Adverse Childhood Experiences in the Yoruba Tribe/Ethnic Group of Nigerians Living in America: A Phenomenological Exploration

by

Patricia Akinrogunde

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences
Liberty University
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This transcendental phenomenological study examined the lived adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) of the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in America. The study setting was virtual through Microsoft Teams sampling members of a local church in central Maryland with a population of about 95% of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe. The trauma from ACEs and cultural factors that may have contributed to the participants’ negative adulthood aggressive behavior was explored in this study. Behavioral constructivism and social constructivism theories guided this study and provided insight into the factors contributing to the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe with childhood trauma. In the Yoruba tribe, childhood experiences are heavily influenced by social and cultural factors; therefore, social constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of social and cultural factors in shaping individuals’ experiences and perceptions of the world, provides a valuable lens for examining childhood experiences of Nigerians in the Yoruba tribe. Additionally, behaviorism suggests that the experience of physical abuse in the Yoruba tribe can influence an individual’s future behavior. Data collection for this study included surveys, interviews, and journaling of 10 participants. Data analysis in this study was conducted following the analysis approach proposed by Moustakas using NVivo12. The thematic findings revealed that members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria place great importance on disciplining young children without regard to harshness or the idea of abuse which results in ACEs. This study provided valuable insights into the experiences of Yoruba individuals with childhood trauma and underscored the need for further research and intervention to support their mental health and well-being.

Keywords: trauma, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), Yoruba, Nigerians
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Dedication

To my beloved husband, Sunday, my loving children Olivia, Taiwo, and Kehinde, and my dear mother, Elizabeth Olaleye, I dedicate this dissertation to you with all my heart. Your unwavering support, encouragement, and love have been the pillars that have held me up throughout this journey.

Sunday, your love, patience, and understanding have been a constant source of strength. You have always been there for me, even when I felt like giving up. Your belief in me has given me the courage to pursue my dreams and reach for the stars.

Olivia, Taiwo, and Kehinde, you are the light of my life, and I am so proud to be your mother. Your love, laughter, and joy have been my constant source of inspiration and motivation. Seeing your smiles daily has given me the strength to keep pushing forward, even when the going gets tough.

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List of Abbreviations

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
American Psychiatric Association (APA)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The Yoruba tribe makes up two-thirds of the population in Nigeria, with the Hausa tribe being the primary and the Igbo tribe being third (Adedayo & Aborisade, 2018; Baglivio et al., 2021; Franke, 2016; Lange, 2011). There are distinctive traits identifiable through observation between the three major cultures of the Nigerian population (Ogundiran, 2012). The Hausas are known for their farming abilities and domineering persistence to serve in high political positions within the country (George, 2016). The Yoruba are known for their perceived submission to a higher power, whether Christian or Muslim (Forde, 2017; Ogundiran, 2012; Olanrewaju, 2021). The Igbo people are family-oriented, supporting one another in reaching high positions of authority, much like the Hausa (George, 2016).

Nigerians believe that through a higher spiritual power, everything will turn out the way it should (Akanni et al., 2021; Peel, 2016). The Yoruba, although in appearance acknowledge that their God (depending on the religion) is all-knowing, loving, and trusting, unfortunately, do not exhibit the behavior (Forde, 2017; George, 2016). The Yorubas are known for their aggressive behavior when offended and lack of respect for others due to their perceived high esteem (Oladeji et al., 2010; Yusuf & Khan, 2019). While positive traits such as familial relationships, love of God, and educational promotion is evident in the tribe (Forde, 2017), the negative behaviors often overshadow the good, causing a stigma to exist among the group (Ojedokun et al., 2021). Since the Yoruba tribe is part of the Nigerian population, the group is popularized as Nigerians as a whole; therefore, Nigerians are known as aggressive people (Ojedokun et al., 2021; Oladeji et al., 2010; Yusuf & Khan, 2019).
Background

Recent research on the social, emotional, and behavioral aspects of Nigerian individuals is severely lacking. Very few peer-reviewed studies have focused on the individual or societal characteristics and associations of the Nigerian community. The majority of recent studies related to Nigeria involve an exploration of the geographical and environmental characteristics of the country (Chanchangi et al., 2020; Ighalo & Adeniyi, 2020; Ighalo et al., 2021) or the physical health issues of the people of the country (Afolayan et al., 2020; Temisanren, 2019). A recent research interest has also been awarded to the various consequences and implications of the COVID-19 pandemic that surfaced in 2020 (Agusi et al., 2020; Ebenso & Otu, 2020; Eranga, 2020; Zhao et al., 2020). Regarding studies on the characteristics and behavior of Nigerian individuals, Haddoud et al. (2022); Nwambam et al. (2018); and Oghosanine (2020) have focused on their education and experiences, particularly entrepreneurship, while Ahuru (2021) and Raimi et al. (2019) have looked into gender-based or feminist perspectives. Critically, although several studies have highlighted the presence of violent behaviors and aggression among Nigerian communities (Anyaegebunam et al., 2019; Nwajiuba et al., 2019), in-depth research has not been conducted to explore the reasons behind and the implications of this kind of behavior.

In this context, Kazeem (2020) linked the criminal behavior of Nigerian adults with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and found that these individuals were exposed to low socio-economic status, ACEs at a young age, and low-level education. While few recent studies involving the association between violent, aggressive, or criminal behavior and ACEs have been conducted in the Nigerian context, Folayan et al. (2020) have explored the correlations of Nigerians’ exposure to ACEs with certain aspects of their childhood and adolescence, such as
bully victimization, resilience, self-esteem, and social support as well as with their psychological well-being during early adulthood (Agbaje et al., 2021; Lawal & Abdulmalik, 2020). To evaluate individuals’ exposure to ACEs, Lacey & Minnis (2020) have utilized the 10-item ACE questionnaire in various cultural contexts.

Based on what has been explored in recent studies and given limited focus, a study examining the ACEs of Nigerian individuals living in America and the influences of these experiences on their adulthood behaviors and interactions with other cultures is expected to provide valuable insights. Further, the 10-item ACE questionnaire complemented by other data sources is expected to be appropriate for this purpose.

**Historical Context**

Nigeria, as it is known today, was not established by the region’s indigenous people. The British demarcated it during their colonial rule over the region in 1914 (Falola & Heaton, 2008). In the late 1950s, Nigeria had the highest population among African countries and significant potential for economic growth owing to the abundance of petroleum reserves in the Niger Delta (Falola & Heaton, 2008). After achieving independence from the British colonialists in 1960, Nigeria became a federation and was called the “Giant of Africa” (Falola & Heaton, 2008; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). Despite becoming an independent and sovereign state, Nigeria witnessed an absence of national identity and unity owing to the nation’s over 300 different tribes, who identified more with their local communities than with the country as a whole (Aina et al., 2020; Falola & Heaton, 2008).

From the 1960s, Nigeria witnessed regional conflicts and botched elections (Falola & Heaton, 2008). As local authorities in the Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western parts feared domination by each other, Nigeria remains to be unified as a singular nation (Osaghae & Suberu,
The regional conflicts reached their peak in 1967 with the culmination of the Nigerian civil war, where the Eastern Nigerian region attempted to establish a separate sovereign nation called Biafra. The civil war lasted for two and half years and resulted in the death of millions of Nigerians and the destruction of the already fragile federal bonds within the nation (Falola & Heaton, 2008). The 1970s was a relatively stable and tranquil period in the history of Nigeria, with the encouraging constitution for the Second Republic lasting from 1979 to 1983 (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). In the following years, the country saw a succession of ethno-military administrations up to 1999 and gradually transitioned to a democracy (Falola & Heaton, 2008; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005).

Social Context

Nigeria comprises a vast number of communities that are distinct in their ethnicities, religions, and cultures. The English language was declared the national language of Nigeria by the Nigerian federal government in 1960 (Falola & Heaton, 2008). However, the ethnic tribes primarily communicate in their own distinct languages (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Nigeria is home to over 300 ethnic tribes, the largest among which are the Hausa or Fulani in Northern Nigeria, the Yoruba in Western Nigeria, and the Igbo in Eastern Nigeria (Aina et al., 2020; Falola & Heaton, 2008; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). The Northern region is home to most Muslim individuals, while the Southern region has a majority of individuals of the Christian faith (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). In a study involving the perspectives of Nigerian students, Martyn (2019) recommended that further research be conducted to represent the vast number of Nigerian ethnic tribes, including the Yoruba community.

Pre-colonial times saw a migration of native people from the North to the South and from the South to the North of Nigeria (Martyn, 2019). Migration across national borders occurred
simultaneously among Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana (Martyn, 2019). More recently, several Nigerians have been found to migrate internationally to countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Europe, Canada, China, and Malaysia for educational and employment opportunities (Martyn, 2019). The ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities of these Nigerian diasporas are questioned in their homeland; they are no longer considered natives, and at the same time, they face discrimination and racism, amongst other struggles in the foreign land that is their new home (Ile & Osekene, 2021). In this regard, it is critical to examine the individual, familial, and psycho-social aspects of diaspora students and workers and explore how they assimilate into a foreign land with their cultural upbringings having occurred within their ethnic communities back in their homeland in Nigeria.

**Theoretical Context**

The theoretical frameworks of behavioral constructivism (Skinner, 1976) and social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1962) formed the foundational bases of the present study. According to Skinner’s (1976) behavioral constructivism, human behavior followed a “stimulus-response pattern” (Ng'andu et al., 2013, p. 58), in that the behaviors of humans were conditioned by interacting with environmental stimuli and had little to do with any involvement with the mind. The theory of social constructivism awards more importance to society’s participation in the development of human behavior. Vygotsky (1962) posited that human behavior primarily developed due to social and cultural interactions within society. According to Rogoff (1990), “children’s cognitive development must be understood not only as taking place with social support in interaction with others but also as involving the development of skills with sociohistorically developed tools that mediate intellectual activity” (p. 23).
In this study, the theories of behavioral and social constructivism were adopted to explore the behavior of individuals of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria living in America. Their behaviors are understood with respect to their interactions with the environment they were brought up in, per the theory of behavioral constructivism, and their social and cultural upbringings and experiences during childhood were focused on to align with the social constructivism theory. A more detailed analysis of the two theories and their applications is presented in Chapter Two.

**Situation to Self**

A certain level of familiarity exists with the research topic due to a first-hand experience of communicating with Nigerian natives living in America. Furthermore, the potential participants of the study are familiar with the individual conducting the study through their shared place of worship, a local church in Maryland. Considering these factors, the goal was to uphold an appropriate level of professionalism to prevent any bias from influencing the data collection and analysis processes. At the same time, familiarity and acquaintance formed the basis for building a good rapport with the participants and making them feel at ease during the entire study process.

**Problem Statement**

Recently, many Nigerians have migrated to the United States to seek educational opportunities, income opportunities, and the American Dream (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2020). Unfortunately, much of the Nigerian population, especially the Yoruba tribe, young and old, exhibit reactive verbal, physical, and relational aggressive behavioral traits toward any form of opposition, not only between other cultures but within the same culture (Anyaegbunam et al., 2019; Nwajiuba et al., 2019). However, the underlying cause of the aggressive behavior of the Yoruba people of Nigeria is not known. In this context, it is critical to explore the reasons behind
their aggressive behavior. Particularly, with the global prevalence and relevance of ACEs (McLennan et al., 2020; Zarse et al., 2019), it is worthwhile to examine the impacts of the ACEs on individuals from the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria and explore whether these ACEs have associations with their aggressive behavior and other adult outcomes. In this regard, Bateson et al. (2020) noted that an in-depth understanding of children’s and adults’ ACEs could help explain trauma-based actions and behaviors, and Kazeem (2020) recommended that further exploratory research be conducted on the ACEs of Nigerian individuals. Furthermore, Christoforou and Ferreira (2020) proposed that individuals involved in conducting studies could find value in utilizing the ACE questionnaire to assess adverse childhood experiences.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe with childhood trauma. To uncover the root cause, trauma from ACEs and/or cultural factors that may have contributed to the negative adulthood aggressive behavior was explored. A demographic survey (see Appendix A), the ACEs questionnaire (see Appendix B), interviews, and a one-month-long journal entry were used for data collection in this study. The problem is relevant to the communities where the Yoruba population is concentrated and the Yoruba population at large. Uncovering underlying causes of aggression in adulthood can create the opportunity for treatment and cohesive societal relationships.

**Significance of the Study**

This study evaluated the underlying cause of aggression in the Yoruba population. Exploring the childhood trauma of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria and its possible association with their aggressive tendencies fills a critical gap in the literature in that it illuminates this community’s emotional and behavioral characteristics. The study also contributes to the existing
research on ACEs, specifically those using the ACE questionnaire. The additional use of interviews and journal analysis extends previous research on ACEs and addresses the criticisms of using the ACE questionnaire to evaluate childhood trauma. The findings of this study are expected to benefit the Nigerian community and contribute to the current literature. Where there is a theme of adverse childhood experiences by the Yoruba tribe, a breakthrough in therapy options might change behaviors that negatively impact the tribe and the surrounding community. While this study was limited to one tribe from Nigeria, the findings may inform future studies investigating ACEs’ interrelations with negative and harmful behaviors.

**Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the childhood trauma experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe and to examine whether and how they may impact these individuals in their adulthood. Research questions for phenomenological studies must possess significance for the larger society and resonate personally with the individual conducting the study (Moustakas, 1994). To that end, the following research questions were developed for this study.

The central research question guiding this study is: How do adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affect the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in the United States?

ACEs have grown to have global prevalence and significance (McLennan et al., 2020; Zarse et al., 2019). However, qualitative research has not focused on the lived experiences of Nigerians, specifically the Yoruba tribe living in America, to understand how the ACEs of this tribe influence their adulthood behaviors. The central research question was developed to align with this gap in the literature. Based on the central research question, the following sub-questions were developed.
Sub-Question 1: How do members of the Yoruba tribe believe that the trauma from childhood impacted their adulthood?

An in-depth and detailed understanding of individuals’ ACEs may help explain their trauma-based actions and behaviors (Bateson et al., 2020). In this regard, exploratory research on the ACEs of Nigerian individuals, particularly those from the Yoruba tribe, has been recommended (Kazeem, 2020), and sub-question 1 aligns with this.

Sub-Question 2: What are the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria?

A significant portion of the Nigerian population, particularly the young and old of the Yoruba tribe, exhibit reactive verbal, physical, and relational aggressive behavioral traits toward any form of opposition, not only between other cultures but within the same culture (Nwajiuba et al., 2019). However, the underlying cause of this aggressive behavior is not known. Sub-question 2 was developed in alignment with this critical point of exploration.

Sub-Question 3: How does the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impact their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture?

As of 2019, the United States is home to the third largest Nigerian community, behind only the United Kingdom and Nigeria itself (Oyebamiji & Adekoye, 2019). In the United States, Nigerians have to face several struggles, including discrimination and racism, and at the same time, their ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities are under question in their homeland, where they are no longer considered natives (Ile & Osekene, 2021). Further, the Nigerians of the Yoruba tribe tend to exhibit aggressive actions and behaviors toward other cultures (Nwajiuba et al., 2019), which may further add to their struggles as immigrants or descendants of immigrants.
Sub-question 3 was developed to explore the experiences of the Yoruba tribe living in America in this regard.

The above research questions were addressed by analyzing the data collected through the interviews and journal entries. Questions 1-22 of the interview described the participants’ childhood experiences, whereas questions 3-20 formed a basis for addressing the central research question. Questions 15 through 22 informed sub-questions 2 and 3, respectively. The participants’ journal entries informed one or more research questions depending on their focus and detail.

**Definitions**

In this study, the experiences of childhood abuse and trauma of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe was explored. Further, the impact of these experiences on the Nigerians’ adulthood outcomes was examined. The following key concepts are defined for this study.

1. *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)* – This term references events or experiences occurring in childhood that have long-term adverse effects (Souers & Hall, 2016). ACEs may be in the form of neglect, abuse, or severely stressful and traumatic rearing settings (Zarse et al., 2019), and they are usually linked with physical and mental health issues (McLennan et al., 2020).

2. *Aggression* – Aggression refers to the behavior exhibited by an individual when they intend to harm or hurt in some way another individual who does not wish to engage in such behavior (Allen & Anderson, 2017). Aggression may be verbal or physical and range from minor actions, such as pushing or name-calling, to serious actions, such as punching, hitting, or kicking, and may even be as severe as shooting, stabbing, or killing (Allen & Anderson, 2017).
3. **Childhood** – Childhood is a phase in the life cycle of a human being when they are between three and eleven years of age. An individual is in their early childhood when they are between three and eight years of age, and in their middle childhood when they are between nine and eleven years (Balasundaram & Avulakunta, 2020).

4. **Diaspora** – Diaspora is defined as “migrants or descendants of migrants, whose identity and sense of belonging have been shaped by their migration experience and background (IOM World Migration Report, 2017, p. 305, as cited in Migration Data Portal, 2020). While the term was originally used to describe the forced displacement of certain peoples, diaspora is now generally used to describe those who identify with a homeland but live outside of it. Definitions of diaspora also include first-generation emigrants and foreign-born children of these individuals, as long as they maintain some link to their parent’s home country. The five characteristics of the diaspora are migration, collective memory, connection, group consciousness, and kinship (Migration Data Portal, 2020).

5. **Trauma** – Trauma is defined as “experiences that cause intense physical and psychological stress reactions. It can refer to a single event, multiple events, or a set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically and emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being” (SAMHSA, 2017a, p. 7).

**Summary**

In this chapter, several introductory topics related to this study were discussed. First, a brief overview of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria, which will be the focus of the present study, and presented the questions regarding this community that need to be addressed were presented. These included questions regarding the underlying cause of aggression in this group, the
contribution of childhood trauma in this regard, the long-term impacts of childhood trauma on
the Yoruba culture, and the influences of the experiences of trauma and the associated negative
behavior on the community’s relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture.
Next, a brief background of the existing research on the Nigerian people, their social, emotional,
and behavioral characteristics, and their exposure to ACEs was presented. The brief background
was followed by a description of the historical and social background of Nigeria and the Yoruba
tribe to provide a context for this research. The theoretical foundation adopted for this study and
the position of the individual conducting the study were then discussed. The specific problem
addressed in this study was then presented as the lack of knowledge regarding the underlying
cause of the aggressive behavior of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Based on the problem
addressed, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of
Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe with childhood trauma. The significance of this study was then
presented, followed by the research questions and the definitions of certain key terms. In the next
chapter, a detailed discussion of the relevant literature related to the study’s topic is presented.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A systematic review of the literature was conducted to explore the problems associated with the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences and factors that reduce the impact of trauma during childhood and adulthood. In the first section, the theories used to guide and frame this study, behavioral and social constructivism, are discussed. Next, recent literature regarding the historical background, tribes, culture, and norms of Nigerians is reviewed. In addition, a historical context of ACEs and their implications are given. Lastly, the literature on childhood trauma interventions is reviewed. In the end, a gap in the literature is identified, presenting the need for this study.

