

Spring 2024

The Schooling Experiences of First-Generation Afro Caribbean Women Educated (Schooled) in the Southeastern United States

Sonya Griffin

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THE SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES OF FIRST-GENERATION AFRO CARIBBEAN
WOMEN FROM HAITI ATTENDING UNIVERSITY IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED
STATES

by

SONYA GRIFFIN

(Under the direction of Sabrina Ross)

ABSTRACT

To address the lack of culturally specific research on subgroups of Black women in the educational environment and Haitian immigrant women in U.S. educational institutions, the study documented the educational experiences of four Haitian women who immigrated to the United States and obtained degrees in U.S. universities. Using a narrative interview research design, this qualitative study collected data from four Haitian immigrant women who were first-generation college graduates through individual interviews and a focus group discussion. Data analysis involved coding to identify emerging themes. Using the two tenets of Black feminist theory, lived experiences as knowledge and intersectionality, the research identified several key findings. The study revealed the multiple barriers that the women encountered while attending U.S. schools due to their ethnicity, immigration status, and status as non-English speakers and the impact on their bicultural socialization and the formation of their bicultural identities. The women expressed that their strong cultural identities from Haiti had a significant influence on the ways they addressed the obstacles they encountered, as well as the formation of their bicultural identities and socialization. The women explained that, although the values instilled by their parents and family were instrumental in achieving their goals, they also had to identity supports, locate resources, and learn new skills to navigate their new environment. Having to use

information and skills from both cultures assisted the women in developing their bicultural identity and socialization competence. Study findings indicate a need for additional research within subgroups of Black women in general, including Haitian women, to identify the cultural values and unique needs of individual sub groups. Such research can inform universities in their efforts to become agents of change by identifying the supports and resources necessary for minority groups to meet their academic goals. The research surmised that more research in the area of ethnic and cultural identities and the intersecting roles that contribute to academic progress toward college graduation is needed.

INDEX WORDS: Haitian Women, Immigrant, First-Generation, Transnational, Black Feminist, Bicultural Identity, Bicultural Socialization, Narrative Interview, Educational Barriers, Black Women

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WOMEN FROM HAITI ATTENDING UNIVERSITY IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED
STATES

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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THE SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES OF FIRST-GENERATION AFRO CARIBBEAN
WOMEN EDUCATED (SCHOOLED) IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my five amazing children (Rodney, Aaron, Edyah, Eglah, and Nathan) and two daughters-in-law (Natacha and Christie). Your continuous encouragement and support on this journey inspired me to accomplish my goal. All of you have endured my joys and tears during this process over the past few years while cheering me to the finish lines. I appreciate your understanding as I attended family vacations and celebrations with books and computer in tow to slip away to work. I have taught you all the spirit of endurance and perseverance throughout your life, and each of you reminded me of those lessons as you encouraged me to finish when I doubt my ability to complete this journey. Finally, to my grandchildren (Arianah, Quintavis Jr., Alana, Samira, Rodney Jr., and Aaron Jr.)—never forget the power of resilience and the importance of education, knowledge, and wisdom. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways, acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths (Proverb 3:5-6).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge every family member, friend, and colleague who has motivated me along the way to complete my research. Although you are too numerous to name, you know who you are and also know that without your faith in me and constant encouragement, I would not have achieved my goals.

I would like to thank my committee for guiding and motivating me through this journey. Your conversations provided assurance and confidence that I could complete this process, and I am so thankful to all of you for rallying around me and not giving up on me.

To my chair, Dr. Sabrina Ross: words cannot describe my gratitude to you. Your support and guidance every step of the way was invaluable, and I will always be indebted to you for assuring me that I could do this. First, I appreciate you for being willing to be my chair. Most importantly, I cherish that you knew when I need encouragement, a gentle nudge, or a listening ear. You are always so soft spoken, but your words will stay with me forever.

To Dr. King-Miller and Dr. Williams-Johnson: thank you both for giving me words of encouragement while providing feedback. I am so thankful that both of you served on my committee along with Dr. Ross. I had a dissertation committee dream team. Dr. Williams-Johnson, I learned so much from you when I took your class, but I was most impressed with your strength and fortitude. Dr. King-Miller, when we spoke about my dissertation, I was not sure that I wanted to complete it, as I was not sure that I could give the topic the attention it deserved. You assured me that I could as you gave me more material to read.

