies, music, T.V.) (Tell me a story)
16. Do you prepare your native food from your Igbo culture? Is it important to have your family eat your native foods? (tell me a story)

17. There have been some researchers to indicate that being bicultural is conflicting – grappling with worlds. Others say being a part of two worlds is beneficial. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having two cultures/ two languages for your children / you / your family as a whole?

18. Do you and your family visit Nigeria or have you ever thought of going back to Nigeria and traveling to several parts of Igboland to share your upbringing?

19. Is there anything else that you would like to add or take back? Is there anything I didn't ask you about, but you think is important to the understanding of Nigerian cultural adjustment and parenting in American culture? Feel free to tell me more about your experiences with parenting your child in America