Theoretical Framework

The framework studied as a foundational blueprint for understanding the Yoruba population is behavioral constructivism (Skinner, 1976) and social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1962). The two theoretical frameworks stemmed from the concept of behavioral studies that started in the early 1900s. Behaviorism, however, doctrinally speaking, is “a way of doing psychological or behavioral science” (Graham & Zalta, 2019, p. 2). Graham and Zalta (2019) further analyzed that behaviorism as a doctrine is committed to the following three claims:

1) Psychology is the science of behavior. Psychology is not the science of the inner mind—as something other or different from behavior.

2) Behavior can be described and explained without referencing mental events or internal psychological processes. The sources of behavior are external (in the environment), not internal (in the mind, in the head).
3) In the course of theory development in psychology, if, somehow, mental terms or concepts are deployed in describing or explaining behavior, then either (a) these terms or concepts should be eliminated and replaced by behavioral terms or (b) they can and should be translated or paraphrased into behavioral concepts.

The three claims can further distinguish various types of behaviorism: Methodological, Psychological or Radical, and Analytical (Graham & Zalta, 2019). Analytical behaviorism, also known as philosophical or logical behaviorism, unlike methodological and psychological behaviorism, which are committed to the truth, is committed to the truth of translating behavioral concepts into mental terms (Graham & Zalta, 2019). A normative theory regarding the scientific conduct of psychology, methodological behaviorism claims “that psychology should concern itself with the behavior of organisms (human and nonhuman animals)” (Graham & Zalta, 2019, p. 3). Watson (1950) believed that methodological behaviorism, such as beliefs and desires, contributes nothing psychology interprets about behavioral sources.

Similarly, psychological behaviorism aims to illustrate behavior in humans and animals regarding external physical stimuli, responses, learning histories, and reinforcements (Pavlov, 1935; Skinner, 1976; Thorndike, 1948). Much empirical evidence illustrates psychological behaviorism in animals, such as rats associating feeding time with discriminative stimuli—events that happen immediately prior to feeding (sounds or lights). This form of psychological behaviorism is further distinguished as a type of behavioral learning known as classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observation conditioning (Graham & Zalta, 2019).

Published evidence of psychological behaviorism in humans is often associated with learning theories. Graham and Zalta (2019) noted that operant conditioning, also known as instrumental conditioning, modifies or shapes behavior through positive and negative
reinforcements. Well-known illustrations introduced and developed by Thorndike (1948) and Skinner (1976) associated operant conditioning with learning theories, where behavioral outcomes result from consequences. In contrast, observation conditioning states that learning is primarily conducted through observation of external actions (Albert, 1977). For example, children learn from what they observe in their environment, primarily influenced by parents, siblings, and family members (Graham & Zalta, 2019).

Embedded in philosophy, analytical or logical behaviorism is a theory about the significance of mental notions (Graham & Zalta, 2019). Analytical behaviorism, founded in the work of Gilbert Ryle from the early to mid-1900s and more recently, U.T. Place from the mid-1900s to 2000 (Graham & Zalta, 2019), states that “the very idea of a mental state or condition is the idea of a behavioral disposition or family of behavioral tendencies, evident in how a person behaves in one situation rather than another” or environmental interactions (p. 5). Psychological behaviorism, or radical behaviorism as termed by Skinner, combines all three types of behaviorism as it is concerned with (1) behavior of organisms versus mental processing, (2) behavior from external environments or stimuli, and (3) mental terms interpreted into behaviors (Skinner, 1957, 1974).

Vygotsky (1962) developed the social learning theory known as social constructivism. Vygotsky believed learning occurs primarily in social and cultural settings rather than solely within the individual. Well defined by Akpan et al. (2020), the social constructivism theory “states that language and culture are the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality” (p. 50). Vygotsky (1962) purported that language and culture play essential roles in human intellectual development and how humans perceive the world.
Since learning can serve in social and cultural settings, as well as the environment, childhood experiences rooted in culture shape perceptions and attitudes among the Yoruba people. Children of the Yoruba tribe are highly disciplined. Ofoha et al. (2019) noted that although children are cherished by their families, they are disciplined under life-threatening circumstances. Ofoha et al. (2019) further noted that discipline under harsh measures is promoted not only in the home but among all extended family members, such as aunts, uncles, and community members within the society. While discipline is not disregarded in many cultures, violent discipline as a tradition can lead to violent behavior in adulthood, including transference to future generations.

Although Vygotsky’s philosophical approach is mainly used in educational settings between teachers and students, the principal point is that the learning environment available at the time is what the learner absorbs (Aytur et al., 2022; Baglivio et al., 2021). Ofoha et al. (2019) argued that the effects of unresolved traumatic experiences endured during childhood due to customary practices create a constant flight or fight response as a coping mechanism in adulthood. In contrast, Matlin et al. (2019) believed constant exposure to ACEs, especially events from customary practice, builds resilience in adulthood. Utilizing the framework of Skinner (1976) and Vygotsky (1962) assisted in uncovering negative behavior and the learned behaviors from environmental, societal, and cultural factors. A deep understanding of past and current behavior, as well as the past and present thought processes of the Yoruba tribe that possibly stemmed from historically learned childhood behavior and experiences, was sought.

In a study exploring Skinner’s (1976) theory of behaviorism in the societal context, Geller (2021) focused on actively caring for people or the AC4P movement. Specifically, enhancing interpersonal compassion and collaboration in society by introducing this movement
that integrated the constructs of behaviorism, humanism, and positive psychology was examined. The AC4P movement was associated with the following behaviors: employing the power of positive consequences, benefiting from observational learning, improving with behavioral feedback, using supportive feedback rather than corrective feedback, embracing and practicing empathy, managing behavior and leading people, and progressing from self-actualization to self-transcendence. Through an investigation of the principles of the behaviorism theory, it was noted that the AC4P movement could help enhance the acceptance, implementation, and benefits of interventions promoting prosocial behavior and improving individual happiness and well-being in society (Geller, 2021). The use of Skinner’s (1976) theory of behaviorism in the study by Geller (2021) informed the present study because, in both, behaviorism was explored for the betterment of certain social behaviors. In the case of Geller (2021), behaviorism was explored in relation to AC4P behaviors for societal benefits, while in this study, behaviorism was explored in relation to Yoruba people’s aggressive behavior for the benefit of this community.

The social constructivism theory of Vygotsky (1962) was similarly explored in a study by Lincoln and Hoffman (2019), who focused on the principles of constructivism in therapy. Lincoln and Hoffman (2019) specifically focused on describing how adopting a constructivist-existential approach could help to substantially enhance existing psychological approaches to therapy. The key construct of experience considered fundamental in both constructivism and existentialism was noted to be the point where these two theories could be integrated. Further, both theories emphasized individual and subjective perspectives more than universal ones. Lincoln and Hoffman (2019) noted that the three settings of caregiver family therapy, equine-facilitated therapy, and substance abuse treatments could benefit from an integrated approach that combined constructivism and existentialism. This study by Lincoln and Hoffman (2019) is
informative of the present study focusing on the Yoruba peoples’ experiences with childhood trauma. Lincoln and Hoffman (2019) presented that a constructivist approach was beneficial in therapy settings. As this study focused on the experiences and consequences of past traumatic experiences of the Yoruba people, the principles of Vygotsky’s (1962) social constructivism theory provided valuable insights regarding the research topic.

**Related Literature**

**The Nigerian History**

Nigeria is one of the largest countries in the Western continent of Africa, with a population of over 200 million people. Nigeria is known for its populous crude oil, earthy minerals, and agricultural niches (Olanrewaju, 2021). Recorded in history, Nigeria became well known when the British colonized and joined the southern and northern parts of the country together (Olanrewaju, 2021). The country later gained independence in 1960, establishing a democratic government and staying a member of the Commonwealth (Olanrewaju, 2021). The primary language spoken in the country is English; however, each tribe communicates in its specific language and dialect (Olanrewaju, 2021).

Spirituality is highly practiced among the Nigerian population, with more than half the population being Muslims and the remainder Christians (Peel, 2016). There are a few tribes and villages that practice traditional religions, where a deity is worshipped through lesser gods (Peel, 2016). The Nigerian government comprises a federal and local government with appointments and terms like modern democratic countries. Although a modern government exists, there are appointed kings for each tribe that establishes laws, customs, and practices for their jurisdiction (Peel, 2016).
Major Tribes of Nigeria

There are over 200 ethnic groups in Nigeria, but the three major groups are the Hausa, residing mainly in the Northern parts of the country; the Yoruba, residing mainly in the southwestern parts of the country; and the Igbo residing within the southeastern parts of the country (Franke, 2016). The Hausa and Fulani tribes are the primary groups in Nigeria, in which their culture is deeply “patriarchal and patrilineal” and rooted in Islamic laws (PBS, 2007, p. 6). Since the country’s independence from Britain, the Hausa group has been dominant in society and politics (Forde, 2017). The Yoruba tribe is the second largest group in the country, densely populated in Lagos. The Yoruba tribe share a middle ground between the Islamic and Christian religion as they embrace both alongside other traditional religions (George, 2016; Olanrewaju, 2021). George (2016) noted that the Igbo tribe, unlike the Hausa, is less politically involved in government roles, and the majority are of the Christian faith.

Origin of the Yoruba Tribe and Culture

The Yoruba tribe is the second largest tribe in western Nigeria, making up about 21% of the population (Lange, 2011). The tribe originated from a man known as Oduduwa. As a result of Oduduwa’s idol worshipping, he fled his hometown of Mecca, after being exposed of his practices, to a town known as Ile-Ife, gaining popularity between the 12th and 14th centuries (Forde, 2017; Olanrewaju, 2021). The Yoruba race began to grow as Oduduwa procreated and gave neighboring towns as an inheritance to his children for rulership. As time progressed, a series of unfortunate events causing drought, famine, and war within the country and western part of Africa led to the collapse of the town. Two centuries later, the town regained its power and was joined by newly formed cities and states (Olanrewaju, 2021). Ogundiran (2012) noted that the expansion of the Yoruba tribe became commercially revolutionized through the Atlantic
slave trade, which shaped the society, culture, and political landscape. Traditional Yoruba tribes are identified by cultural customs in food, clothing, and tribal markings (George, 2016).

**Yoruba Cultural Norms and Practices**

Falola and Akinyemi (2017) shared that the two concepts of culture and customs are interrelated; culture is the totality of the ways of life of a people, while “custom is a traditional way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular place, time or society” (p. 22). Customs, therefore, are part of the cultural matrix. Olanrewaju (2021) noted that there are about 30 million native speakers of the Yoruba language found in southwestern Nigeria and the South-eastern Benin Republic. The author shared that there are also descendants of Yoruba people transported to the New World during the Transatlantic slavery of the 18th to 19th centuries, most especially in Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, Trinidad, and Puerto Rico, who speak variations of the language and claim the Yoruba identity. According to Falola and Akinyemi (2017), an important tradition of the Yoruba culture is the naming of a newborn baby. The baby is given as many as 10 names provided by parents and close relatives (Falola & Akinyemi, 2017). Depending on the family's religious background, the church, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, gives divine names directly from God to the baby (Peel, 2016).

Among the many ethnic tribes in Nigeria, the Yoruba people are known to have prominent and well-defined greeting postures, which may be periodic or seasonal, occupational, or event- and festival-specific (Aina et al., 2020; Segun, 2018). Traditional Yoruba greetings are generally initiated by the younger person; *idọbalẹ* is the name of the male greeting, and *ikúnlẹ* is the corresponding name for the female greeting (Oluyemi & Olumide, 2021). These greetings serve several pragmatic functions, including facilitating communication and interpersonal relationships, guiding people’s politeness and social behavior, promoting mutual respect,
exemplifying cultural identity, and promoting unity (Segun, 2018). Oluyemi and Olumide (2021) noted that the traditional forms of greetings of the Yoruba tribe were inseparable from their culture. However, the Yoruba culture of greeting is gradually declining, particularly among the younger generation (Oluyemi & Olumide, 2021; Segun, 2018). In their study with 20 young adults from the Yoruba tribe, Oluyemi and Olumide (2021) found that these individuals were concerned about the decline of traditional greeting practices and attributed it not to personal preferences but to external factors, such as “poor parental socialization, prohibition of Yoruba language as a means of communication in schools, westernization, peer group influence, Internet, and social media” (p. 1).

Another traditional practice noted by Falola and Akinyemi (2017) is the institution of marriage between a man and a woman. When a man finds a woman he intends to marry, he informs his parents, and an arrangement is made for the two families to meet for an introduction (Falola & Akinyemi, 2017). Upon accepting the woman’s family, a date for the traditional marriage is selected. On this day, the groom’s family must present requested monetary and nonmonetary gifts to the bride and her family. Additionally, a formal price is paid for the bride.

Many cultural norms cause childhood trauma; however, because these traditions are widely accepted, it is not considered a traumatic experience. Nevertheless, a study conducted by Anuforo et al. (2004) noted that those who experienced cultural traditions such as female circumcision during childhood are now against the cultural practice. These women advocate a change in attitude regarding female circumcision (Anuforo et al., 2004).

Lastly, cultural norms regarding children's upbringing are important in the Yoruba tribe. Violent discipline against children is a culturally empowering custom believed by Nigerians in raising children (Ofoha et al., 2019). While citing Bassey (2016), Ofoha et al. (2019) noted that
although children are cherished by their families, they are disciplined under life-threatening circumstances. In addition, extended family and community members are also allowed to use violent measures to discipline that child (Ofoha et al., 2019).

**Adverse Childhood Experiences**

The study of childhood experiences is the foundational blueprint of discovery in the population of interest (Nigerians) and its contribution to negative adult behaviors. Several research articles provided a general definition of ACEs; however, Kalmakis and Chandler (2014) shared that “adverse childhood experiences are operationally defined as childhood events, varying in severity and often chronic, occurring in a family or social environment and causing harm or distress” (p. 11). Experiences from one’s past, whether positive or negative, can shape one’s behavior in the future.

Recent literature by Jones et al. (2020) provided a relevant definition of ACE:

> Potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood and adolescence, such as experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; witnessing violence in the home; having a family member attempt or die by suicide; and growing up in a household with substance use, mental health problems, or instability due to parental separation, divorce, or incarceration” (p. 5).

If untreated, ACEs can negatively impact individuals' mental health later in life.

The results shared by the authors in this article indicate that adverse childhood experiences cause harm or distress, disrupting the child's physical or psychological health and development (Kalmakis & Chandler, 2014). These experiences in childhood can cause alcohol and substance abuse and severe mental health issues like depression in adulthood (Ashaba et al., 2022; Kiburi et al., 2018; Satinsky et al., 2021). Based on a cross-sectional study with 1630
individuals from rural Uganda, Ashaba et al. (2022) noted that ACEs of these people were significantly associated with their behaviors of heavy alcohol consumption and that the influence of ACEs was partially buffered by social participation. Kiburi et al. (2018) noted a high prevalence of ACEs among individuals with substance use disorders. The specific ACEs that may have contributed to this outcome included experiences of emotional abuse, physical neglect and abuse, and being around someone in the household with a mental illness (Kiburi et al., 2018). The cumulative number of such experiences has also been associated with depression symptom severity and major depressive disorder (Satinsky et al., 2021).

ACEs can further lead to suicide and/or suicidal ideation (Bruwer et al., 2014; Satinsky et al., 2021). The common forms of adverse events that may lead to suicide attempts include sexual abuse, physical abuse, and parental divorce (Bruwer et al., 2014). In a cross-sectional population-based study in Uganda with 1626 adults who had ACEs, Satinsky et al. (2021) found that suicidal ideation was statistically associated with ACEs, such as being insecure regarding food and/or water or residing with an adult who had been jailed or imprisoned.

In this regard, Morgan et al. (2021) questioned the resilience of individuals exposed to ACEs. Psychological resilience is known to mediate the correlation between ACEs and the corresponding negative outcomes in individuals (Morgan et al., 2021). Morgan et al. conducted a systematic review to explore this topic and identified nine valid studies for their meta-analysis. A negative correlation was observed between ACEs and individuals’ psychological resilience, and Morgan et al. (2021) highlighted that multiple dimensions constituted the construct of resilience in individuals exposed to ACEs. These research findings highlight the critical consequences that ACE exposure may have and indicate the need for further research on this topic to facilitate the development of policies and practices to prevent exposure to such experiences.
History and Types of ACEs

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that ACEs severely impact future well-being. ACEs were first studied by the CDC and Kaiser Permanente Health Center from 1995 to 1997 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021). The ACEs study was pioneered by several physicians, psychiatrists, and psychologists. However, the foundation of ACEs originated from a study conducted by Dr. Robert Anda and Dr. Vincent Felitti to explore connections between childhood adversity and adult physical and mental health (Felitti et al., 1998; Souers & Hall, 2016). Felitti et al.’s (1998) curiosity regarding their patient’s inability to lose weight and whether the reasons were attributed to childhood experiences was also an opportunity for the ACEs exploration (Stevens, 2015). The original study identified eight major types of childhood trauma—three types of abuse: (1) sexual, (2) verbal, and (3) physical; five types of family dysfunction: (1) a parent who is mentally ill, (2) a parent who is an alcoholic, (3) a mother who is a domestic violence victim, (4) a family member who has been incarcerated, and (5) the loss of a parent through divorce or abandonment (Kalmakis & Chandler, 2014; Stevens, 2015). The ACEs study has expanded since it originated with the addition of emotional and physical neglect to make a total of 10 ACE types (Petrucelli et al., 2019). The findings of the research study conducted by Felitti et al. (1998) revealed that the more ACEs reported by adults, the worse their physical and mental health. Additional studies have further expanded ACEs to include living in foster care and bullying (Waite & Ryan, 2019), as cited in Crowder (2021).

ACEs Scale

The ACEs scale is a brief instrument used to assess childhood adversity in children under the age of 18 years (CDC, 2021; Schmidt et al., 2020). The ACEs instrument comprises 10 items, the first half assessing maltreatment and the second on family dysfunction (CDC, 2016;
Felitti et al., 1998; Schmidt et al., 2020). The ACE questionnaire relates incidences of maltreatment and adverse rearing settings of childhood with the physical and mental health outcomes in adulthood (Zarse et al., 2019).