To Dr. He and Dr. Weaver: I thank you for the words you provided early in my studies that kept me in the program. Dr. He, during an initial meet and greet orientation for new students to the program, you gave us invaluable advice to which I will summarize as reminding us to

maintain humility and balance. Throughout this process, I have tried to remain mindful of your comments that day by remembering to enjoy the journey to the destination. One weekend afternoon, after a long day of classes, as I walked out of the building, I was in deep thought of whether or not I would come back to class. I do not know what you saw at that moment or perhaps earlier in class, but Dr. Weaver, you looked at me and said, "Sonya, you belong in this program." Working towards this degree has been my most challenging academic accomplishment and all of you have assisted me in achieving my goal. Thank you all for being my village!

Last but not least, all thanks are to God, for through Him all things are possible.
(Matthew 19:26).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
LIST OF TABLES	8
LIST OF FIGURES	9
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	10
Afro-Caribbean and Ethnic Identification	11
Afro-Caribbean Immigrants to the United States and Bicultural Identity	13
Statement of the Problem.....	15
Conceptual Framework	17
Black Feminist Thought.....	17
Intersectionality.....	17
Lived Experiences as Knowledge	18
Bicultural Identity/Bicultural Socialization	21
Methodology	24
Research Questions	25
Significance of the Study	25
Advancing Educational Research on Haitian Afro-Caribbean Women	26
Advancing the Curriculum Studies Field: The Curriculum of Place	26
Place as Geography/Location	27
Place as Status.....	27
Place as Belonging.....	28
Organization of the Dissertation	28
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	30
History of the Caribbean.....	30
Colonialism	31
Saint-Domingue Colony	35
One Island, Two Countries	38
Haiti Economic and Social Hardships	40
Sustained Poverty in Haiti	43
Present Day.....	45
Subordination of Haitian Women	46
Notable People of Haitian Descent	47
Jean-Michel Basquiat.....	47
Ti Manno.....	48
Garcelle Beauvais	48
Roxane Gay.....	49
Edwidge Danticat.....	49
Wyclef Jean.....	49
The Arts in Haiti	50
Music.....	50
Visual Art.....	52
Literature.....	53

Religion.....	55
Catholicism	55
Vodou.....	55
Role of Women Within the Caribbean Community	56
Haitian Women History: Afro-Caribbean Women Status	58
Enslavement's Impact on Family Dynamics	59
Patriarchal System's Effect on Educational Access for Women	61
Education and Afro-Caribbean Immigrants.....	62
Educational Experiences of Black Women.....	65
K-12 Education	65
Postsecondary Education	67
Studies of Afro-Caribbean Women and Education	68
Summary	71
3 METHODOLOGY	72
Research Design: Qualitative Approach.....	72
Methodological Approach: Narrative Interview	72
Challenges.....	76
Participant Selection, Demographics, and Procedures	77
Recruitment.....	78
Data Collection Procedures.....	80
Data Storage.....	82
Data Analysis Procedures	83
Limitations of the Study.....	84
Role of the Researcher.....	84
Validity and Reliability.....	85
Credibility	87
Transferability.....	87
Ethical Considerations	87
Summary	88
4 REPRESENTATION OF DATA	90
Review of Research Questions	90
Participants' Profiles	91
Nicolette.....	91
Roseline.....	91
Nadia.....	92
Darlene.....	92
Data Collection and Analysis.....	92
Interview Questions and Responses.....	93
Interview Question 2.....	94
Interview Questions 3 and 4	95
Interview Question 5.....	98
Interview Questions 6-9.....	99
Interview Questions 10-13.....	106
Interview Questions 14-18.....	110
Interview Question 19.....	118
Interview Question 20	119