Lacey and Minnis (2020) noted that scholars and practitioners have used the ACEs measurement scale for years. The ACEs questionnaire has been used to determine the correlations between traumatic childhood experiences and adulthood outcomes (Ramiro et al., 2010; Reavis et al., 2013). In a cross-sectional study with 1068 adults from urban Metro Manila, Ramiro et al. (2010) utilized the ACEs questionnaire and found that a third of the participants had been exposed to at least one ACE, and 9% to over four ACEs, including physical and psychological neglect, emotional abuse, living with a problem drinker or alcoholic, and domestic violence. Exposure to these ACEs was linked with health-risk behaviors such as smoking, alcohol abuse, and risky sexual behavior (Ramiro et al., 2010). As measured by the ACE questionnaire, ACEs can also have more severe adulthood outcomes. Reavis et al. (2013) showed a link between ACEs and criminal behavior. Based on the ACEs questionnaire responses of 151 criminal offenders from San Diego, California, who had been convicted of non-sexual child abuse, domestic violence, sexual offenses, or stalking, the Reavis et al. (2013) noted that these offenders reported nearly four times as many ACEs compared to a normative sample of adult males. Specifically, child abusers and sexual offenders were found to have experienced childhood sexual abuse. These study findings illustrate the applicability of the ACEs questionnaire.

More recent studies have explored the efficacy and suitability of this questionnaire. The ACEs questionnaire has been noted to have the characteristic of simplicity, which is both an advantage and a limitation: “Its simplicity facilitates wide-ranging applications in public policy,
public health, and clinical settings but risks over-simplistic communication of risk/causality, determinism, and stigma” (Lacey & Minnis, 2020; p. 116). Lacey and Minnis noted that although the measurement tool has been used to effectively diagnose and treat countless individuals since adversities co-occur, Mendel et al. (2021) and SmithBattle et al. (2021) should find new approaches to using the tool to assist practitioners effectively.

The benefits of the ACEs questionnaire as a screening tool may be enhanced if clinicians receive trauma-informed care knowledge and skills (Mendel et al., 2021). To begin with, the 10-item ACEs questionnaire should be introduced in practical clinical settings among physicians. In a study with 226 community-based and resident physicians, Stork et al. (2020) noted that 81% did not have knowledge of the ACEs questionnaire, and only 3% had used the questionnaire in their clinical practice. Research on the application of the ACEs questionnaire in many settings may lead to more focus on the questionnaire from the healthcare sector, from which point the ACEs questionnaire can be applied in clinical practice and further improved upon.

**External Factors**

According to Agbaje et al. (2021), external factors such as lack of parental education and those living in poor areas present a higher risk of ACEs. Adeyinka et al. (2020) argued that the mortality of children under five years old is higher than it should be during a sustainable era. Limited access to care, lack of education, and socioeconomic issues play critical factors in the high mortality rates of children under five (Adeyinka et al., 2020).

**Socioeconomic Factors**

Salawu and Owoaje (2020) argued that poverty and poor education are the primary cause of ACEs among the youth in Nigeria. According to the author’s study results, over 90% of Nigerians surveyed experienced at least one form of ACEs. Emotional neglect was reportedly the
leading ACEs experienced (Salawu & Owoaje, 2020). Similarly, Abdulmalik et al. (2019) noted that income limitations are associated with access to mental health care in Nigeria. Awareness of the income disparity pushed the country’s world leaders to examine how access to healthcare and mental health can be achieved (Abdulmalik et al., 2019). Furthermore, Amemiya et al. (2018) concluded that cognitive function and economic hardship exposure in childhood leads to a higher occurrence of mental health disorders.

**Educational Factors**

Poverty and poor education are the primary cause of ACEs among the youth in Nigeria (Salawu & Owoaje, 2020). Studies by Radcliff et al. (2019); Salawu and Owoaje (2020); and CDC (2021) showed a significant increase in the multiple types of ACEs exposure occurring in people with limited access to education, healthcare, and financial resources. Radcliff et al. (2019) concluded in a study that over 65% of adults who experienced homelessness during childhood reported exposure to more than four types of ACEs than those who did not.

**Internal Factors**

According to Agbaje et al. (2021), parental factors are prevalent among young adults with psychological stress. Haynes et al. (2020) argued that exploring adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in parents, along with the effects of family dysfunction and abuse, aids in understanding potential ACEs exposure in children. McLafferty et al. (2015) shared that adults with one or more occurrences of childhood adversity are more at risk of developing psychopathology. The severity of mental health illness depended on the type(s) of adversity experienced. For example, those that suffered parental loss experienced a higher occurrence of depression than those who experienced isolation (McLafferty et al., 2015).
Parental Factors

Parental exposure to trauma can be a leading cause of ACEs in children, specifically through transference (Narayan et al., 2021). As parents develop coping mechanisms due to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from unresolved trauma, child-parent difficulties and negative parenting practices increase (Narayan et al., 2021). Worthy of importance, Crouch et al. (2019) and Haynes et al. (2020) noted that historical childhood adversity among parents resulted in a high probability of their children experiencing trauma. In addition, a research study revealed that multiple types of ACE were prevalent in households with higher parental stress than those with low parental stress (Crouch et al., 2019). Haynes et al. (2020) shared that parenting stress, including childrearing, daily commitments, and caregiving, can occur from their children’s positive and negative behaviors. Parental stress can trigger responses that directly and indirectly affect their children, exposing them to stressors or adverse events (Haynes et al., 2020).

Family Dysfunction

Although gender-specific, Egya (2011) provided information on certain childhood experiences encountered by the feminist, along with worldviews that shape the society in which women live today. According to Egya (2011), female children were not allowed the opportunities that male children were afforded, such as mingling with friends or enjoying leisure time to relax. Instead, they were to maintain the home, look after all siblings, and assist their mother in child-rearing. In addition, female children were more at risk of being molested or raped without adequate supervision (Egya, 2011).

Abuse

A study by the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect resulted in a high number of children under 18 experiencing some form of abuse in the household (Miller et al.,
2018). Similar surveyed results showed that over 35% of children experience food shortages, while others showed the loss of one or both parents (Miller et al., 2018). Survey results by Mosley-Johnson et al. (2019) of those with ACEs showed that life satisfaction was relatively low compared to those without ACEs. People who experienced physical abuse and household dysfunction as ACEs were associated with lower life satisfaction than those who reported no ACEs or other forms of ACEs (Mosley-Johnson et al., 2019). Agbaje et al. (2021) reported that over 85% of young adults self-reported in a survey that they were victims of sexual abuse. Half of those reported experiencing at least two or more adverse childhood events, mainly from parental factors such as neglect and physical abuse (Agbaje et al., 2021).

**Impacts of ACEs**

ACEs may severely influence its victims in various stages of their lives, from childhood exposure to an ACE to adulthood. The impacts of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on behavioral outcomes in middle childhood were explored by Hunt et al. (2017). The study investigated a national urban birth cohort known as the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, analyzing data from over 3000 children. The focus was on ACEs, including instances of physical and emotional childhood abuse, neglect, parental domestic violence, substance abuse, anxiety, depression, and parental incarceration that children had encountered by the age of five. The study findings revealed that by the early age of nine, children exposed to ACEs when they were younger began exhibiting behavioral problems. These problems included externalization and internalization behaviors and the possibility of a diagnosis of ADHD in middle childhood (Hunt et al., 2017). In another study, Merrick et al. (2017) examined the relationship between ACEs and the mental health of adults. Drawing on data from 7465 adults from California between 19 and 98 years, the Merrick et al. (2017) found that ACEs had associations with the
adults’ tendencies to abuse alcohol, use drugs, be depressed, and make suicide attempts in adulthood. These studies revealed the harmful behavioral outcomes that ACEs might have on individuals.

Behavioral outcomes of being exposed to ACEs may specifically be related to aggression on the part of the individual exposed to an ACE. In this regard, Mumford et al. (2019) explored the association of ACEs with violence and aggression toward relationships in adulthood. Mumford et al. (2019) surveyed 1561 young adults aged between 18 and 32 in the United States who reported being in a relationship with a significant other. The study findings indicated that ACEs were directly related to both physical and verbal aggression for the participants. The verbal aggression exhibited by the participants toward their partners, friends, or even strangers was noted to negatively impact the intimacy of their relationships (Mumford et al., 2019). In another study, Khodabandeh et al. (2018) examined the correlation between ACEs and aggressive behavior among 350 adult males accused of physical aggression in forensic settings. Through interviews and questionnaires, Khodabandeh et al. (2018) found that significant associations existed between ACEs and aggressive behavior in the participants.

The most common ACE reported was family dysfunction, primarily violence within the family. Khodabandeh et al. (2018) highlighted the risk for several aggression- and violence-related outcomes in adulthood for children who had been exposed to ACEs. In contrast, in a study by Dudeck et al. (2016) with 55 male forensic psychiatry inpatients, the study noted that while ACEs triggered suicide attempts for participants, they did not result in violent behavior for the sample. The association of ACEs with violence and aggression may be influenced by the individual’s resilience, as demonstrated by Dambacher et al. (2022). Like Dudeck et al. (2016), Dambacher et al. (2022) focused on 57 male forensic inpatients to explore the mediating role of
resilience on the correlation between ACEs and aggression. Dambacher et al., 2022 found that the resilience factor completely mediated the association between ACEs and aggressive behavior.

**ACEs Among Nigerians**

Several studies have examined the various consequences and implications of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) among Nigerian individuals. In a recent investigation, Agbaje et al. (2021) explored the prevalence of ACEs among Nigerian youth and their associations with psychological distress. The study included 203 undergraduate students from two higher educational institutions, namely the University of Nigeria and the School of Public Health Technology. By analyzing demographic statistics and questionnaire responses, it was found that 14.8%, 30.5%, and 41.3% of the students had encountered one, two to three, and over four ACEs, respectively. Females reported experiencing more ACEs than males. Agbaje et al. (2021) determined that any level of exposure to ACEs was linked to psychological distress among these students. Similar to Agbaje et al.’s study, Lawal and Abdulmalik (2020) focused on pre-clinical medical students in their second or third year at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. They aimed to investigate the correlation between ACEs and the psychosocial well-being of these students. Questionnaire responses were collected from 277 students, among whom 40.8% reported exposure to at least one ACE. Specifically, 19.1% of the students reported being physically abused, 18.2% reported being emotionally abused, 9.0% reported being sexually abused, and 9.4% reported being exposed to parental divorce. Lawal and Abdulmalik (2020) noted a significant correlation between ACEs and psychosocial well-being among the participants. Further, students who had been exposed to ACEs were found to be six times more likely to have low esteem than those who had not been exposed to ACEs (Lawal & Abdulmalik, 2020).
While Agbaje et al. (2021) and Lawal and Abdulmalik (2020) focused on Nigerian higher education students, Folayan et al. (2020) conducted a study with Nigerian children from primary and secondary schools. The study sample included 1209 students between ages 6 and 16. Folayan et al. (2020) evaluated the associations among ACEs, bully victimization, resilience, self-esteem, and social support. Based on analyses of questionnaire responses, social support had a significant and negative correlation with ACEs and bully victimization and a significant positive association with self-esteem and resilience (Folayan et al., 2020). These study findings indicated that ACEs and the corresponding negative consequences are prevalent across a wide range of ages in Nigerian individuals. The negative outcomes of childhood trauma and abuse among Nigerians persist throughout childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood.

The influence of ACEs may further manifest in Nigerians' behavior in adulthood. Kazeem (2020) explored how the ACEs, socioeconomic status, and criminal behavior of Nigerians were associated. Using a standardized questionnaire, Kazeem (2020) drew on the perspectives of 253 inmates of the Agodi Correctional Centre in Ibadan, Nigeria, who had been convicted of internet fraud, property-related offenses, armed robbery, or murder. ACEs related to the inmates’ family environment, peer and community violence, and exposure to collective violence or war were significant predictors of criminal behavior. Specifically, ACEs significantly impacted general conflict tactics and property, interpersonal, and drug crime to varying extents. Further, the high likelihood of criminal behavior was linked with low socioeconomic status, age, and education (Kazeem, 2020). For ACEs and policing behavior, Bateson et al. (2020) noted that a detailed understanding and identification of ACEs could help develop “an easily understandable framework to identify vulnerable adults and children” (p. 141), which, in turn,
could facilitate the development of trauma-informed policing practices and responses. This would ultimately help safeguard children from trauma and abuse (Bateson et al., 2020).

The ACEs of Nigerians may be addressed by developing and implementing adequate interventions. In this regard, Eseadi et al. (2016) explored how a cognitive restructuring intervention program related to rational-emotive behavior therapy could help in addressing the effects of ACEs. Eseadi et al. (2016) focused on Nigerian individuals from Nsukka Urban of the Enugu State of Nigeria. The following hypotheses were developed as part of the study: (1) The effects of ACEs on Nigerian individuals would not be significantly related to their gender; (2) The effects of ACEs on Nigerian individuals would be significantly reduced post-treatment; and (3) The effects of ACEs of the Nigerian individuals would be reduced more for the intervention group compared to the control group. Eseadi et al. (2016) identified 520 Nigerians from the selected region who were victims of ACEs.

Among them, 26 participants were included in the study based on the inclusion criteria. The duration for full intervention was 12 weeks, and follow-up sessions were conducted for an additional two weeks. Questionnaires were used for data collection before and after the subjection of the intervention. The study results revealed that gender differences did not determine the presence of ACEs for the participants, thus supporting the first hypothesis. The second hypothesis was also supported as significant improvements were observed for the Nigerian individuals who participated in the study and underwent the intervention. Finally, a significant reduction of irrational thoughts and behaviors arising from ACEs was found in the intervention group compared to the control group, confirming the third hypothesis (Eseadi et al., 2016). The findings of this study indicated that appropriate intervention programs might help
mitigate the harmful effects of ACEs in Nigerian individuals. For this, further research on the ACEs of these individuals and their corresponding impacts may be beneficial.

**Nigerian Community in the United States**

Nigerian migration to the United States has seen a gradual increase since Nigeria’s post-colonial times. As early as 1980, approximately 25,000 Nigerian immigrants were residents of the United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2015). With the number of Nigerian immigrants being admitted into the United States increasing from around 3000 in 1988 to over 10,000 in 1996, residents of the United States claiming to have a Nigerian heritage reached 277,631 in 2012, according to an American Community Survey (Oyebamiji & Adekoye, 2019). The 2013 United States census put the number of Nigerian Americans at 299,310, among whom 262,000 were aged 16 years or more (Oyebamiji & Adekoye, 2019). According to the Migration Policy Institute, in 2015, around 0.6% of the foreign-born population of the United States were immigrants from Nigeria (Migration Policy Institute, 2015). As of 2019, the United States is home to the third largest Nigerian community, behind Nigeria and the United Kingdom (Oyebamiji & Adekoye, 2019).

The vast number of Nigerians in the United States has led to research on the motivations of the people of this community for moving from their homeland to a foreign country. Oyebamiji and Adekoye (2019) noted that the primary motivations for Nigerian individuals’ migration to the United States were career development and a desire to make a mark. Based on interviews with 1600 Nigerian adults, Isbell and Ojewale (2018) found that individuals aged under 35 years who had post-secondary education and lived in cities were particularly likely to consider moving abroad. Their motivations for doing so were dominantly economic, including moving to find work, escape poverty and economic hardships, or seek better business prospects. Some also
considered moving to pursue education. North America was observed to be the most popular destination for Nigerians who wished to move abroad (Isbell & Ojewale, 2018).

Despite their motivations, once in the United States, individuals from Nigeria typically experience several struggles. Along with general hardships related to studies and employment, Nigerians face discrimination and racism, and at the same time, their ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities are under question in their homeland, where they are no longer considered natives (Ile & Osekene, 2021). Irrespective of these struggles, the Nigerian community has socially integrated into their respective societies in the United States and, in fact, actively participated in large-scale societal incidences, such as the Black Lives Matter movement (Acheme & Cionea, 2022). In this context, the individual and social behaviors of people from the Nigerian community are worth exploring for a better understanding of their culture and examining the characteristics and consequences of their interactions with the society to which they or their ancestors migrated.

Impact of ACEs Among the Yoruba Living in the United States

ACEs can impact people from various backgrounds and cultures. Studies from literature identified Nigerians as one of the many populations that lack mental health care services for both adults and children (Atilola et al., 2015; Mosley-Johnson et al., 2019; Uwakwe et al., 2012). A study by Uwakwe et al. (2012) revealed that over 50% of the Nigerian population self-identified that they experienced trauma during childhood and did not receive mental health therapy or treatment. Greeson et al. (2014) identified strong associations between various traumatic childhood events and multiple behavior issues, including aggression and violence. This violence and aggression stemming from ACEs is a call for action in societies affected by multicultural backgrounds, specifically Nigerians.
Atilola et al. (2015) argued that mental health services are necessary for Nigerian children who have experienced traumatic events and hardship. A current lack of mental health services means that children who are now adults went without mental health resources and have adverse childhood experiences affecting adult behavior (Atilola et al., 2015). Both women and men who experienced child abuse exhibit negative mental health behaviors such as suicide attempts, mood swings, and substance use (Comacchio et al., 2019). Women were more likely to develop an early onset of mental health issues than men; however, both genders experienced significant cognitive dysfunction. Adults with one or more childhood adversity occurrences are more at risk of developing psychopathology (McLafferty et al., 2015).

The severity of mental health illness depended on the type(s) of adversity experienced. Zhang et al. (2019) reviewed various published studies of associations between ACEs and the early onset of puberty among girls. The results showed a significant effect on early puberty from ACEs, specifically, the absence of a father and family dysfunction (Zhang et al., 2019). Overall, there is an association between ACEs and the female reproductive system. Research results of a study conducted by McElroy and Hevey (2013) indicated that “all early experiences, except physical abuse and death of a parent in childhood, were significantly correlated with a number of stressors and well-being” (p. 68). Sciaraffa et al. (2018) argued that “brain development in the early years is susceptible to toxic stress caused by ACEs” (p. 2). Through epigenetics research, the authors justified that “toxic stress has the capacity to physically change a child’s brain and be hardwired into the child’s biology via genes in the DNA” (Sciaraffa et al., 2018, p. 14). Furthermore, Anda et al. (2006) confirmed that a developing brain is subject to impairment and poor function as the ACEs-graded relationship increases.
**Relationship Shortfalls**

Studies show that ACEs impact future relationships (Eseadi et al., 2016; McLafferty et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2018). Relationship qualities such as love and nurture may be lacking in those who have undergone a traumatic event (van der Kolk, 2015). Attachment issues, such as the inability to form lasting and meaningful relationships, are common among trauma victims (Brunzell et al., 2016). Mosley-Johnson et al. (2019) examined the relationship between ACEs, life satisfaction, and social and psychological well-being. The authors argued that high-level ACEs in multiple areas were associated with overall life satisfaction. As a result of low life satisfaction, personal and professional relationships among those exposed to ACEs were not favorable. The CDC (2021) states that “children growing up with toxic stress may have difficulty forming healthy and stable relationships” (p. 4). Shortfalls in relationships can lead to the inability of Nigerians to maintain a positive social life in the workplace, school, and church.

**Difficult Cultural Integration**

The world's interconnectedness through globalization has dramatically affected immigrant social and cultural beliefs (Hirschman, 2014; Leyva-Flores et al., 2019). The United States migration laws have allowed immigrants to enter the country and establish their lives for many years (Schmidt, 2019). Although immigrants voluntarily choose to live in a foreign land, integration is usually challenging. For example, emigrated Nigerians currently living in the United States reported that negative psychological experiences exist because of their migration to the country (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2020). The existence of psychological experiences is primarily due to the norms of the Nigerian culture, which caused difficult adjustment to the American culture, negatively impacting not only external relationships but internal relationships between husbands, wives, parents, and children (Ekwemalor & Ezeobele, 2020). Many Nigerian
immigrants residing in the United States are highly male-dominated, implying that gender inequality predominates and affects their sociocultural beliefs and practices in marriage and other relationships (Moghadam, 2020). Males are regarded as superior, making decisions, and deciding their family's fate, while women are inferior beings confined in their male counterpart's shadows (Moghadam, 2020). The variation between the cultures poses a significant challenge since the westernized culture supports gender equity and equality relative to the male-dominated countries, reinforcing inequality (Parrado & Flippen, 2010).

**Exhibited Types of Negative Behaviors**

Unresolved adverse childhood experiences can lead to many mental health issues in adulthood, one being verbal, physical, and relational aggression (Mueller-Bamouh et al., 2016; Ramaiya et al., 2021). A study by Mueller-Bamouh et al. (2016) provided information on two types of aggression—“reactive and proactive” (p. 89). The study also focused on immigrant refugee children transitioning to the American lifestyle. The study results determined that aggression is predicted by familial violence, not just organized violence. The number of children involved in crime is rising (Abdulraheem-Mustapha, 2016). Child offenders are tried as adults without protection or parental support, which could potentially expose them to long-term criminal activity as adults. Unfortunately, child offenders, including their parents, are unaware of their rights; therefore, they are subject to interrogation without lawful representation (Abdulraheem-Mustapha, 2016). Aytur et al. (2022) concluded that “traumatic and stressful childhood events increase the likelihood of multiple adolescent risk behaviors, including alcohol misuse, tobacco use, drug use, sleep deprivation, risky sexual behaviors, as well as other unhealthy behaviors” (p. 267).
**Aggression and Violence**

Young adolescent children risk peer violence when exposed to ACEs (Ramaiya et al., 2021). The author’s study showed that boys are at higher risk of violence and lifetime alcohol and tobacco use than girls due to early exposure to ACEs (Ramaiya et al., 2021). As a result, adults with untreated mental illness during childhood can experience prolonged forms of mental illness than those with some treatment and therapy. Chinwokwu and Michael (2019) used the theoretical framework, frustration-aggression theory, to suggest that the violent behavior exhibited by Nigerian’s lack of resources is to fulfill basic needs. As a result of the unmet needs, illegal acts of terrorism and militancy aid in kidnapping Nigerian citizens for ransom, creating fear and unrest in the population (Chinwokwu & Michael, 2019; Yusuf & Khan, 2019).

Ojedokun et al. (2021) concluded that interpersonal violence leading to homicides occurred primarily within the household, usually between family members (nuclear and extended); however, in some cases, violence also occurs between intimate friends. According to Ojedokun et al. (2021), violence leading to homicide occurred highest in spousal conflict and between parent and child. Adedayo and Aborisade (2018) elucidated that social media has become an outlet for the acceptance of various negative behavior, including bullying and gender-based violence. In addition, social media exposes vulnerable children to negative behavior (Adedayo & Aborisade, 2018).

**Behavioral Consequences**

Behavioral problems and violence are strongly associated with traumatic childhood experiences (Greeson et al., 2014). Unfortunately, there is still a need for a trauma-informed public health and social welfare approach to prevention, risk reduction, and early intervention for traumatized youth (Greeson et al., 2014). Moreover, traumatic events during childhood are
linked to an array of emotional and behavioral problems and psychosocial impairments (Greeson et al., 2014). Nigerians that experienced trauma had no access to mental health treatment and exhibited violent behavior as a coping mechanism (Uwakwe et al., 2012). As a result of negative behaviors and no access to mental health services, victims are subject to emotional and cognitive consequences (Mosley-Johnson et al., 2019). Salokangas et al. (2018) proposed, in a study, that adults with ACEs were associated with negative perceptions of attitude toward others. Those with ACEs were also associated with depression (Salokangas et al., 2018). People with ACEs are at greater risk for developing secondary and tertiary mental health illnesses and disorders.

**Cognitive Consequences**

Exposure to ACEs impacts adult mental health (Merrick et al., 2017). Amemiya et al. (2018) argued that ACEs are associated with limited cognitive functioning compared to those without ACEs. Sekoni et al. (2021) reported: “Sexual abuse in childhood, past-year intimate partner violence, and anxiety were significantly associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)” (p. 19). A study conducted by Poletti et al. (2014) resulted in a positive relationship between ACEs and depressive cognitive distortions. The authors indicated that harsh parenting within the family environment contributes to depression and poor cognitive function. Crouch et al. (2019) noted that poor mental health outcomes, such as negative cognitive and physical functions, are associated with ACEs. A study conducted by Eseadi et al. (2016) suggested that irrational thoughts and behaviors may stem from adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in Nigerian adults. However, the results indicated no significant differences in the level of stress experienced from ACEs among both men and women. This finding holds importance as other investigations aim to explore potential variations in the effects of ACEs based on gender. Poletti
et al. (2014) argued that cognitive distortion affects thinking and is associated with individuals diagnosed with bipolar disorder and exposure to ACEs. ACEs Intervention Options and Impact

Greeson et al., 2014; Lacey & Minnis, 2020; Salokangas et al., 2018 proposed that utilizing the ACEs scale to identify childhood trauma can lead to early interventions such as education, treatment, and life satisfaction. Early intervention in mental health treatment for children and adolescent groups greatly reduces these negative thoughts and behaviors (Eseadi et al., 2016). An always-available adult positively impacts the effects of ACEs (Bellis et al., 2017). A recent study by Crowder (2021) investigated the experiences of individuals who overcame ACEs/trauma to become resilient adults. The study pointed out that ACEs do not always result in negative outcomes, but resilience through adversity can promote positive outcomes. Eseadi et al. (2016); Greeson et al. (2014); Lacey & Minnis (2020); and Salokangas et al. (2018) agreed that prevention and early intervention are essential in eradicating ACEs. Awareness through education, information sharing, neighboring healthcare providers, and much more are just some ways to intervene in adverse events. Uncontrollable factors that cause trauma, such as the sudden death of a parent, economic loss from natural disasters, or global economic issues, may be difficult to address; however, the impact of these factors can be minimized by establishing or utilizing programs currently in place (welfare, shelters, government subsidy).

Summary

ACE is a public health issue that affects people around the world. Untreated childhood trauma can have serious implications on the health and well-being of individuals (Portis et al., 2021). As reviewed in the literature, limited mental health resources exist within countries predisposed to educational and socioeconomic factors. Particularly, the Nigerian people living in America through emigration experienced multiple forms of childhood trauma as a way of life.
Female circumcision, poverty, parental abuse, violent disciplinary measures, and much more are the norms of many Nigerian families, specifically the Yoruba ethnic group. Childhood experiences influence various forms of behaviors in adulthood. In addition to behaviors, difficult integration into a new country with different cultural background create negative tensions among cultures. Research is needed to identify the lived childhood experiences of the Yoruba tribe living in America.

In this regard, Kazeem (2015) conducted a study using the ACE International Questionnaire (IQ) and Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) on Nigerian prison inmates living in the country. The research revealed that young, uneducated, and divorced prison inmates were more likely to experience ACEs. However, the author identified the need for further research on overall ACEs using the ACEs IQ. In a follow-up study, Kazeem (2020) linked prison inmates’ ACEs related to their childhood family environment, peer and community violence, and exposure to collective violence or war to their criminal behavior. A high likelihood of criminal behavior was linked with low socioeconomic status, age, and education (Kazeem, 2020). Kazeem (2020) highlighted that ACEs tended to occur in family systems that were “embedded in increasingly complex societal systems” (p. 326), and considering the traditional and ethnic cultural upbringing of Nigerian individuals, further exploratory research on ACEs of these individuals and their impacts is critical. While substantial research exists in assessing ACEs among various cultural backgrounds, this study aimed to fill the gap in research regarding the use of ACEs and lived experiences among the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in America.

Despite the abundance of studies on ACEs and their impact on various cultures and backgrounds, no qualitative studies have reviewed the lived experiences of Nigerians, specifically the Yoruba tribe living in America, to understand how these ACEs influence their
adulthood behaviors. Understanding past experiences, specifically childhood trauma, may provide answers to questions about behaviors affecting adulthood, as supported by Skinner’s (1976) behavioral theory. The goal of this research was to gather rich and deep details of childhood experiences, both positive and negative, from the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in America. The details uncovered in this study will bring awareness to communities and practitioners that wish to help and understand this ethnic group. In addition, community counselors and therapists can be better equipped to offer effective treatment options and education for prevention.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This transcendental phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of Nigerians living in America, specifically ACEs and childhood trauma. In this chapter, research methods are discussed, including the design, setting, research questions, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

Design

The primary understanding of qualitative research is that it studies real-life observations developed through interviews, conversations, recordings, and observations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When that information is analyzed and interpreted, the results can impact change if warranted. Multiple approaches can be used in a qualitative research design. These approaches include narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Rooted in philosophy, the phenomenological research approach is mostly used in the social science and medical field since it investigates the commonalities of concepts or phenomena experienced by a group of people (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The two types of phenomenology are hermeneutical and transcendental. Hermeneutical phenomenology of research is a description of personal experiences, while transcendental phenomenology describes the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The importance of philosophical assumptions shapes the direction of a research study, guided by the individual's perception of reality (ontology), their understanding of reality (epistemology), their values regarding knowledge (axiology), and the chosen methodology (methodology) (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Philosophical assumptions play a crucial role in
qualitative studies when thoroughly examining the definition of such studies. In the definition provided by Creswell and Poth (2018), the study and interpretation are based on assumptions and observational findings. Neglecting to incorporate these assumptions can lead to reader confusion regarding the research's purpose and the inability to connect the various aspects of the research design. Philosophical assumptions encompass the beliefs held by individuals undertaking research, informing their approach. The beliefs are enacted by theoretical and interpretive frameworks (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Moon and Blackman (2014), philosophical assumptions are essential to the social science field and are critical to the success of the research outcomes.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe with childhood trauma. To uncover the root cause, the research explored the adverse childhood experiences of people from the Yoruba tribe and the resulting trauma. This study was a phenomenological qualitative study. The phenomenological research approach is right for this study as it examined the lived adverse childhood experiences of the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in America. As suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018), to keep the integrity of the experiences shared, transcendental phenomenology was used to keep the original context of experiences shared. Furthermore, as described in the Creswell and Poth text (2018), employing the phenomenological eight-step approach enables individuals to accomplish the following:

- Determine whether the research problem is best examined by using a phenomenological approach
- Identify a phenomenon of interest to study and describe it
- Distinguish and specify the broad philosophical assumptions of phenomenology
- Collect data from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon by using interviews
• Generate themes from the analysis of significant statements
• Develop textual and structural descriptions
• Report the essence of the phenomenon by using a composite description
• Present the understanding of the essence of the experience in written form (p. 81)

**Research Questions**

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), concrete research questions are essential to phenomenological research. The following research questions were developed for this study to explore lived experiences of Nigerians with ACEs or trauma. The central research question guiding this study was: How do adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affect the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria over time?

Based on the central research question, the following sub-questions were developed.

Sub-Question 1: How do members of the Yoruba tribe believe that the trauma from childhood impacted their adulthood?

Sub-Question 2: What are the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria?

Sub-Question 3: How does the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impact their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture?

**Setting**

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the need to minimize the risk of COVID-related exposures, interviews were conducted through the virtual platform Microsoft Teams. Participants were instructed to find a private space in their homes to conduct the interviews to maintain confidentiality. Those with reliable Wi-Fi were able to join the virtual platform from their current residences. Two backup measures were implemented to ensure uninterrupted
interviews in case of unstable Wi-Fi: firstly, participants could use their cell phones to call into the Teams platform and listen in case the virtual platform froze, and secondly, a cell phone was used to record the interviews for later review. Participants were encouraged to call in on their cellphones and mute them during the interview as an additional backup in case of unexpected disruptions in the virtual platform. Muting the phones helped minimize any feedback during the interview. The demographic survey (see Appendix A) and ACEs questionnaire (see Appendix B) were administered electronically online utilizing Qualtrics.

Participants

Participants were recruited from a local place of worship, community, and social media postings. In a qualitative research approach, purposive sampling is best suited as the participants must be able to provide information about the study investigated (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the sample size is not limited to a specific number; rather, the sample size should be substantial enough to generate themes and successfully answer the interview questions. Therefore, a minimum of 10 participants, all Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe, were sampled. Selected participants were between the ages of 18-65 as this group could describe specific childhood experiences that occurred between ages 0-17 (CDC, 2021). Participants who completed the criteria specified in the research study were compensated with a $20 VISA gift card. The demographic information for each participant is displayed in Table 1 below.
Table 1

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality/Race</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Years in US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yasmin</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Construction Estimator</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Community Rehabilitation</td>
<td>46 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Home Daycare</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Correction Officer</td>
<td>27 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Maintenance Operator</td>
<td>42 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Self-employed; Engineer</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>41 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>26 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures

Moustakas (1994) noted the importance of having a detailed, organized, and systematic outline for conducting a transcendental phenomenological study. The procedures of this research study consisted of the following: securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (see Appendix J), recruiting participants, securing their agreement and approval, gathering data from three different sources (triangulation), and securely recording and storing data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The completed and approved proposal by the dissertation chair and IRB application was submitted to Liberty’s Institutional Review Board for approval. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), IRB approval is necessary when conducting research on humans to ensure the ethical treatment of human subjects. After obtaining the University’s approval, participant recruitment commenced using convenience sampling.

Recruitment of participants was completed using various outlets. The primary form of recruitment was through the posting a recruitment letter on the notice board within the lobby of the church premises. In addition, a recruitment letter was posted on the church’s social communication group and social media platforms. The post contained participant criteria and
contact information. In all instances, interested candidates were asked to email for further communication. The recruitment period lasted 16 weeks to recruit a substantial pool of qualified participants.

Participants must be 18-65 years to be eligible for this study. The candidates who met this criterion and emailed to indicate interest in participating in the study were sent the IRB-approved informed consent form (see Appendix E), the demographic questionnaire, and the 10-item Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) questionnaire via email. The participants were requested to email the completed questionnaires and consent forms for submission. The questionnaires took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The participants who scored three or more on the ACEs questionnaire were considered for the interviews and journal entries. These eligible participants were sent another email requesting them to participate in an audio-recorded Microsoft Teams interview lasting around 60 minutes and their preferred date and time of the interview. The participants willing to participate in the interview were sent a link to a Microsoft Teams call. At the end of the interviews, the participants were given journal prompts to consider for their journal entries. The participants were emailed the prompts. The journal entries were collected after a month.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim using the online transcription tool, Konch.ai. After the interviews were transcribed, they were sent to the participants via email to allow them to check for accuracy. The participants had seven days to get back with any clarifications, after which the transcripts were considered final and used for the analysis.

**The Researcher’s Role**

In this phenomenological study, the individual conducting the study fulfilled the role of gathering and analyzing the data. The individual conducting the study is currently employed as a
Contracting Officer with the Department of Health and Human Services and has no professional relationship with study participants. However, a certain level of familiarity exists through their shared place of worship at a local church in Maryland. While acquaintanceships may exist among participants, there is no authority over them. Bracketing was important during this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018), as the individual has firsthand experience dealing with Nigerian natives residing in America. Drawing from those personal experiences, the individual maintained objectivity when analyzing the data and reporting positive or negative findings. The focus was solely on the lived experiences of other Nigerians attending the church, rather than their own. After all interviews were completed and transcribed, a copy was provided to each participant to check for accuracy.

**Data Collection**

In a qualitative research study, data collection is integral to the research process. Data collection for this study included surveys, interviews, and journaling. First, a demographic survey (see Appendix A) was utilized to collect demographics to ensure participant eligibility. In addition, a questionnaire was administered to verify that participants fell among those that experienced the phenomenon. Next, interviews were conducted to lead participants into discussing their lived experiences through open-ended core questions (Creswell & Poth). Lastly, participants were given journal prompts (see Appendix G) to record additional thoughts regarding their lived experiences. Throughout the data collection process, if participants exhibited any adverse reactions due to the discomforting memories, they were referred to a free mental health support hotline that offers 24-hour professional support.
Surveys

In qualitative research, surveys are sometimes helpful for data collection (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). For this study, a demographic survey (see Appendix A) and the ACEs questionnaire (see Appendix B) were used and administered online using Qualtrics. Both instruments served to establish the participants’ eligibility for the study as the demographic survey included questions regarding the cultural background of the participants, and the ACE questionnaire verified the occurrence of adverse childhood experiences among the participants prior to their continued involvement in the study. The initial demographic survey included questions delineating gender, age, ethnicity, geographical location, marital status, educational attainment, and employment status. The questions established the diversity of the participant sample and spoke to the study’s transferability (Gall et al., 2007).

The ACE questionnaire (see Appendix B) is a 10-item measure administered to all participants to examine childhood trauma. This questionnaire was developed and first used by Felitti et al. (1998) and includes questions related to childhood maltreatment and household challenges (McLennan et al., 2020). The ACE questionnaire relates incidences of maltreatment and adverse rearing settings during childhood with the physical and mental health outcomes in adulthood (Zarse et al., 2019). In this study, the ACE questionnaire helped examine the experiences of the Nigerian participants regarding their childhood trauma and abuse, which may later be related to their negative behaviors in adulthood. According to the CDC (2021), general text information, publications available for download, and graphs developed by CDC and presented on CDC’s website are works of the United States Government and are in the public domain. Published content such as surveys and questionnaires are meant for public use and are not subject to copyright law protections (see Appendix H and I). Permission is not required for
the use of public domain items. Therefore, ACEs questionnaires were administered electronically online using Qualtrics to the participants in a controlled environment, and they were submitted after completion.