Interview Question 21	123
Focus Group Interview	123
Coding Process for Individual Interviews and Focus Group Session	126
Analyzing Participants' Narratives	127
Theme 1: Cultural Influences.....	130
Heritage.....	131
Family	132
Theme 2: Intersectionality of Educational Experiences	133
Haitian.....	133
Non-English Speaking	134
First Generation	135
Limited Opportunities in Haiti.....	136
Women.....	137
Theme 3: Perceptions of Education	138
Theme 4: Perceptions of Barriers	138
Theme 5: Bicultural Identity	139
Theme 6: Bicultural Socialization	142
Summary	143
5 FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	145
Discussion of Findings.....	147
Finding for RQ1	147
Theme: Cultural Influences.....	148
Theme: Perceptions of Education	149
Theme: Perceptions of Barriers	151
Finding for RQ2.....	152
Theme: Perceptions of Barriers	154
Theme: Intersectionality of Educational Experiences	155
Finding for RQ3.....	159
Theme: Bicultural Identity	159
Theme: Bicultural Socialization	160
Summary of Findings.....	168
Study Significance: A Curriculum of Place.....	170
Implications.....	173
Recommendations for Further Research.....	174
Positionality Statement	177
My Relationship with the African Diaspora	177
Concluding Thoughts.....	179
REFERENCES	183
APPENDICES	
A IRB APPROVAL.....	205
B WE ARE THE WORLD 25 FOR HAITI (LYRICS).....	206
C DEMOGRAPHIC DATA COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE	210
D RECRUITMENT SCRIPT.....	211
E INFORMED CONSENT FORM	212
F CODING TABLE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS	215

G FOCUS GROUP DATA ANALYSIS MATRIX.....	221
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LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Participants' Profiles	78
Table 2: Interview Questions	80
Table 3: Focus Group Questions	81
Table 4: Themes and Sub Themes	127
Table 5: RQ1 Finding and Themes.....	152
Table 6: RQ2 Finding and Themes.....	158
Table 7: RQ3 Finding and Themes.....	167

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Interview Question 2.....	94
Figure 2: Interview Questions 3 and 4	96
Figure 3: Interview Question 5.....	98
Figure 4: Interview Questions 6-9.....	99
Figure 5: Interview Questions 10-13.....	106
Figure 6: Interview Questions 14-18.....	110
Figure 7: Interview Question 19.....	118
Figure 8: Interview Question 20.....	119
Figure 9: Interview Question 21.....	123
Figure 10: Graphic Representation of Study.....	176

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Black feminist scholars have described the experiences of Black women in higher education as both hypervisible and invisible (Patton et al., 2016; Patton & Hayes, 2018). Pervasive stereotypes of Black women and their bodies make their presence hypervisible within educational spaces (Collins, 2000). However, the failure of higher education institutions to consider Black women's needs and intersectional experiences of marginalization seriously contributes to their invisibility (Patton & Hayes, 2018) and to the limited amount of available research on Black women conducted from an intersectional perspective (Patton et al., 2016).

Existing research on Black women's experiences tends to overlook their diversity and treat all subgroups of Black women as monolithic (Hudley, 2016; Hutchinson, 2018; Kim, 2014; Morgan, 2015). There is diversity within unity for Black women (Collins, 2000) that results in Black women's navigation of similar structures of oppression due to their marginalization within existing racial and gender hierarchies. At the same time, differences in the experiences and social locations of individual Black women require that they use diverse survival strategies; individual Black women also have different opportunities for agency as they navigate structures of oppression (Collins, 2000). One way to challenge Black women's invisibility within educational spaces is to engage in studies of specific subgroups of Black women to identify their unique experiences. There is a recognized need for research that highlights the nuances in the cultural experiences of subgroups of Black women, such as those from the Caribbean (Morgan, 2015).

Both African American and Afro-Caribbean women experience overlapping identities and experiences that create complex yet distinct sets of challenges that they must overcome. While much of the research on the experiences of U.S.-born Black women relates to controlling

images and interlocking systems of sexist and racist oppression (Collins, 2000), research on Afro-Caribbean women tends to document their perceptions of immigration status, ethnicity, gender, and language (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC], 2018; Pierce & Elisme, 2000; Wilson, 2002). Afro-Caribbean women experience marginalization in the United States similar to African American women (Wilson 2002), but they differ based on minority statuses and ethnic identities. As a voluntary minority (Ogbu, 1998), Afro-Caribbean women's ethnic identities are shaped by their home country, not the United States (Fries-Britt et al., 2014), which is shaped by ethnicity rather than race (King Miller, 2017).