**Interviews**

Creswell and Poth (2018) described interviews as a key function of data collection in a qualitative study. The interview is the primary means of data collection in phenomenological qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In an interview, qualitative research presents open-ended questions to the participant, who answers based on their lived experiences. Individual interviews using open-ended questions focused on the phenomenon are the most targeted way to collect data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The questions asked sought to gain childhood experiences and trauma while under the age of 18. In addition to asking participants to share specific experiences, questions were asked regarding behavioral and cognitive functions to gain insight into the trauma’s impacts on their adulthood. Individual interviews were conducted and recorded via Microsoft Teams and were limited to 60 minutes. Participants were provided a copy of their transcribed interview for accuracy check and member checking. The following interview questions were developed as part of the data collection process (see Appendix F):

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. In what way do you identify with the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria?
3. Describe your childhood.
4. Describe details regarding your parent’s marital status.
5. How would you describe the location and community in which you grew up?
6. How many siblings did you have growing up?
7. Describe the role of your parents in the household.
8. Describe how your needs were met as a child.

9. What needs would you say were unmet during your childhood?

10. Describe events that were not so pleasing during your childhood.

11. Describe your responsibilities during childhood.

12. How would you describe the way you were disciplined as a child?

13. Describe the mode of punishment for actions that were displeasing to your parents, guardians, and/or family members.

14. Knowing how other cultures raise children, describe your feelings regarding how you were raised and how you felt about your childhood.

15. What traumatic experience did you face as a child?

16. Describe the physical, emotional, and mental impact the experienced trauma had on you.

17. Describe your current mental health status and well-being.

18. How would you say your childhood impacted your current mental health status?

19. What other factors do you think impacted your current mental health status?

20. As indicated by the results of the ACEs questionnaire, you currently have a high/moderate level of ACEs. What do you feel was the most childhood trauma that contributed to this?

21. Describe two occasions where you believe you were misunderstood by someone from the American culture.

22. How do you think your behavior and attitude are viewed by Americans?

23. Is there anything else you would like to add?

24. May I contact you if I have further questions and/or need clarification?
Research participants may be triggered throughout the data collection process, specifically during the interview. Upon discovering a participant’s discomfort, the participant was given the option to end the interview and referred to a free mental health support hotline that offers 24-hour professional support.

**Journals**

In addition to interviewing participants, Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended journaling as another form of data collection. Creswell and Poth (2018) noted that document review is generally used to supplement interviews. In this study, a journal was utilized to provide an additional data source, one that allowed participants extended time to consider the questions and their responses, time they may not have been given or may not take in an interview. Participants were asked to keep a journal of daily experiences and how it relates to their childhood. Participants were also provided three journal prompts (see Appendix G) relating to the trauma suffered. As thoughts or memories surfaced, participants annotated them in their journals. The journal was collected after a month for analysis and assessment.

Participants were provided the following journal prompts at the beginning of the data collection process: (1) Briefly describe the trauma you suffered as a child, (2) discuss the impact of that trauma on you at the time and now, and (3) explore what factors or aspects of your life enabled you to become successful despite the trauma. Please be specific and detailed in your responses. The journals provided an opportunity to capture details of participants’ experiences, feelings, and revelations. The journal insights provided a richer, more detailed, and more reflective view of the participants’ lived experiences.
Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted following the analysis approach proposed by Moustakas (1994). This “highly structured approach to analysis” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 187) includes the following steps: (a) identification of significant statements, (b) development of meaning units, (c) clustering of themes, and (d) advancement of textual and structural descriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These steps were followed to analyze the participants’ interview transcripts and journal entries. Their responses to the ACEs survey were also used to supplement the analysis.

As the first step, significant and relevant statements made by the participants during their interviews or written by them in their journals were noted. These statements included references to any key events or experiences the participants had during their childhood and the impacts of these experiences during their adult life. In the second step, the significant statements identified were cross-referenced with the participants’ ACEs survey responses to formulate meaningful units, where each unit comprised the key takeaway points of related statements. These developed meanings were grouped into common themes across all participant transcripts, journal entries, and survey responses as the third step. During this process, the lived childhood trauma experiences of the participants were explored and shared. Finally, in the fourth step, the essence of the phenomenon, childhood trauma, and/or childhood experience was shared in composite text. The commonalities between essence and experiences, such as various forms of abuse, were structured and described.

Trustworthiness

As cited in Elo et al. (2014), the aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative research approach is to support the argument that the research results are of significant importance (Lincoln et al.,
The components of trustworthiness include credibility, dependability, and transferability (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The trustworthiness forms used in this study included member checking, triangulation, and transferability.

**Credibility**

Member checking is a known tool for validating the credibility of data results (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Collected data were returned to participants to check for accuracy and verify their shared experience. Member checking increases reliability by providing participants with direct and immediate feedback regarding shared information. Members reviewed transcribed interview questions and answers, journals, and responses to the questionnaire administered for proper interpretation and analysis.

**Dependability and Confirmability**

Another form of trustworthiness that will be used is triangulation. Triangulation is utilizing numerous techniques or information in qualitative research to foster a thorough comprehension of phenomena (Patton, 1999). Triangulation tests the validity of data from various sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Triangulation increases reliability by comparing notes, interviews, and journals for similarities and differences in developing themes related to the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

**Transferability**

As cited in Elo et al. (2014), the transferability of a study signifies the extent to which the study findings can be applied in other settings or groups. While this research study applies to a specific group, the phenomenon studied is well-known. ACEs apply to humankind all over the world. ACEs are not limited to a specific cultural group as verified in the literature; therefore, the
resulting impact of trauma endured during childhood affects various groups that can be repeatedly verified.

**Ethical Considerations**

The research investigated the past and lived experiences of adults that endured adverse experiences. As a result, volunteer participants remained confidential through the use of pseudonyms. The information gained through questionnaires, interviews, and journals were kept secure using access controls and password protection. As Creswell and Poth (2018) offered, all documents were kept secure in a controlled environment. Data collection began after Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study, including the approval to use human subjects (see Appendix J). All forms of electronic data are kept on a computer that only the individual conducting the study can access.

**Summary**

Creswell and Poth (2018) shared that when identifying a phenomenon, the “object of human experience” is key (p. 75). In a phenomenological approach, the central phenomenon or primary focus of purpose must be chosen. Therefore, the transcendental phenomenological approach was implemented using adverse childhood events as the phenomenon. The phenomenological research approach is right for this study as it allows data collection through interviews with participants who have experienced a difficult and/or traumatic childhood (abuse, poverty, neglect, war, etc.). The participants’ experiences were then interpreted to understand how they contributed to negative behaviors in adulthood. The setting of this study was a local church in central Maryland, 95% of whose members are Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe. A minimum of 10 participants between the ages of 18 and 65 were recruited from this church for participation in the study. A demographic survey, the 10-item ACE questionnaire, interviews,
and a one-month journal entry were used as the data sources. The qualitative data collected were analyzed following the approach proposed by Moustakas (1994) to address the identified problem and the developed research questions.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The fourth chapter of the study contains the findings from the analysis of the interviews with the 10 participants. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe with childhood trauma. To uncover potential root causes of these traumas, the trauma from ACEs and/or cultural factors that may have contributed to the negative adulthood aggressive behavior was explored. The central research question which guided this study was: How do adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affect the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in the United States? Based on the central research question, the following sub-questions were developed:

Sub-Question 1: How do members of the Yoruba tribe believe that the trauma from childhood impacted their adulthood?

Sub-Question 2: What are the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria?

Sub-Question 3. How does the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impact their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture?

In this chapter, the background of the 10 interviewed participants is described, the data analysis process applied in the study, the purpose of the study and the research questions which guided the study are discussed. The chapter's main focus focuses on the results of the analysis, where the verbatim responses of the participants are incorporated to support the findings. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary and an introduction to the fifth chapter.
Participants

Participants involved in this study included 10 Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe, living in the United States. The participants' ages ranged from 25-62 years old. Of the 10 participants, five were males, and five were females. The participants had varying careers and professions and had been in the U.S. in between eight and 46 years. Table 2 contains the demographics of the participants.

Table 2

Breakdown of the Participants’ Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality/Race</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Years in US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yasmin</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Construction Estimator</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Community Rehabilitation</td>
<td>46 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Home Daycare</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Correction Officer</td>
<td>27 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Maintenance Operator</td>
<td>42 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Self-employed; Engineer</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>41 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>26 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yasmin

Yasmin is a 25-year-old male who works in the publishing industry. Yasmin was born to conservative parents and lived in a neighborhood with adequate resources. Yasmin’s scored a 4 on the ACEs assessment. Yasmin’s ACEs score indicates a high risk of ACEs and childhood trauma, which can increase the risk of disease and social issues later in life. Yasmin shared how he witnessed and experienced fear at a young age seeing how his mother feared his father when their marriage fell apart. Yasmin is employed full time, but fears committing to having his own family due to his negative experiences during childhood.
Ahmed

Ahmed is a 45-year-old male construction estimator who has been in the United States for a decade. He was born and raised in Lagos and moved to Maryland at the age of 35-years old. Ahmed scored a 3 on the ACEs assessment. Ahmed’s ACEs score indicates a high risk of ACEs which can increase the risk of disease and social issues. Ahmed recalled having a happy and peaceful family, with his parents having a good relationship with one another. In terms of his childhood environment, he described living in a slum and having no choice but the stay there as they had limited financial resources. Due to the living conditions, he found studying and preparing for exams extra difficult as they had no water and electricity. He also added that he was exposed to actions and practices that he did not realize were sexual abuses due to their culture.

Pamela

Pamela is a 39-year-old self-employed female who has been in the U.S. for 15 years. Pamela scored a 5 on the ACEs assessment indicating a significantly high risk of ACEs and childhood trauma, which can increase disease and social issues in adulthood. Pamela found her parents to be strict when she was younger. She shared how her mother would discipline her even for the smallest things she did. Due to many traumatic incidents and experiences, she described her childhood as fearful. She added that such an environment was due to their culture.

Emily

Emily a 59-year-old female who is part of a community rehabilitation specialist for a Catholic charity. Emily scored a 4 on the ACEs assessment. Emily’s ACEs score indicates a high risk of ACEs which can increase the risk of disease and social issues. She has been in the U.S. since 1975, and she described living in the U.S. as "nice and beautiful." When asked about her
culture, she identified it as "one of the most beautiful cultures to ever exist in the world." For her, the Yoruba culture is founded on family and unity. She also found her childhood in Nigeria "pleasant."

**Mary**

Mary is a 61-year-old businesswoman from Nigeria who relocated and has been living in the United States for several years. Mary scored a 4 on the ACEs assessment. Mary’s ACEs score indicates a high risk of ACEs which can increase the risk of disease and social issues. She currently runs a home daycare in Texas. She got married 38 years ago, but her husband passed away 12 years ago and described life as "not easy" due to her background. During the interview, she admitted that her upbringing was difficult and that she experienced trauma at a young age.

**Michelle**

Michelle is a 58-year-old Nigerian female. She is a correction officer who has been living in the United States for 27 years. Michelle scored a 5 on the ACEs assessment, indicating a significantly high risk of ACEs that can increase the risk of disease and social issues. Michelle is married with one child. As part of the Yoruba tribe, she discussed how her childhood was a mixture of good and bad experiences. She highlighted how she could recall her rough experiences stemming from how her Nigerian parents disciplined her. She added how such practices are forms of discipline, not abuse in their culture.

**Peter**

Peter is a 62-year-old boiler technician maintenance operator; he has been in the United States for over 42 years. Peter had obtained a Master's degree at Brooklyn College, specializing in finance and economics. When asked about his childhood, he defined it as "very secured" while also sharing a substantial understanding of the culture following the Yoruba line tradition.
Coming from a well-educated and financially secure family, this participant was well-disciplined and respected their traditions greatly. Peter scored a 3 on the ACEs assessment. Peter’s ACEs score indicates a high risk of ACEs which can increase the risk of disease and social issues.

Simon

Simon is a 45-year-old male Engineer. Simon was born and raised in a Christian home and identified himself as a part of the Yoruba tribe and community his whole life. Growing up in a small neighborhood in Nigeria, he found himself in a peaceful and well-disciplined community. He shared how his family members were friendly and everyone accommodated one another as part of a Christian community. Simon scored a 4 on the ACEs assessment. Simon’s ACEs score indicates a high risk of ACEs, increasing the risk of disease and social issues.

Stephanie

Stephanie: a 52-year-old female who has been in the U.S. for more than four decades. Stephanie strongly identified with the Yoruba culture, noting how she knows her culture, language, food, and music. In her younger years, she vividly remembered her mother's partner who displayed violent actions, used foul language, and even sexually touched her. She also expressed how her mother supported this partner. Stephanie scored a 4 on the ACEs assessment. Stephanie’s ACEs score indicates a high risk of ACEs exposure during childhood, which increases the risk of disease and social issues in adulthood.

Tiffany

Tiffany is a 42-year-old female pharmacist in the U.S. for 26 years. Tiffany described her culture and background as being found in education and discipline. She also noted how she was raised in a religious and prayerful family with a good childhood and supportive parents. Tiffany
scored a 4 on the ACEs assessment. Tiffany’s ACEs score indicates exposure to ACEs during childhood which can increase the risk of disease and social issues in her adulthood.

**Results**

The personal lived experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe exhibiting ACEs formed and are presented in the Theme Development and Research Questions Responses sections. From the analysis and with the help of NVivo12, a total of 26 themes were uncovered. Upon completing the analysis of the interviews, the main and sub-research questions of the study were addressed. The main research question of how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affect the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in the United States was answered through the themes uncovered from the three sub-research questions.

**Theme Development**

The themes that emerged from the interviews were categorized based on the hierarchy or significance of the themes. The themes with the most participant references per research question were considered the major themes or the study’s most significant findings. Other themes were named as the minor themes or the other vital findings with fewer references than the major themes. Finally, subthemes were incorporated to present the examples or details under the major and minor themes. Table 3 shows the number of themes generated per sub-research question.

**Table 3**

*Breakdown of the Number of Themes Per Sub-Research Question*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Research Question</th>
<th>Thematic Category</th>
<th>Number of Major Themes</th>
<th>Number of Minor Themes</th>
<th>Number of Subthemes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRQ1</td>
<td>Thematic Category 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRQ1</td>
<td>Thematic Category 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRQ2</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRQ3</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When asked about how members of the Yoruba tribe believe that the trauma from childhood impacted their adulthood, it was first determined the kinds of traumas experienced and discussed how such traumas affected them as they grew older. From the analysis, it was found that most participants experienced different types of abuse (physical, sexual, and verbal) and experienced punishments as forms of discipline (physical, no food, no sleep, etc.). As a result of the trauma, most participants realized the importance of their Faith in God and continued living their lives despite their sufferings. The same number of participants also noted how they have become more cautious of the people around them. Upon exploring the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria, the same participants believed that the aggressive behaviors stem from their great emphasis on harsh discipline, blurring the boundaries between discipline and abuse. Finally, when asked about how the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impacts their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture, the participants had varying responses. The participants highlighted how despite the differences, they have learned to respect the norms and values of other cultures. Table 4 contains the complete breakdown of the study themes in response to all research questions.
### Table 4

**Breakdown of the Study Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Research Questions</th>
<th>Thematic Category</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Number of References</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRQ1. How do members of the Yoruba tribe believe that the trauma from childhood impacted their adulthood?</td>
<td>TC1. The traumas experienced</td>
<td>Experiencing different types of abuse *Being physically abused *Being sexually abused *Being verbally abused</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experiencing punishments as forms of discipline (physical, no food, no sleep, etc.)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Developing fear from the aggressive behaviors of the father</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Having the responsibilities of an adult at a very young age</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lacking financial resources to pursue goals and desires</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Living in a violent community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TC2. How the ACES impacted the participants</td>
<td>Realizing the importance of Faith in God</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Becoming more cautious of people around them</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Becoming more disciplined and responsible</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trying one's best to not emulate the actions and practices of parents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Becoming stronger amidst issues and struggles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRQ2. What are the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria?</td>
<td>Placing great emphasis on harsh discipline *Having unclear boundaries between discipline and abuse</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Upholding a masculine culture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lacking awareness and education of what is right or wrong</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRQ3. How does the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impact their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture?</td>
<td>Developing respect for the norms and values of other cultures</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experiencing issues due to language barrier</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being unfamiliar with seeking mental health help from professionals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Witnessing how Black Americans have experienced success</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Subtheme/s*
Thematic Category 1. The Traumas Experienced

The first thematic category discussed the traumas experienced by the participants. It is important to discuss these traumatic experiences of the participants to understand the stories they will be sharing about the phenomenon in the latter sections of the study. The themes are also supported by the participants’ verbatim responses to demonstrate that they were extracted from the participant interview answers and not the individual or personal perceptions. Each of the themes is discussed below.

Experiencing different types of abuse.

The first major theme of the study reported the experiences of nine of the 10 participants, noting how they have already suffered from different types of abuse at a young age. The participants detailed how they were physically, sexually, and verbally abused by their parents and some members of their community. Each subtheme is discussed below.

Subtheme 1: Being physically abused. The most common type of abuse shared by the participants during the interviews was physical abuse. Ahmed grew up in poverty and experienced different types of traumatic experiences. As an example, Ahmed narrated that there were actions by his mother that made him “dislike” her. This participant painfully recalled how his mother almost fractured his skull from being hit with the buckle or metal of the belt. Ahmed shared how this was an unforgettable experience that changed his view of and relationship with his mother, saying:

She now said that she remembers very well because immediately she, you know, she wanted to use the latter part, but then the buckle part of it, the metal part of it, it might have hit me, that she nearly fainted, that she thought she had, you know, fractured my skull. You know, scratching my head, I then stood up and was crying and didn't say
anything. So, she said OK, she now uses what we call, but you know, strong mind, at all.

Nothing. But she felt sad bad though in her heart. But that day, that thing was a very, it made me, I will never forget. It made me, let me not say hate, but dislike, my mom more that time.

Furthermore, Pamela echoed Ahmed’s experience sharing how her mother beat her up with things she could not imagine could be used to discipline a child. During this time, Pamela noted how the physical abuses made her think that her parents “hated” her, stating the following:

My mom had beaten me with things that I never even knew you could beat children with… During the punishment, I almost felt as if my parents hated me. I didn’t care that they provided.

Meanwhile, Emily shared how her father beat her up due to false information and accusations of a man she did not know. Emily stated how her father and her mother beat her up; she described how this experience was the “most terrible time” of her life. Emily highlighted during the interview:

Uh, a friend called him and told him that I was meeting up with this guy. And I hated that man because he gave my father false information. And I hated him so much. I mean, it made, it made the two of them beat me up. They beat me up together. I was looking at like how; my eyes were so red, and they were bleeding. And it was so terrible. And now it's a terrible time in my life. I would never forget it. I tried to forget it, but I just, I just, I just. Let me just say: I am trying not to forgive them; I forgive them. I forgive them.