Afro-Caribbean and Ethnic Identification

Afro-Caribbean women typically have strong ethnic identities due to powerful ties with their homeland (Hutchinson, 2018; Moses, 2019). Moses (2019) suggested that Afro-Caribbean immigrants' success is highly correlated to maintaining a strong ethnic identification with the culture to which they are born. King Miller (2017) reasoned that the social and cultural values instilled from their home country, along with the support of their Caribbean community, provide a foundation for a positive self-identity. A positive self-identity and value of education may help Afro-Caribbean women persevere in meeting their educational goals. Since they perceive education as an opportunity to gain upward mobility (Bryce-LaPorte, 1972), Afro-Caribbean students are willing to make many sacrifices, including separation from their families, to obtain an education in the United States (Hutchinson, 2018). The ability to form and maintain identities within multiple cultures is considered a major factor in Afro-Caribbean women successfully navigating the educational institutions in the United States (Berry et al., 2006; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012). Understanding the culture of their new home and incorporating this knowledge into their daily lives while maintaining the culture of their homeland gives them the abilities to

function effectively in both mainstream society and their own culture (Padilla, 2006). By acquiring the norms, attitudes, and behavior patterns of two ethnic groups, and using the knowledge they obtain in various social situations, Afro Caribbean students adapt to situations that they encounter to successfully navigate within the larger society (Padilla, 2006). This is known as cultural competence. Many Afro-Caribbean students build resilience and overcome barriers associated with their schooling experiences in the United States (Hutchinson, 2018). Afro-Caribbean students' educational resilience is another factor that researchers attribute to their strong sense of cultural identity (Kim, 2014).

Cultural competency as defined by Mayfield (2020) has multiple components. First, it is the ability to use critical thinking skills to interpret how beliefs and cultural values influence both conscious and unconscious behavior. It is also understanding how inequity can be continued through socialized behaviors and having the knowledge to disrupt practices that are inequitable to achieve personal and professional success (Clark et al., 2016; Gay, 2010; Howard, 2010). Customs and values that are passed from generation to generation serve as a pattern for interpreting reality (Howard, 2010) and influence how people think, the decisions they make as well as what they believe is important to learn about others' behaviors on which they operate daily (Howard, 2010). Haitian women that immigrate to the United States, similar to other immigrants, are often immersed in several cultures at the same time. Cultural competence involves self-awareness as it challenges one's own assumptions and interpreting the culture of others (Brantmeier, 2020). It allows for empathy and appreciation of the diversity of otherness as one develops openness towards other cultures (Krajewski, 2011).

Afro-Caribbean Immigrants to the United States and Bicultural Identity

Approximately 3.5 million immigrants from the Caribbean live in the United States, with Afro-Caribbean women comprising a significant portion of that number (Zong & Batalova, 2019). More than 90% of Caribbean immigrants come from five countries: Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago and live primarily in Florida or New York (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). They possess varying skill levels, language backgrounds, racial composition, and motivation for emigration (Zong & Batalova, 2019), such as educational opportunities, economic stability, and social mobility (Alfred, 2003).

In 2018, Haitians were the fourth largest foreign-born group in the United States after immigrants from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica (Olson-Medina & Batalova, 2020), with women migrating in larger numbers than men (Catanese, 1998). Like other Afro-Caribbean groups, Haitian women hold a strong value for education (Alfred, 2003; Moses, 2019). Some researchers attribute their value of education to a history of colonialism that portrayed education as a vehicle for social mobility (Alfred, 2003; Moses, 2019; Vickerman, 2016; Wilson, 2002). Vilme and Butler (2004) stated that Haitian women are one of the least recognized and studied groups in the United States, which may explain why very few studies exist that examine their educational experiences. One study conducted by Woldemikael (1989) examined Haitians in U.S. educational institutions in Evanston, Illinois but did not specifically study female/women students, which makes this study unique.

Woldemikael's (1989) research examined how a community in Evanston, Illinois would interact with Haitian immigrants settling in the area. Specifically, the study examined how U.S. institutions in Evanston would treat the Haitian immigrants and the impact on their cultural identity. The study investigated whether the institutions treated Haitians similarly to Black

Americans or as a distinct cultural group. Bryce-Laporte (1972) indicated that most Black immigrants face discrimination in the United States due to similar physical traits, primarily skin color, to African-Americans. The second question is whether Haitian immigrants would maintain their identity or acculturate to the majority or minority groups in Evanston. The study was conducted through fieldwork and observations.

The findings revealed that Haitian Americans in Evanston sought to assert a distinct identity separate from Black Americans and other foreign Blacks. Haitians faced a conflict of identity between the identity given to them by both the dominant and minority cultures in the United States and their self-definition based on their culture. Haitians could try to maintain their identity or accept the identity they received in the United States, one based on race (Woldemikael, 1989). They perceived U.S. society as racially stratified, where race influenced access to economic opportunities. Despite facing pressure to conform to racial constructs, Haitian immigrants resisted accepting the subordinate social position based on race. Motivated by economic goals and political safety, they wanted to take advantage of the economic opportunities in the United States (Woldemikael, 1989).

Another significant finding of Woldemikael's study was the transformation of identity between first- and second-generation Haitians. First-generation Haitian (those who had emigrated to the United States) rejected U.S. racial categories and denied the impact of racism on their lives, while the U.S-born children of Haitian parents became more like their Afro-American peers than like their Haitian parents (Woldemikael, 1989). First-generation Haitians used other Haitians as their point of reference and interacted within their community with other Haitians through church and work. They tried to maintain Haitian cultural traditions and created their own community to mitigate the impact of racism (Woldemikael, 1989). Conversely, the second-

generation Haitians used U.S. society to define their goals and evaluate their achievements. The school became the socializing agent for second-generation Haitians, replacing the church and community that served as the socializing agent for first-generation Haitians (Woldemikael, 1989). Second-generation Haitians reported experiencing pressure from their peers, teachers, and administrators to conform to the values and norms that they were exposed to in school. Since the White peers and staff assumed the Black students to be a homogenous racial group with little cultural differentiation between the Black student group and the Haitian student group; Afro-American students often defined these values and norms (Woldemikael, 1989).

Hutchinson (2018) study investigated the lived experiences of successful first-generation foreign-born Caribbean Black immigrants enrolled in predominantly White public universities in Florida. Using narrative interview, the study examined factors influencing student success. Key findings of this study indicated that participants attributed their academic success to family support and have a strong cultural identity. The participants of that study also indicated that peer connections and faculty relationships facilitated their success. Similar to the results of this study, the women in Hutchinson's study understood that education was a route to upward mobility. Participants of both studies also indicated similar barriers such as financial struggles, limited social interactions and the stress of immigrating to a new country.

Statement of the Problem

Within the Afro-Caribbean group, few studies have specifically examined the educational experiences of Haitian women (Ridgell & Lounsbury, 2004; Spitzer, 2000). Some studies of Haitian immigrant educational experiences portray these immigrants as the group more likely than any other Caribbean immigrants to fall behind in education (Catanese, 1998; Pierce & Elisme, 2000), although other studies suggest that Haitian immigrants value education and strive

to overcome barriers they encounter in educational institutions (Woldemikael, 1989). The limited research on Haitian immigrants in U.S. educational institutions suggests that more research on this subgroup is necessary. This study addressed the lack of culturally specific research on subgroups of Black women in educational environments by studying the experiences of Haitian women as they attended college in the United States. It also built on existing research on Afro-Caribbean women by exploring the educational experiences of Haitian-born, Afro-Caribbean immigrant women who had pursued higher education in the United States.

Using two tenets of Black feminist theory—experience as knowledge and intersectionality—that propose that Black women are in the best position to share their knowledge of self because of their unique experiences due to multiple intersectionality, this study documented the educational experiences of Haitian Afro-Caribbean women who immigrated to and pursued higher education in the United States. The researcher also used the bicultural identity/socialization lens to examine the influence of bicultural identity on the educational experiences of Haitian Afro-Caribbean women. The purpose of this study was to document and discuss the bicultural identity and socialization of Haitian Afro-Caribbean women, as well as their ability to form a positive self-concept amidst confronting intersectional identities and overcoming barriers forged by leaving their homeland. The researcher explored any feelings of belonging and in-betweenness that Haitian Afro-Caribbean women encountered as they moved to the United States. The researcher could not locate studies specifically targeting Haitian women experiences in American universities. This supports the need for further study, and this study addressed that gap.