Mary recalled experiences where she was beaten up by two different family members. First, her sister forced her to eat pap, a Nigerian food, but Mary refused. When the pap arrived, she had to take it, and while eating, she vomited. Despite this, she was beaten up, and her sister used a razor
to cut her body. Mary narrated:

First, I don't take pap at all, right from my childhood. When I want to spend some time with her, she will want to force me to drink that pap. For me, I prefer not to even eat than giving me the pap. Once your drink comes, she will bring the razor, razor blade... She's such a... What will I... I don't want to call her a bad thing, but she's… She taunted me in a bad way, which till today, I can never forget. That's number one. She will force me to drink the pap. I will be vomiting. I'll be rolling on the floor, still beating me, using razor blade to touch my body and cut.

Another traumatizing experience happened when Mary’s sister asked her to make soup for her brother-in-law from 9 to 10 pm. Her sister would not ask politely but would even use a soldier boot to kick her and force her to follow her, recalling the following:

Then number two, there were times when the husband comes back from work. The husband was a soldier; he came at 9:00 or 10:00 at night. At night, I'll be sleeping. She will use that soldier boot to kick me on the foot, "Go and get him pèpè soup at Makola."

Aside from Mary’s traumatic experience with her sister, she also faced trauma from the younger wife of her father. She was accused of misbehaving and reported to her father, who “beat the hell out” of her and “sent her out of her house,” saying:

There was a time I quarreled with a younger wife of my father. You know, when a child is being pushed to the wall, you are bound to misbehave. So, when the woman reported me to my dad, he beat the hell out of me and sent me out of the house, like I had to go and sleep next door, the next house to our house.

Subtheme 2: Being sexually abused. The second type of abuse shared by the participants was sexual abuse. Aside from experiencing physical abuse, Ahmed recollected how
he was sexually abused when he was young without realizing it. Ahmed was exposed to older girls touching his private parts. At around four to six years old, he was being sexually abused by older women, saying:

You know now, like we said, when I now grew up, I now realize, you know, being exposed to, you know, those older girls that were, like, touching our bodies, you know, touching our private parts and all those stuff. Yes, those were, those were not good because they had effects later on one growing up. Because, you know, like I said, growing up as at that time, exactly when those older girls were like, you know, touching us take off our pants, touch our penises, and then use our hands to, you know, press their chests, their breasts, you know, then it was so, you know, for us, we are kids. I was four years old. I was five years old. I was six years old. It was like that within the span of years. So, I grew up. You know, but all those things were not good. They were, you know, they are all sexual abuses.

During the interview, Pamela shared her story of being sexually abused for the first time after the abuse happened. Although challenging, Pamela took the courage to recall her traumatic experience of being sexually abused by a man from the church back home. Pamela admitted that it was very challenging to share this story as she has always kept it inside her and avoided talking about it for years:

And there was this man, who knows? I don't know. Like he, he kept, I just know one time that, he said calmly, and he was in a public place where other people were around, so I just can't even imagine how he got away with this, thinking about it now, and I'm like, this was terrible.
Umm, but he said come, and then he was just talking to me. And next thing you know, his hands were rubbing my breasts. And he was just fondling my breasts around and around. And I think maybe someone must have seen it and said, why are you touching this child like this? Well, it's maybe just, to be honest, I can't even remember how this happened. Maybe my memory does not serve me properly because…

That is, how can a grown man who is in Nigeria want to fondle? Like, that's not something that exists in the culture. So, it's you, or I'll be scared that maybe the guy will turn the story around, saying that I am the one that was trying to advance or throw myself at him because Nigerian parents, they take the word of other people instead of their own children. They think their children are liars. So, I was just too scared to even tell any adult, how to keep that inside of me, even until today. This is the first time that I think I'm even sharing this story.

Lastly, Stephanie narrated how her stepfather sexually abused her. An example she noted during the interview was her stepfather touching children and using the bathroom, although he knew she was inside taking a shower. The participant stated:

I don't know if I'll call him a pedophile, but yeah, he was a… He likes to touch children. I'll use myself as an example. Let's say I'm in the shower. That's the time he needs to use the bathroom. We live in an apartment building. I mean an apartment with two bedrooms. So, it was one bathroom. He only wants to use the restroom whenever one of the girls is taking a shower.

At the same time, in her journal, she noted how sexual abuse at a young age continue to impact her and haunt her until today. She shared how the sexual abuse had led her to have trust issues but is also working very hard to recover and understand herself better, writing:
A traumatic experience that happened as a young person that has affected me then and still does now is being touched inappropriately and without consent, it has made me hypersensitive and hyper-vigilant, also made me a person with trust issues, listening to videos and reading books written by people that went through similar experiences has helped a lot. I’ve come to realized that some of the things I do is as a result of the things that happened to me and not necessarily who I am.

**Subtheme 3: Being verbally abused.** The last type of abuse that a participant experienced was verbal abuse. Stephanie shared that she would hear hurtful words and insults from her mother and stepfather, saying she grew up with “Verbal abuse. With a lot of insults.”

*Experiencing punishments as forms of discipline (physical, no food, no sleep, etc.).*

The second major theme reported the different punishments the nine participants received when they were young, noting that these were forms of discipline in their culture. Some examples included physical punishments; they were not allowed to eat or sleep when they made mistakes. Tiffany called their punishments “corporal punishments,” where they were beaten with canes and wires in their younger years. Tiffany narrated:

- I don't know, like, what they could call corporal punishment when you get beaten. Well, you're spanked with canes and wires and all that. Yeah, that was it for us. We were; it was physical punishment. You know, my mom, especially had canes, we had wires. We had what they call koboko at one point, which we threw away. But yes, that was a type of punishment we got. Punishments like the most common one was you get; you know, you get beaten beat, you get, you get spanked.

Ahmed shared similar punishment memories as the other participants, describing them as the “worst.” Ahmed had physical punishments, highlighting the following:
I've never experienced before in my life. That's the worst one. But most of the time, it is always. They will tell us like to the punisher, like stool down, stool down, in terms of you put one finger on the floor, you raise one of your legs. So that, that one or you do frog jumps or you know they put you, lay your butts on that, they say hold something, and they smack your bum.

Emily recalled how her mother would have a stick ready while they were eating. The stick is always there, and one mistake could lead to punishment, noting how her mother would lash her using the said stick. Emily shared:

All your food is ready, and she will leave you in the room, and she will have her egba ready. That's the stick. So, she will watch. She will watch. She will have the stick ready, and right after, she closes the [door]. You just hear the door close behind you. And there’s she and you in the room. There you go. Your punishment, she will lash you.

Michelle explained how Nigerians have very different perceptions of discipline and abuse.

Michelle admitted that punishments could be rough, but these are the parents’ and teachers’ ways of ensuring they are raised well and disciplined enough. Michelle narrated during the interview:

Sometimes life is not balanced anyway. But sometimes it was good, sometimes it was fun, but sometimes it was rough. Nigerian parents, they discipline their children. Not abuse. We don't call it abuse; we call it discipline. So, when you do something, something that you can get away with over here, you don't get away with it in Nigeria. Even at the school level, when you go to school, you do something over here, they will call your parents, call the teachers. But in Nigeria, they will discipline you themselves. They will lay you down and give you strokes of the cane. They might give you 10 strokes
of the cane at your butt. So that was rough. They might punish you for lying to them.

Yes, that was rough.

Finally, Pamela developed hate from the physical abuse of her mother. In her personal journal, her childhood trauma of being harshly disciplined by his mother resulted in wanting to leave her home at a young age and never return. Pamela wrote:

The childhood trauma experienced was the thought of hate felt by my mother due to the harsh discipline methods. When being disciplined due to not completing chores, I would be beaten with a belt and sometimes be subjected to an uncomfortable position for an hour. The next day or two my body would be sore due to the punishment.

The impact of the trauma then made me hate my mother. I couldn’t wait to leave home and never look back; however, I have learned to forgive and move past the hurt. I also feel that the trauma endured caused me to be timid and more reclusive than I’d like to be.

I wish to be bolder and more assertive.

**Subtheme 1: Developing fear from the aggressive behaviors of the father.** One minor theme that emerged was the development of fear from the aggressive and violent behaviors of the five participants’ fathers. Emily highlighted during the interview that she did not enjoy home when her parents were there, especially her father. Emily described how:

I enjoyed them not being at home, really. I enjoyed them not being home. I enjoyed, then, being alone by myself because when they get home, it was always some kind of trouble, one you didn’t do this, you didn’t do that. You didn’t do this. You didn’t do that. You never. I really never knew where they would come at me, especially my dad. My mom, on the other hand, was more peaceful to stay with whenever she was home.
Uh, she's usually typing. She's usually doing her own homework, so I guess that's why it's much better for me when she's at home, and I'm at peace when she was at home, and I was at home, she minded her business, and I minded my business. I would just do my homework. When my dad came home, on the other hand, that was a different thing. Meanwhile, Mary commented how her father was not a good example growing up, saying: “Yeah, because my father did not... he wouldn’t build a good home. He did not lay a good example. Nothing to emulate, nothing good to emulate with that kind of setting. So already, it was a trauma.” Mary’s father failed to provide a positive and nurturing environment at home. His behavior and actions were not worthy of being imitated or followed. The lack of a good role model in her early life had a lasting impact on her well-being and outlook.

**Thematic Category 2. How the ACES Impacted the Participants**

The second thematic category discussed the impacts of the traumatic experiences shared by the participants in the first thematic category. The themes under this category are representations of how much the traumatic experiences changed the participants’ lives even after many years have passed. Each of the themes is discussed in detail below.

**Realizing the importance of Faith in God**

The third major theme was the lived experience of six of the 10 participants. The traumas caused them to develop and realize the value of their relationship with God. This theme highlights the significant role that faith and religion play in the lives of the members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. Based on Ahmed’s experience, accepting Jesus in his life and creating a solid relationship with God changed his life. The changes include his perceptions about his past struggles and traumatic experiences.
Accepting Jesus in my life and walking with God has made me, I would say, changed everything for me, to be honest, because I've learned to, you know, forgive every action, every deed, so, and then also, and I did. I started that journey at a young age also while I was in high school.

Pamela was grateful for discovering God and having a strong foundation and religious background. For Pamela, she was able to forgive and move past her experiences because she firmly believed in God and listened to His words and teachings, saying:

You know, I'm thankful because God is good, and I know that Nigerians truly believe in serving God. They have a strong background in religion. That is, like, what keeps everyone going, I suppose. I couldn't go, even with everything that had happened; I felt like I wanted to disown my mom. I didn't want to have anything to do with her once I left the house, but because God lives inside of me, I chose forgiveness, and I chose to just move on. Like I said before, if it wasn't for God, I don't know how I would even be able to go through this right now.

Similarly, Emily also shared how with God, she could forgive the traumatic abuses of her father. Further, she explained how she could cope and manage her traumas and life struggles better with her strong faith. Emily stated:

I trust God more because I bury myself in, in work and school and because, eventually, I know God from the day they introduced, my mother introduced me to God. My dad was an atheist at that time. But later on, he found God, when they, upon them arriving back in Nigeria. A lot of people in the church appreciate him. They appreciated what he did. But thank God, I forgive them. I forgave them. There is power in forgiveness. So that was a
traumatic experience that I ever had in my life. I found God. I, I've always been introduced to God. And I have a relationship with God, so that comes first. I'm able to deal with even more traumatic stuff in my life right now. Because of my relationship with Christ, I'm able to tolerate. Really, having him as your source.

Similarly, in his journal, Peter acknowledged the role of his relationship with God and how such relationship helped him move past the hurt and traumas, writing:

I think the primary factor that enabled me to become successful is my relationship with God. Placing my trust in him helped me move past the trauma and hurt. I experienced emotional healing and still do as I progress through life’s struggles.

Lastly, Simon also found God in the process. Simon is 45 years old and serves as a church worker. His faith in God allowed him to create a better life, move beyond his traumatic past, and create a new and better life for his family. Simon shared:

Today, I'm a Christian. I'm a 45-year-old man. I have so many things that bring joy to me, and I'm functioning in my head. I'm okay. I am hundred percent feel okay. I have a child, a good wife, and a lovely family. So today, I am supposed to do many things that bring joy to my life. I'm working as a church worker, a prophet of God, and then I have a group in the church. I do my part in the church. I still do my part in the world. I teach my family the word of God.

Simon found happiness and contentment in his life. He identifies as a Christian and enjoys many things that bring him joy. He feels mentally well and is satisfied with his life. Additionally, he continues to contribute positively to the world and is responsible for teaching his family about the word of God.
Becoming more cautious of people around them.

The fourth major theme of the study revealed the impact of trauma, where six of the 10 participants have become more cautious of the people around them. Pamela admitted that she greatly distrusted people due to her past traumas and the abuses she received, even from the closest people around her. The participant explained how:

I just don't trust anymore. And whenever I get close to someone, I think framed. They always end up; just, I feel like they end up stabbing me in the back or they take advantage of you, and then, you know, I go back to my cocoon where you know, I'm like when now I have attempted to trust someone, and then they now prove that they cannot be trusted.

Peter described the different feelings and emotions he would develop when remembering his traumatic past. For Peter, life continues to be difficult, especially when he recalls his younger years, saying:

Well, it makes me sometimes jittery, and sometimes I'm afraid. It's just about when I look back and have some reflections on what happened when I was a kid. I kind of have a flashback, and I feel, sometimes goose pimples because I had that experience. When I see such events happen or similar events happen, it gives me some reflection of what happened when I was a teenager, when I was a kid. And it has a little bit of fear. It gives me fear, and it gives me what you call flight or fight syndrome, where either I can stay and fight it, or I just live the same. And that is a very traumatic experience that I had.

Finally, Stephanie simply commented how she: “Always have to watch out. I'm extremely guarded. You know, I don't trust grown-ups, especially men, even after now.” In his personal journal, Yasmin admitted that he has struggled to navigate romantic relationships due to emotional vulnerability. He added how he needs to improve his ability to trust others, writing:
As I turn the corner into early adulthood and begin navigating romantic relationships of my own, I often struggle with displaying emotional vulnerability. I have yet to develop consistent trust that my bearing my feelings or ideas will not result in some sort of ridicule or shame. Emotionally I am not close with either of my parents and often view my relationships with both of them as obligation rather than something dynamic to be explored and strengthened. I am currently uncertain about my own desire to have a family.

Placing great emphasis on harsh discipline.

The fifth major theme of the study reported the significant emphasis of the members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria on harsh discipline to ensure that their children are raised as they should be. A fundamental problem with this mindset was the development of unclear boundaries between discipline and abuse. Tiffany admitted that the Nigerian way of raising children is unique and different. Tiffany commented: "The Nigerian way of raising kids, but not to the extent of the way I was raised. It was a little bit too much, but as far as instilling discipline, values, respect, and things like that, yes."

Similarly, Ahmed added: "But you know, sometimes things are misunderstood, so you feel, and this punishment doesn't warrant, you know this thing I committed. It has always been like it never outweighs each other." Michelle narrated how although disciplining the children was rough, the Nigerian parents' actions were for their children's welfare and future. The participant believed that:

Okay. Sometimes life is not balanced anyway. But sometimes it was good, sometimes it was fun, but sometimes it was rough. Nigerian parents, they discipline their children. Not abuse. We don't call it abuse; we call it discipline. So, when you do something,
something that you can get away with over here, you don't get away with it in Nigeria.

Even at the school level, when you go to school, you do something over here, they will call you, call you, the teachers. But in Nigeria, they will discipline you themselves. They will lay you down and give you strokes of the cane. They might give you 10 strokes of the cane at your butt. So that was rough. They might punish you for lying down to them. Yes, that was rough. No, not that I know of. The only thing that we say is that when they discipline you, they would think it's abuse, but it is discipline in Nigerian terms.

For Peter, the Yoruba tradition follows a unique way of disciplining their children. Like Michelle, Peter also believed that such punishments and disciplines were their parents’ ways of showing that they love and care for their children. He also admitted that despite the good intentions, this culture or tradition is harsh, and children get hurt in the process, saying:

It's something like that; that's what most Yoruba traditions always do. They say, "If you do good to me as your dad or your mom, good will follow you. And if you are bad, well, remember that you're going to have kids, and the kids will do the same." So, stuff that the traditional Yoruba culture is. But at the end of the day, they really love you. They actually want to be you to be the best and for you to go forward in life, not to be a bad person.

As we come from the family of the Yoruba group, the discipline is harsh. We were actually flogged. When you misbehaved or when you do something contrary to the norms of the family, my dad will pull out a belt, and we were really flogged. That's what he does. And we cry, sometimes you cry, and the more you cry, the more whip you get. And also, there's other forms of punishment. You can be deprived of certain luxuries or certain food that you were supposed to have, and they will say, "Well, today you're not
going to have this food." Let's say example, that when the family had on weekends, they cook some rice or stew or they love rice as Nigerians. Because of what you did, you might be limited to that, or you might not be able to get that. You probably pass it on to your older brother or your younger sister. So those are the form of punishment, but we were actually being whipped.

Well, I've seen people get hurt. I assume my dad hit my sister. There's nothing you can do. And also, I've seen, when I was a kid, sometimes we go out to a party. I've seen people get hurt. They always fight, fight over the issue of either food or fight over your friend or your friends have had a fight. It's called a group fight. We have to take a side, and people get hurt.

Again, Simon shared the same belief as Michelle and Peter. For Simon, these disciplining practices allowed him to become who he is today. Simon explained how he only realized this later on, saying:

The only thing that contributes to my... is the discipline that my father gives to me. This father, they all think it's not equal. But I can tell that my father gets me, and he makes me think and make me realize that the world is not complete. So then, teach me the way I am today to know how much you have to be disciplined yourself, no matter the condition or moral situation. You have to be disciplined yourself. And I think it helped me to date.

Lastly, Tiffany commented: “Punishments like the most common one was you get; you know, you get beaten beat, you get, you get spanked.” Tiffany describes the common form of punishment experienced, which involved physical discipline. She was subjected to beatings and spankings as a means of correction or punishment.
Minor Theme 1: Developing respect for the norms and values of other cultures. The first minor theme that emerged from the analysis of the responses related to the third sub-research question was the development of respect for other cultures. Emily, keeping the traditions and practices of her own culture in mind, has since realized the need to respect and understand the practices and beliefs of others, saying:

Come to terms with it, and they decided to launch the dawn on me, so my culture, I appreciate my culture. Other people's cultures, I respect. I come to terms with whatever it is that they do, but it doesn't mean that I have to accept it as my own because that's not my own culture.

Meanwhile, Michelle shared that although the Yoruba and American cultures are extremely different, it is important to remain respectful and accepting of diversity. The participant emphasized during the interview that:

They are more respectful in Yoruba culture than here. You understand? But still, over here in America, they still respect you. Yeah. They respect you. If you do the right thing, they will respect you and your attitude is right. If your attitude is something else, if it's bad, America will not hesitate to tell you right away. They don't keep it, right?