Conceptual Framework

This study utilized a conceptual framework based on two Black feminist concepts articulated by Collins (2000): (a) intersectionality; and (b) lived experience as a criterion of knowledge. In addition, bicultural identity theory informed this study. A discussion of Black feminist thought and the contributions of two Black feminist concepts to the study precedes a discussion of bicultural identity theory and its contributions to this study.

Black Feminist Thought

Black feminist theory (BFT) examines how the intersectionality of race and gender has impacted the life experiences of Black women (Collins, 2000). Specifically, in this study, BFT documented the impact of intersectionality of gender, race, language, immigrant status, and culture experienced by Haitian immigrant women on their educational experiences.

The Black feminist movement arose from the feminist and civil right movement in the mid-1900s, as it recognized that women of African descent in the United States face a unique set of issues not addressed by either movement (Bailey, 2020). When a group faces discrimination on multiple biases, such as gender, race, language, and immigration status, it is intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991). As members of two distinct minority groups, Black women face the dual effects of sexism and racism. Crenshaw (1991) defined this as intersectionality.

Intersectionality

Kimberle Crenshaw (1991), an African American lawyer, professor, and civil rights advocate, coined the term *intersectionality*, a concept that addresses the idea that people's experiences vary depending on the intersection of their markers of social identity and the structures of oppression that they navigate. Intersectionality refers to the layers of oppression that a specific group may endure, such as racial and gender bias. Theorists such as Crenshaw (1991)

argued that the combined effects of double discrimination experienced by Black women are wider than the general categories of discrimination or being discriminated for one subgroup, such as race or gender.

Specifically, for the study, the intersectionality of multiple characteristics contributes to how Haitian Afro-Caribbean women are perceived by members of other groups within the United States. Factors such as gender, immigration status, nationality, race, class, location, and ethnicity impact the experiences of Haitian women as they obtain their education in the southern United States. The concept of intersectionality examined how multiple factors influence the identities of Haitian women after their immigration to the United States and if the factors were advantageous or disadvantageous to their educational experiences.

Lived Experiences as Knowledge

Another tenet of BFT that served to frame this study was experience as a criterion of knowledge. Black feminist theory allows for the examining of the lived experiences of Black women, specifically Haitian Afro-Caribbean women in this study. Their everyday experiences provide them with a unique viewpoint of the impact of discrimination on multiple fronts. Due to their experience of the phenomenon under study in this research, Haitian Afro-Caribbean women were in the best position to explain and evaluate the meaning of it (Collins, 2000).

Black women's lived experiences become the basis for their knowledge construction as they are able to engage in dialogue about their experiences. Most women of African descent face similar challenges, but it does not mean that all individual Black women have all had the same experience nor would they agree on the significance of their varying experiences. They have a collective yet individualized aspect of being a Black woman (Collins, 2000). All the tenets of BFT do not necessarily apply to Afro-Caribbean women because they have different historical

experiences, but their knowledge of their experiences qualifies them to be agents of knowledge. Haitian women can speak to their educational experiences in the United States. Due to their lived experiences, they are best qualified to describe their perceptions of the influences that different factors may or may not have on their identity formation in the United States.

Haitian American women have to manage multiple concepts simultaneously, such as the idea of who they are currently and who they are becoming, as well as their identity as defined by others and the identities they construct along the way (Vickerman, 2016). Immigrants may experience in-betweenness, which is a feeling of not belonging to either their homeland or to their host country (Potter & Philips, 2006). They maintain the traditions and cultures of their home country while experiencing and gaining knowledge in the host country. The new place now called home also shapes the person they are becoming. It is as though they become more of a hybrid; they belong to a third home somewhere between their homeland and the host country (Potter & Philips, 2006). Even the hyphenated term, *Haitian-American*, signifies a merging of two places.

Haitian women immigration status carries its own set of identities. U.S. law provides for a variety of categories so that immigrants can legally enter into the country. According to the State Justice Institute (2013), non-immigrant temporary visas are for immigrants authorized to stay for a specified period of time. This may include vacationers, students, certain classes of temporary workers, and other specialized categories. Immigrants with lawful permanent resident status, also called green card holders, are allowed to reside and work permanently in the United States. There is also naturalized citizen status. To be considered a naturalized citizen, the immigrant must be lawfully admitted for permanent residence; be at least 18 years of age; have resided continuously in the United States for five years (three years if married to a U.S. citizen)

after being admitted for lawful permanent resident status; be of good moral character; support the U.S. Constitution; and be physically present in the United States at least half time during the five years prior to filling the application for citizenship (State Justice Institute, 2013).

Haitian immigrant women are frequently expected to take care of the home even if they work outside the home (Stafford, 1984). If they emigrate first (before their spouse), they may leave their children behind with relatives and work to send money back to Haiti and initiate a chain migration. A chain migration occurs when an immigrant assists relatives in migrating to the United States (Stafford, 1984). First-generation immigrant women try to maintain the traditions and culture of Haiti and usually stay within the close-knit Haitian community in which they live, whereas second-generation Haitian women are more likely to strive for independence and live in both cultures (Stafford, 1984; Woldemikael, 1989).

When identifying the emotional capital of Haitian Afro-Caribbean women migrating to the United States, the tenets of Black feminist thought alone do not explain their journey. Haitian women have to deal with perceptions based on gender, ethnicity, race, and immigration status. For Afro-Caribbean immigrants to the United States, these perceptions may be complicated by experiences of alienation. Afro-Caribbean women do not perceive race and racial identity as people in the United States. They understand the struggles in regard to race in the United States but typically do not have the same viewpoints. Haiti, like most of the Caribbean, has leaders and professionals who are Black. The primary indication of class is economic status, and education is seen primarily as a factor in changing one's socioeconomic status. Traditionally, Blacks have formed the majority in Caribbean countries and consequently occupy a diverse range of positions. Blacks rule these predominantly Black countries; therefore, social mobility occurs within a Black context (Kalmijn, 1996; Vickerman, 2016). Race is not perceived as a

hindrance to social upward mobility. Based on the influence of colonization, education is seen as a solution to economic disparity (Kalmijn, 1996; Vickerman, 2016). As a result, in this study, bicultural identity theory served to capture the distinct experiences of non-U.S.-born Haitian Afro-Caribbean women immigrants living in the United States.

Bicultural Identity/Bicultural Socialization

Berry (2003) defined *acculturation* as psychological and behavioral changes that occur in people exposed to more than one culture. It is a bilinear process with two key factors: (a) the extent to which one is motivated and/or allowed to maintain their ethnic culture and identity and (b) the extent to which one is motivated and/or allowed to be involved in the dominate culture (Nguyen et al., 2009). There are four possible outcomes from how these two factors are negotiated: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration (Berry et al., 2006; Tsai et al., 2000). The integration, or bicultural strategy, occurs when individuals are able to maintain their ethnic culture while interacting with the dominant culture. Assimilation and separation are polar opposites, since assimilation implies taking on the dominant's group culture and forgoing one's ethnic culture and features; whereas separation implies maintaining one's ethnic culture and not taking on the culture of the dominate group. Marginalization is not having an opportunity or having no preference to interact with either culture (Berry, 2003).

Bicultural identity is how people change as a result of being exposed to two cultures. Identity is in essence a core sense of self over time and in social context (Grotevant, 1992). Josselson (1994) defined *identity* as the interaction of individual and society, and McAdams (2001) stated that identity is created by a life story that has both social and biographical elements. These elements, in turn, form one's identity. All three definitions share a component that identity is social in nature; therefore, it requires interaction with others.