In his personal journal, Yasmin expressed how his education helped him become successful and understand the differences between people. He noted how he has since become an open-minded and understanding individual, writing:

Grounding in core values of education, hard work, and determination were key factors that have enabled me to find success as a young adult. I was immensely fortunate to have attended some of the best public schools in the United States. Though we did not grow up rich, the relative privilege of growing up in New York with free or low-cost access to its
wealth of institutions and cultural centers resulted in my having an open-minded approach to the world and people around me.

Yasmin highlights the importance of core values such as education, hard work, and determination in his journey to success as a young adult. Despite not coming from a wealthy background, he was fortunate to attend excellent public schools in the United States. Growing up in New York provided him access to various cultural centers and institutions, which fostered an open-minded perspective toward the world and the people they encountered.

**Research Question Responses**

The answers to the research questions that guided the study are provided here, using the themes and subthemes from the data analysis. The central research question guiding this study is:

How do adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affect the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in the United States? Based on the central research question, the following sub-questions were developed and framed the study:

Sub-Question 1: How do members of the Yoruba tribe believe that the trauma from childhood impacted their adulthood?

Sub-Question 2: What are the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria?

Sub-Question 3: How does the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impact their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture?

**Sub-Question 1**

The first sub-research question asked how members of the Yoruba tribe believe that the trauma from childhood impacted their adulthood. From the analysis and the lived experiences of the participants, the majority of the participants shared different types of abuse, such as physical,
sexual, and verbal abuse. At the same time, the same number of participants experienced punishments as forms of discipline (physical, no food, no sleep, etc.). Five participants reported that they developed fear from the aggressive behaviors of the father. Three other minor themes followed but with limited references, and further research is needed to solidify these themes' credibility. The three experiences were developing traumas as they had the responsibilities of an adult at a very young age, lacked financial resources to pursue goals and desires, and lived in a violent community. Table 5 contains the breakdown of the themes in response to the first sub-research question.

**Table 5**

*Breakdown of the Study Themes Addressing SRQ1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Research Questions</th>
<th>Thematic Category</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Number of References</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRQ1. How do members of the Yoruba tribe believe that the trauma from childhood impacted their adulthood?</td>
<td>TC1. The traumas experienced</td>
<td>Experiencing different types of abuse *Being physically abused *Being sexually abused *Being verbally abused</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experiencing punishments as forms of discipline (physical, no food, no sleep, etc.)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Developing fear from the aggressive behaviors of the father</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Having the responsibilities of an adult at a very young age</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lacking financial resources to pursue goals and desires</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Living in a violent community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TC2. How the ACES impacted the participants</td>
<td>Realizing the importance of Faith in God</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Becoming more cautious of people around them</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Becoming more disciplined and responsible</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trying one's best to not emulate the actions and practices of parents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Becoming stronger amidst issues and struggles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sub-Question 2

The second sub-research question of the study explored the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. The analysis revealed that members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria place great importance on disciplining young children without regard to harshness or the idea of abuse. Two other minor themes followed but with limited participant references. The two themes needing further research were: upholding a masculine culture and lacking awareness and education of what is right or wrong. Table 6 displays the themes in response to the second sub-research question.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown of the Study Themes Addressing SRQ2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Research Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRQ2. What are the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria?</td>
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Sub-Question 3

The third sub-research question inquired about how the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impacts their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture. The analysis of the participants’ responses resulted in minor themes as they shared varying perceptions and experiences about the phenomenon. All minor themes uncovered under this sub-research question may need further research and exploration. The experiences included: developing respect for the norms and values of other cultures; being unfamiliar with seeking mental health help from professionals; witnessing how Black Americans have experienced
success; and experiencing issues due to the language barrier. Table 7 contains the themes addressing the final sub-research question.

Table 7

Breakdown of the Study Themes Addressing SRQ3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Research Questions</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Number of References</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRQ3. How does the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impact their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture?</td>
<td>Developing respect for the norms and values of other cultures</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experiencing issues due to language barrier</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being unfamiliar with seeking mental health help from professionals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Witnessing how Black Americans have experienced success</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

The fourth chapter of the study contained the themes uncovered from the analysis of the lived experiences of the 10 participants interviewed for the study. This phenomenological study aimed to explore the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe with childhood trauma. To uncover the root cause, the trauma from ACEs and/or cultural factors that may have contributed to the negative adulthood aggressive behavior was explored. From the analysis and with the help of NVivo12, a total of 26 themes were uncovered. In the final chapter, these themes are discussed with respect to the previously discussed literature. The research's recommendations, implications, and conclusions are also presented.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

This phenomenological study aimed to explore the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe with childhood trauma. To identify the root causes of negative, aggressive behavior in adulthood, the possible contributions of trauma from ACEs and cultural were explored. Several methods were used for data collection, including a demographic survey (see Appendix A), the ACEs questionnaire (see Appendix B), interviews, and a one-month journal entry. The study topic is relevant to the Yoruba population and the communities where they are concentrated. Identifying the underlying causes of aggressive behavior in adulthood could pave the way for effective treatment and foster a more cohesive society. Ultimately, the findings of this study could help inform the development of more effective treatment strategies for those struggling with negative, aggressive behavior. The study highlighted the importance of understanding the root causes of negative, aggressive behavior in adulthood. The aim was to shed light on this complex issue by exploring the possible contributions of childhood trauma and cultural factors.

The preceding chapter presented the outcomes of this phenomenological study, which included an examination of the interviews conducted. The analysis provided a detailed account of the lived experiences of the 10 participants in the study. Using NVivo12, a total of 26 themes were identified (see Appendix K). This chapter discusses the themes with regard to the literature previously discussed and how the themes answered the research questions. This chapter also offers suggestions, implications, and conclusions of the study.
Summary of Findings

This study investigated how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) impact members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians residing in the United States. Several themes emerged through three sub-research questions that addressed the central research question. One of the thematic categories revealed the effects of the traumatic experiences shared by the participants, shedding light on how ACEs affect the Yoruba tribe in the United States. The themes within this category highlighted the lasting impact of the traumatic experiences, including various forms of abuse and punishment used as disciplinary measures. The participants' traumas led them to develop a stronger relationship with God and increased vigilance toward those around them. The interviews indicated that three participants developed traumas as they had the responsibilities of an adult at a very young age, lacked financial resources to pursue goals and desires, and lived in a violent community. The study was also guided by one central question and three sub-questions.

Sub-Question 1

The first sub-question was: How do members of the Yoruba tribe believe that the trauma from childhood impacted their adulthood? The participants in this study shared different types of abuse, such as physical, sexual, and verbal abuse, and punishments in the form of discipline. Five of the participants also reported they developed fear from the aggressive behaviors of the father.

Sub-Question 2

The second sub-question asked: What are the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria? From the analysis, the second sub-question was answered with the participants citing that members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria placed great importance on disciplining young children without regard to harshness or the idea of abuse, upholding a masculine culture, and lacking awareness and education of what is right or wrong.
Sub-Question 3

The third sub-question asked: How does the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impact their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture? The themes revealed concerning this research question were developing respect for the norms and values of other cultures, experiencing issues due to language barrier, being unfamiliar with seeking mental health from professionals, and witnessing how Black Americans have experienced success.

The study was grounded in two theoretical frameworks: behavioral and social constructivism. Social constructivism, originated by Vygotsky, posits that learning primarily occurs in social and cultural settings rather than solely within the individual (Vygotsky, 1962). This theory best explains the findings of this study, as the behaviors and attitudes of individuals from the Yoruba tribe in the United States are influenced by the ACEs they experienced during childhood. According to Akpan et al. (2020), social constructivism theory "states that language and culture are the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality" (p. 50). The participants in this study constructed their reality based on the cultural frameworks of the Yoruba tribe, and the ACEs they experienced during childhood influenced their lives in the United States. In addition, the behavioral constructivism theory helped to understand how ACEs affect the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in the United States. The behaviors of individuals from the Yoruba tribe can be explained by the conditioning they experienced during childhood, including abuse and discipline as a form of punishment, which resulted in ACEs.

The following section presents a comprehensive analysis of the data collected in this study. The study was guided by two theoretical frameworks: social constructivism and behavioral constructivism. These frameworks are further explored to explain the study's findings.
Furthermore, the study's findings concerning the literature on ACEs and Nigerian culture are discussed. The study's results are evaluated to determine how they contribute to the current knowledge of ACEs and Nigerian culture. Additionally, the findings are analyzed to identify how they expand upon the two theoretical frameworks used in this study.

**Discussion**

This study's results are confirmed in the literature and reinforced by the two theoretical frameworks that guided the research. The subsequent sections explore how the findings correspond to the theoretical framework and how the two theories can best clarify the findings. Additionally, the study's findings are compared to the empirical literature on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and their impact on the Nigerian community.

**Empirical Literature**

Several major and minor themes emerged that answered the central research question and the three sub-questions. The main research question, how do adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affect the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in the United States, was answered through the themes uncovered from the three sub-research questions. Several of the major and minor themes were confirmed in the reviewed literature, and some were found to be divergent findings that were not discussed in the literature.

The first sub-question, how do members of the Yoruba tribe believe that the trauma from childhood impacted their adulthood, was answered with two thematic categories, including the traumas experienced and how the ACES impacted the participants. The three experiences were developing traumas as they had the responsibilities of an adult at a very young age, lacked financial resources to pursue goals and desires, and lived in a violent community. According to Jones et al. (2020), Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) refer to potentially traumatic events
that transpire during childhood and adolescence, which include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, witnessing domestic violence, having a family member attempt or commit suicide, and growing up in a household marked by substance use, mental health problems, or instability resulting from parental separation, divorce, or incarceration. If left untreated, ACEs can adversely affect individuals' mental health in their later years (Ashaba et al., 2022; Kiburi et al., 2018; Satinsky et al., 2021). The findings of this study confirmed that the participants were all affected by ACEs experienced during their childhood. The traumas experienced by the participants in this study included physical, verbal, and sexual abuse. Experiencing punishments as forms of discipline and living in a violent community were all aspects of the participants' lives that contributed to ACEs.

In a study conducted by Morgan et al. (2021), it was discovered that psychological resilience plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between ACEs and their corresponding adverse outcomes in individuals. This study found that most participants attributed their traumatic experiences to a newfound appreciation for the value of their relationship with God. Pamela, for instance, expressed gratitude for discovering God and having a solid religious foundation. Participants’ firm belief in God's words and teachings enabled them to forgive and move past their traumatic experiences. Similarly, Emily shared how her faith in God allowed her to forgive her father’s abusive behavior and cope better with life's struggles. These sentiments expressed by the participants underscore the psychological resilience that many victims of ACEs exhibit in overcoming past traumas. Despite their challenges, individuals with strong religious faith can find comfort and solace in their belief system.

The second sub-question, what are the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria, was answered with the theme of placing great
emphasis on harsh discipline. According to Narayan et al. (2021), parental exposure to trauma can significantly cause ACEs in children, specifically through transference. Parents who develop coping mechanisms due to unresolved trauma resulting from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may encounter increased child-parent difficulties and harmful parenting practices. Moreover, historical childhood adversity among parents has been found to increase the likelihood of their children experiencing trauma (Crouch et al., 2019; Haynes et al., 2020). In the Yoruba tribe, corporal punishment is a cultural norm in child-rearing practices, which may also be linked to transference. Parents who have experienced similar types of abuse are more likely to transfer those experiences to their children. Thus, cultural practices can significantly impact the perpetuation of ACEs within a community.

The third sub-question, how does the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impact their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture, was answered with minor themes, which included developing respect for the norms and values of other cultures; being unfamiliar with seeking mental health help from professionals; witnessing how Black Americans have experienced success; and experiencing issues due to the language barrier. In a study by Ekwemalor and Ezeobele (2020) on emigrated Nigerians currently living in the United States, negative psychological experiences were found to exist due to migration. Interestingly, this was not true in this study, where participants reported the development of respect for other cultures. For instance, Emily acknowledged the importance of keeping her culture's traditions and practices in mind while respecting and understanding others' practices and beliefs. Similarly, Michelle acknowledged the stark differences between Yoruba and American cultures but stressed the importance of respecting and accepting diversity. These findings suggest that while culture and societal norms may contribute to the perpetuation of
ACEs, it is possible to foster a greater sense of understanding and respect for diversity, which can help break the cycle of trauma. It is, therefore, essential to develop culturally sensitive interventions that acknowledge and incorporate the cultural practices of affected communities in addressing the issue of ACEs.

**Theoretical Framework**

The two theoretical frameworks utilized in this study provided insight into the factors contributing to the experiences of individuals who have suffered from ACEs and explored the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe with childhood trauma. These frameworks guided the development of the research questions, as well as data analysis and interpretation. By examining the study findings through the lens of these theoretical frameworks, we can better understand trauma from ACEs that may have contributed to the negative adulthood aggressive behavior in Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe.

Social constructivism is a theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of social and cultural factors in shaping individuals’ experiences and perceptions of the world (Vygotsky, 1962). According to social constructivism, individuals are not passive recipients of information but actively construct their understanding of reality based on their interactions with the social and cultural context in which they live (Akpan et al., 2020). Therefore, social constructivism provides a valuable lens for examining the childhood experiences of Nigerians in the Yoruba tribe. In the Yoruba tribe, childhood experiences are heavily influenced by social and cultural factors. Yoruba society strongly emphasizes family and community; children are expected to respect and obey their elders (Oluyemi & Olumide, 2021). As a result, childhood experiences in the Yoruba tribe are shaped by the community’s values, beliefs, and practices.
Social constructivism would suggest that individual factors do not solely determine childhood experiences but are shaped by the cultural and social context in which they occur. The study participants experienced different forms of abuse, such as physical, sexual, and verbal abuse, which contributed to their ACEs. From these cultural and social norms of the Yoruba tribe, many participants noted they developed fear from the aggressive behaviors of their fathers. Tiffany called their punishments "corporal punishments," where they were beaten with canes and wires in their younger years. In the case of physical abuse as experienced by the participants in this study, social constructivism suggests that individual factors do not solely determine the abuse experience but are shaped by the social and cultural context in which it occurs. In this study, physical abuse was more prevalent and normalized, which helped to shape the future attitudes of individuals from the Yoruba tribe that reside in the United States.

Behaviorism is a theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of learning through experience and the role of environmental factors in shaping behavior (Graham & Zalta, 2019). According to behaviorism, behavior is shaped through reinforcement and punishment, influencing an individual's likelihood of engaging in a particular behavior (Graham & Zalta, 2019). In the case of physical abuse in the Yoruba tribe, behaviorism suggests that the experience of abuse can influence an individual's future behavior. For example, if an individual is physically abused as a child, they may learn that aggressive behavior is an acceptable way to express anger or assert control over others. Alternatively, they may learn that aggression is a way to avoid punishment or negative consequences. The opposite results were found in this study, with participants recognizing that the physical, sexual, and verbal abuse they experienced was unacceptable and not practices deemed normal in other cultures. In the study, Peter explained that the Yoruba tradition follows a unique way of disciplining their children and believed that
such punishments and disciplines were their parents' ways of showing that they love and care for their children. He also admitted that despite the good intentions, their culture or tradition is harsh, and children get hurt in the process.

Behaviorism also suggests that the experience of physical abuse can lead to the development of maladaptive behaviors or psychological problems (Tezel et al., 2015; Odhayani et al., 2013). For example, an individual who experiences physical abuse may develop anxiety, depression, or other mental health conditions due to the trauma they have experienced. Some of the participants in this study developed a fear of their fathers' aggressive and violent behaviors. Emily highlighted during the interview that she did not enjoy home when her parents were there, especially her father. The effects of the ACEs experienced by the participants caused them to develop a closer relationship with God to deal with their childhood experiences. Based on Ahmed's experience, accepting Jesus in his life and creating a solid relationship with God changed his life. This includes his perceptions about his past struggles and traumatic experiences. Pamela was grateful for discovering God and having a solid foundation and religious background. For this participant, he was able to forgive and move past his experiences because he firmly believed in God and listened to His words and teachings.

Implications

Undertaking this research has far-reaching implications for the Yoruba tribe and Nigerians living in the United States. The study has made significant contributions to the two theoretical frameworks that guided this research and have also helped to fill the gap in the literature on ACEs and the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe living in the United States. In the subsequent sections, the implications of this study on theory, current literature, and practical implications will be discussed in greater depth.
Theoretical Implications

This study explored the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe with childhood trauma, and the results have several implications for behaviorism theory. The study provided insight into how childhood trauma can shape an individual's behavior and attitudes from the perspective of individuals from the Yoruba tribe. Behaviorism theory emphasizes the role of environmental factors in shaping behavior, and childhood trauma can be seen as an environmental factor that can significantly impact an individual's behavior (Skinner, 1976). The study also provided insight into how behaviorism can be used to treat individuals who have experienced childhood trauma. The participants in this current study experienced different forms of childhood trauma that helped shape their behavior in adulthood. Ahmed, in the study, shared an experience from childhood that stayed with him through adulthood. Ahmed stated:

My mother used the metal part of the belt, but then the buckle part of it, the metal part of it, and she nearly fainted because she thought she had, you know, fractured my skull. You know, scratching my head, then stood up and was crying and didn't say anything. So, she said OK, she now uses what we call, but you know, strong mind. She didn’t say nothing. But she felt sad bad through in her heart. But that day that thing was a very it made me. I will never forget. It made me. Let me not say hate but dislike my mom more that time.

The use of behavioral therapy techniques can be effective in addressing some of the negative behavioral patterns that may result from childhood trauma. The study also highlighted the importance of early intervention and prevention of childhood trauma. Behavioral interventions that promote positive parenting practices and reduce the likelihood of exposure to traumatic experiences can effectively prevent the development of negative behaviors and attitudes later in life. While the child-rearing practices of the Yoruba tribe are cultural norms,
they do not have to be as extreme as they are if adults clearly understand the difference between discipline and abuse.

Conducting this study has several implications for social constructivism theory. The study provides evidence that supports the idea that cultural and social factors can shape an individual's perception of traumatic experiences (Vygotsky, 1962). The study also underscored the importance of understanding cultural context when examining the effects of childhood trauma (Agbaje et al., 2021). Given that cultural practices and beliefs can shape an individual's perception of traumatic experiences, it is crucial to consider the cultural context when designing interventions to support individuals who have experienced childhood trauma. By taking a culturally sensitive approach, mental health practitioners can better tailor their interventions to the specific needs and experiences of individuals from the Yoruba tribe.

**Empirical Implications**

Several empirical implications have risen out of conducting this study. Increased understanding of the prevalence and nature of childhood trauma among Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe is one empirical implication that will add to the current literature on the topic. The findings also provided insights into the types of childhood traumas commonly experienced among this population and the frequency of such experiences. The identification of risk and protective factors associated with childhood trauma were also revealed in this study which can help to identify factors that contribute to the risk of experiencing childhood trauma and those that may protect against its harmful effects. Six of the participants stated the traumas caused them to develop and realize the value of their relationships with God. Pamela was grateful for discovering God and having a strong foundation and religious background. For Pamela, she was
able to forgive and move past his experiences because he firmly believed in God and listened to His words and teachings. Pamela stated:

You know I'm thankful because God is good and I know that Nigerians truly believe in serving God. They have a strong background in religion. That is like what keeps everyone going, I suppose so. I can't go that even with everything that happened, I felt like I wanted to disappoint my mom. I didn't want to have anything to do with her once I left the house, but because God lives inside of me, I chose forgiveness, and I chose just to move on. Like I said before, if it wasn't for God, I don't know how I would even be able to go through this right now.

The participants utilized their belief in God to help them deal with past traumas which can have implications for future therapies that can address ACEs. The recognition of the psychological impact of childhood trauma was also revealed in this study which highlighted the psychological impact of childhood trauma on individuals from the Yoruba tribe, such as the development of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Uwakwe et al. (2012) revealed in a study over 50% of the Nigerian population self-identified that they experienced trauma during childhood and did not receive mental health therapy or treatment. This finding indicates that individuals seek other forms of treatment or therapy such as relying on their relationship with God. This study also revealed an understanding of cultural factors that may influence childhood trauma experiences. The study also provided insights into how cultural factors, such as beliefs, attitudes, and values, may influence the experiences of childhood trauma among individuals from the Yoruba tribe. One of the minor themes revealed in this study was an emphasis member of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria had on harsh discipline to warrant their children are raised as they should be. Tiffany admitted that the Nigerian way of raising children is unique
and different. The study's findings can also inform the development of culturally sensitive and appropriate interventions for individuals from the Yoruba tribe who have experienced childhood trauma.

**Practical Implications**

This study has practical implications for policymakers, healthcare providers, and social workers who work with the Nigerian community. It provides insight into the factors that contribute to the development of ACEs, such as parental exposure to trauma. It highlights the need for interventions that address this population's root causes of trauma. The study's findings also underscore the need for programs and resources that promote resilience in individuals who have experienced trauma. Finally, this study has implications for the Yoruba community residing in the United States. By shedding light on the experiences and challenges this community faces, this study highlights the need for culturally sensitive interventions that address the unique needs of this population. It also underscores the importance of preserving cultural traditions and practices while respecting and accepting diversity.

**Christian Worldview**

A Christian worldview emphasizes the importance of addressing trauma to promote healing and restoration. In the Christian faith, God is seen as a source of comfort and healing, and there may be a focus on prayer and spiritual support for those who have experienced trauma. Based on Ahmed’s experience in this study, accepting Jesus in his life and creating a solid relationship with God changed his life. This includes his perceptions about his past struggles and traumatic experiences. As the Bible states in Psalm 147:3, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (*English Standard Version Bible, 2001*, Psalm 147:3). Many of the participants in the study realized the importance of faith in God. The traumas caused them to develop and
realize the value of their relationship with God. Pamela was grateful for discovering God and having a solid foundation and religious background. Pamela could forgive and move past her experiences because she firmly believed in God and listened to His words and teachings. In addition, a Christian worldview stresses addressing social and structural factors contributing to trauma. This includes recognizing the impact of poverty, discrimination, and other forms of injustice on individuals and communities. The Christian faith places a strong emphasis on caring for the vulnerable and oppressed, as Jesus teaches in Matthew 25:40, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Matthew 25:40).

**Strengths and Weaknesses**

The study has several strengths, including its use of a diverse sample of participants. The participants' age range was between 25 and 62 years old, and the sample was equally distributed between genders. In addition, the participants had varying careers and professions and had lived in the United States for between eight and 46 years. This diversity in the sample enhanced the transferability of the study results. It allowed for a broader understanding of the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe who had experienced childhood trauma. Despite these strengths, the study had several weaknesses that must be acknowledged. One such weakness was the small sample size, which limited the generalizability of the findings to a larger population of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe, not only in the United States but in different parts of the world. While the sample was diverse, it did not necessarily represent the larger population. Therefore, caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions based solely on this study's findings. Another weakness of the study was the potential for social desirability bias. Participants may have underreported or overreported their experiences of childhood trauma to provide socially
desirable responses. This bias could have influenced the accuracy and reliability of the study’s findings.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

In qualitative studies, delimitations and limitations refer to factors that may impact the study's scope, reliability, and generalizability (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). While these terms are often used interchangeably, they can have slightly different meanings. Delimitations are factors intentionally set to narrow the study’s focus (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Delimitations can include specific geographic locations, time frames, populations, or data types included in the study. Delimitations ensure that the study is manageable, and that the data collected are relevant to the research question. Several factors delimited this study. The first delimitation was that the study focused on individuals from the Yoruba tribe that currently live in the United States because this was the focus of the study. The study was also delimited to individuals primarily from my local place of worship.

On the other hand, limitations may impact the study's reliability or generalizability beyond control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Limitations can include small sample sizes, limited resources, biased or unrepresentative samples, or difficulties in collecting data. These factors can make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions or generalize the findings to other populations or contexts. This study was limited by the small sample size—10 participants. Both delimitations and limitations are essential when designing and interpreting qualitative studies. Delimitations help to ensure that the study is focused and feasible, while limitations help to identify potential sources of bias or error in the study’s findings. By acknowledging and addressing these factors, research investigators can enhance the quality and credibility of their qualitative research.
Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study provided valuable insights and recommendations that can inform future research and interventions. Specifically, the third sub-research question investigated the impact of negative behavior among members of the Yoruba tribe on their relationships with other cultures, particularly with American culture. The minor themes from this inquiry revealed the need for further research and exploration. One of the significant themes that emerged is the importance of respecting other cultures' norms and values. The Yoruba participants in the study noted that they had to navigate cultural differences when interacting with Americans and that developing an understanding and respect for these differences was crucial in fostering positive relationships. This theme underscores the importance of cultural competence and sensitivity in promoting intercultural understanding and cooperation. Future research should be conducted to examine the cultural differences individuals from the Yoruba tribe have encountered while integrating into American culture.

While the main research question in this study was: How do adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affect the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in the United States? This question still needs to be fully answered. Future research should be conducted to examine this topic in more depth using interviews with individuals from the Yoruba tribe, which would be guided by an interview protocol that would elicit responses directly relevant to this research question. In addition to research that primarily examines the effects of ACEs on the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in the United States, future research could also focus on how those experiences changed their perceptions of practices and cultural norms of the Yoruba tribe.

Additionally, the participants in the study noted that they had witnessed how Black Americans had experienced success, which challenged some of their preconceived notions about
race and success. Future research could tap into this more and explore the differences between the success of Black Americans and how individuals from the Yoruba tribe define success. Regarding the abuse individuals experienced in this study, future research could explore how those experiences affected their relationships and child-rearing practices.

Summary

This phenomenological study aimed to explore the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribe with childhood trauma. To uncover the root cause, trauma from ACEs and cultural factors that may have contributed to the negative adulthood aggressive behavior was explored. The central research question was: How do adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affect the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in the United States? The findings of this study provided insight into the lived experiences of the Yoruba tribe of Nigerians living in the United States. The findings revealed that members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria place great importance on disciplining young children without regard to harshness or the idea of abuse which results in ACEs. The lack of education about right and wrong was also found to be one of the reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria.

Exploring the experiences of Nigerians from the Yoruba tribes with childhood trauma and its impact on their adulthood is an important area of study. The qualitative research on this topic sheds light on the diverse experiences of Yoruba individuals and the potential long-term effects of childhood trauma on their mental health and well-being. The study identified a range of cultural beliefs that influenced how participants processed and dealt with their trauma. Overall, this study provided valuable insights into the experiences of Yoruba individuals with childhood trauma and underscored the need for further research and intervention to support their mental health and well-being.
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APPENDIX A: Demographics Survey

1. What is your current age?
2. What is your ethnicity?
3. What is your gender?
4. Where do you live geographically? (state, area of state, region of country)
5. What is your marital status? (single, married, divorced)
6. What is your highest level of education achieved?
7. What is your current employment status? (full-time, part-time, unemployed)
8. Please continue to the ACE questionnaire. If you are eligible, I will contact you.
9. Please enter your name and email address here:
APPENDIX B: ACEs Questionnaire

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often** …
   - Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________
   - Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often** …
   - Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________
   - **Ever** hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever**…
   - Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________
   - Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________

4. Did you **often** feel that …
   - No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________
   - Your family didn’t look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________

5. Did you **often** feel that …
   - You didn’t have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________
   - Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________

6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?
   - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________

7. Was your mother or stepmother:
   - **Often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?
   - **Sometimes or often** kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?
   - **Ever** repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
     - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
   - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide?
   - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________

10. Did a household member go to prison?
    - Yes  No  If yes enter 1  ________

**Now add up your “Yes” answers:  _______  This is your ACE Score**
APPENDIX C: Recruitment Letter

Dear Recipient:

As a graduate student in the School of Behavioral Sciences at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to investigate the adverse childhood experiences of Nigerians living in America, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be between 18 and 65 years of age, members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria, and have suffered an adverse childhood experience or trauma. Participants must also score a three or higher on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) 10-item questionnaire and be living in the United States.

Participants, if willing, will be asked to in an audio-recorded Zoom interview (45-60 minutes), review their interview transcripts for accuracy (30 minutes), and respond to three journal prompts (60 minutes for 30 days). Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at [email] or [email] for more information. I will send you a link to a screening survey.

A consent document will be emailed to you are found to be eligible. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you would like to participate, please sign the consent document and return it to me at the above listed email address. Once I receive the signed consent document, I will contact you to schedule an interview. If you are not eligible, I will notify you and discard your screening survey responses.

Each eligible participant who completes all study procedures will receive a $20 Amazon gift card.

Sincerely,

Patricia Akinrogunde
Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX D: Social Media / Public Board Recruitment Post

As a graduate student in the School of Behavioral Sciences at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to investigate the adverse childhood experiences of Nigerians living in America, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be between 18 and 65 years of age, members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria, and have suffered an adverse childhood experience or trauma. They must also score a three or higher on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) 10-item questionnaire and be living in the United States.

Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded Zoom interview (45-60 minutes), review their interview transcripts for accuracy (30 minutes), and respond to three journal prompts (60 minutes for 30 days). Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at [redacted] or [redacted] for more information. I will send you a link to a screening survey. A consent document will be emailed to eligible individuals. If you are not eligible, I will notify you and discard your screening survey responses.

Each eligible participant who completes all study procedures will receive a $20 Amazon gift card.
APPENDIX E: Consent Form

Title of the Project: A Phenomenological Exploration of Adverse Childhood Experiences in the Yoruba Tribe/Ethic Group of Nigerians Living in America
Principal Investigator: Patricia Akinrogunde, Doctoral Student, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study
You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be between the age of 18-65, a Nigerian native from the Yoruba tribe, and have suffered from adverse childhood experiences or trauma. You must also have scored a three or higher on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) 10-item questionnaire and be living in the United States. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?
The purpose of the study is to describe Nigerians from the Yoruba tribes’ lived experiences with childhood trauma. To uncover the root cause, the research will explore trauma from adverse childhood events that might contributed to negative behaviors.

What will happen if you take part in this study?
If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:
1. Participate in an individual interview via Zoom that will last between 45 to 60 minutes. You will be asked questions relating to the research study. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed.
2. You will have the opportunity to review your interview transcript to ensure its accuracy (30 minutes).
3. Participate in keeping a personal journal for one month. You will document recollections of your childhood in the journal as they come to mind throughout your day. The journal will be collected after a month. It should take about 60 minutes each day.

How could you or others benefit from this study?
Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, participants will receive their ACE scores to keep for their own records. Benefits to society include the potential to inform counselors, educators, and social workers about how to best help people of all ages who have suffered adverse childhood experiences especially when exhibiting negative behaviors as a coping mechanism. Additional benefits include the potential to change practices in the educational and societal setting in a way that allows more people to overcome their childhood trauma.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?
The risks involved in this study are minimal meaning they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. However, risks may include an emotional response to trauma or adverse events experienced during childhood. If at any point you feel you cannot continue in the study, your participation will be terminated.
If you were to disclose any information regarding ongoing or current child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I would be required to report it to the proper authorities.

How will personal information be protected?
The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential using pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation and/or private Zoom meeting.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

How will participants be compensated for being part of the study?
Each eligible participant who completes all procedures will receive a $20 Amazon gift card.

Is study participation voluntary?
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?
If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?
The researcher conducting this study is Patricia Akinrogunde. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at [redacted]. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, Dr. Tracy Baker, at [redacted].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, [redacted], or email at [redacted].

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.
Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

____________________________________
Printed Subject Name

____________________________________
Signature & Date
**APPENDIX F: Interview Questions & Protocols**

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<td>Video/Audio Platform</td>
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<th>Interview Questions</th>
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<td>1. Tell me about yourself.</td>
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<td>2. In what way do you identify with the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Describe your childhood.</td>
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<td>4. Describe details regarding your parent’s marital status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How would you describe the location and community in which you grew up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How many siblings did you have growing up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Describe the role of your parents in the household?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Describe how your needs were met as a child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. What needs would you say were unmet during your childhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Describe events that were not so pleasing during your childhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Describe your responsibilities during childhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. How would you describe the way you were disciplined as a child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Describe the mode of punishment for actions that were displeasing to your parents, guardians, and/or family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Knowing how other cultures raise children, describe your feelings regarding how you were raised and how you felt about your childhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. What traumatic experience did you face as a child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Describe the physical, emotional, and mental impact the experienced trauma had on you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Describe your current mental health status and well-being?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. How would you say your childhood impacted your current mental health status?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. What other factors do you think impacted your current mental health status?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. As indicated by the results of ACEs questionnaire, you currently have a high/moderate level of ACEs. What do you feel was the most childhood trauma that contributed to this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Describe two occasions where you believe you were misunderstood by someone from the American culture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. How do you think your behavior and attitude are viewed by Americans?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Is there anything else you would like to add?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. May I contact you if I have further questions and/or need clarification?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G: Journal Prompts

Prompt 1: Briefly describe the trauma you suffered as a child.

Prompt 2: Discuss the impact of that trauma on you at the time and now.

Prompt 3: Explore what factors or aspects of your life enabled you to become successful despite the trauma.
APPENDIX H: CDC Email Request

From: Akinrogunde, Patricia
Sent: Wednesday, July 13, 2022, 4:22 PM
To: DVP Inquiries (CDC)
Subject: Request to use ACEs Questionnaire in Research Study

Good afternoon,

I am a doctoral student currently working on a research study (dissertation) utilizing ACEs. I would like to inquire about the process or request permission to use the questionnaire in my data collection.

Any information you have to offer in order for me to proceed would be greatly appreciated!

Thanks,
Patricia
APPENDIX I: CDC Email Response

DVP Inquiries (CDC)  
To: Akinrogunde, Patricia  
Thu 7/14/2022 11:31 AM  
[ EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content.]

Thank you for your inquiry.

General text information, publications available for download, and graphs developed by CDC and presented on CDC's website are works of the United States Government and are in the public domain. This means that they are meant for public use and are not subject to copyright law protections. Permission is not required for use of public domain items. But we do ask that you credit CDC as the original source whenever the items are used in any publicly distributed media.

The Family Health History and Health Appraisal questionnaires were used to collect information on child abuse and neglect, household challenges, and other socio-behavioral factors in the original CDC-Kaiser ACE Study. The questionnaires are not copyrighted, and there are no fees for their use. You can download them as pdfs using the following links.

Family Health History Questionnaires:

Health Appraisal Questionnaire

Additionally, it is important to note that while the original ACEs questions (referenced above) were used in the 1998 CDC-Kaiser ACEs study, this study is not ongoing. There are similar ACEs questions in the ACEs module of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Surveys (BRFSS). The BRFSS ACE module was adapted from the original CDC-Kaiser ACE Study and is used to collect information on child abuse and neglect and household challenges. Please see the BRFSS Questionnaires website for the most up-to-date versions of the BRFSS ACE Modules.

It is also important to note that CDC does not endorse the use of the ACE score in any sort of diagnosis process. Many organizations use ACE study questions and other screening tools at their discretion.

Again, thank you for your inquiry and we hope you find this information helpful.
APPENDIX J: Draft Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application & Approval

Date: 4-19-2023

IRB #: IRB-FY22-23-178
Title: A Phenomenological Exploration of Adverse Childhood Experiences in the Yoruba Tribe/Ethnic Group of Nigerians Living in America
Creation Date: 8-10-2022
End Date: 
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Patricia Akinrogunde
Review Board: Research Ethics Office
Sponsor:

Study History

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<th>Review Type</th>
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<th>Decision</th>
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Key Study Contacts

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<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Co-Principal Investigator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Baker</td>
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<td>Patricia Akinrogunde</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patricia Akinrogunde</td>
<td>Primary Contact</td>
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## APPENDIX K: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Results

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>Nationality/Race</th>
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<td>Yasmin</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ahmed</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
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<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
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<td>Michelle</td>
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<td>Peter</td>
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<td>Simon</td>
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<td>Nigerian/Black</td>
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<td>Stephanie</td>
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<td>Tiffany</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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## APPENDIX L: N.Vivo Thematic Coding

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<td>Being physically abused</td>
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<td>19/Mar/2023/1:52/PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being sexually abused</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Being verbally abused</td>
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<td>19/Mar/2023/1:52/PM</td>
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<td>Experiencing punishments as forms of discipline (physical, no food, no sleep, etc.)</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Developing fear from the aggressive behaviors of the father</td>
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<td>Having the responsibilities of an adult at a very young age</td>
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<td>Lacking financial resources to pursue goals and desires</td>
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<td>Living in a violent community</td>
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<td>Realizing the importance of Faith in God</td>
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<td>Becoming more cautious of people around them</td>
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<td>Becoming more disciplined and responsible</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Becoming stronger amidst issues and struggles</td>
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<td>SRQ2. What are the underlying reasons behind the aggressive behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria</td>
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<td>Having unclear boundaries between discipline and abuse</td>
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<td>Upholding a masculine culture</td>
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<td>Lacking awareness and education of what is right or wrong</td>
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<td>Lacking feelings and emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRQ3. How does the negative behavior of members of the Yoruba tribe impact their relationship with other cultures, specifically the American culture</td>
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<td>Developing respect for the norms and values of other cultures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being unfamiliar with seeking mental health help from professionals</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Witnessing how Black Americans have experienced success</td>
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<td>Experiencing issues due to language barrier</td>
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