Within bicultural identity are two modes: alternation and fusion. Individuals who are highly oriented to both cultures and able to switch between the two cultures are said to alternate, whereas those who achieve fusion are highly oriented to both cultures but essentially fuse components of each to form a third culture that originates from the two cultures (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Birman (1994) identified types of bicultural individuals and used the term *blended* for fused. After acknowledging that bicultural identity is not uniform across individuals, Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) established blended and alternating bicultural identities. Bicultural individuals may learn one culture before they learn the other culture or may learn their two cultures simultaneously (Padilla, 2006). Second-generation children of immigrants and mixed-ethnic individuals often learn their two cultures at the same time, while first-generation immigrants tend to maintain the culture of their native country (Birman, 1994; Padilla, 2006). Kim (2014) defined first-generation immigrants as students who migrated to America and second-generation immigrants as students born in America to parents who immigrated to the United States.

A bicultural person has two social personas and identities. Thus, they are able to blend in both cultures, and they can switch from one cultural orientation to the other (Padilla, 2006). Researchers have also noted that comfort with two cultures extends to interactions with individuals from cultures other than the two that the bicultural person has competence in, hence bicultural socialization (Padilla, 2006). Padilla (2006) ascertained that it is possible to be a member of two cultural groups without being in psychological conflict about either, and it is possible for one not to favor one culture over the other. Bicultural socialization is associated with greater productivity and higher academic achievement, adaptation, and fewer interpersonal conflicts (Berry et al., 2006; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012).

Numerous research studies point to bicultural identity as an important factor for Afro-Caribbean people in the United States. For example, researchers have examined the intersectionality of race and ethnicity and concluded that Afro-Caribbean immigrants value their ethnic identity over racial identity and view the idea of Blackness differently from their Afro-American counterparts (Mwangi, 2014; Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015). Through a systematic review of studies centering around Black immigrants, Mwangi and English (2017) identified bicultural identity as a hybrid identity that some Black immigrants develop to bridge two cultures: The United States and their/parents' home country, noting that educational institutions served as the primary site where this bridging occurred.

Research also highlights the importance of bicultural identity in the educational experiences of Afro-Caribbean immigrants to the United States. Okere (2017) identified attributes of Black immigrant students that predicted dynamics of their adjustment into mainstream culture while examining the bicultural socialization of Black immigrant students in predominately White universities. The role of social structures and bicultural identity points to culture as an intermediary, whereby Black immigrants employ their culture as a protective factor against social, political, and economic barriers that ultimately aid in their educational success (Barnett et al., 2012; Mwangi & English, 2017).

Concepts of bicultural identity and socialization are relevant when explaining how Haitian Afro-Caribbean women are able to successfully migrate to the United States. Having a firm cultural identity and connection to their native country paired with the flexibility to interact with the majority group when they migrate to the United States may be a determining factor in how they are able to overcome numerous barriers as they navigate dual positions (Vickerman, 2016). The researcher for this study posited that Haitian Afro-Caribbean immigrant women may

use bicultural socialization to acquire the skills necessary to function in their new society. Examining the lived experiences of Haitian American women immigrants assisted in gaining knowledge of how bicultural socialization and identity impacted their educational experiences.

Methodology

The researcher selected narrative interview as the research design for this study.

Narrative approach is a qualitative research method that allows participants to tell their lived experiences (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Researchers utilize this method to interview participants in order to gain their perspectives through open-ended questions created to access their experiential knowledge (Leavy, 2011). Using narrative interview, this study captured and preserved the voices of four Haitian Afro-Caribbean immigrant women as they related their lived experiences regarding educational encounters while attending school in the southern United States.

The study focused on four Haitian Afro-Caribbean women, gathering data through the collection of their stories and reporting their individual schooling experiences and its impact. Participants in the study consisted of first-generation immigrant Afro-Caribbean women. The use of narrative interview provided insight of the women's lived experiences as they navigated their educational arenas. The researcher recruited participants from Haitian Afro-Caribbean women that she knew had attended school in the Southern United States and asked for their assistance in recruiting other study participants. This method, known as snowball sampling or chain method, is a convenience sampling method applied when it is difficult to access subjects with the target characteristics (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). In this method, existing study participants recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. Snowballing is a cost-effective and efficient

way to access people who may otherwise be difficult to find (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018; Naderifar et al., 2017).

Because feminist research indicates that women are usually those who carry out the work of maintaining and expanding social ties and relationships (Noy, 2008), the researcher used snowball sampling to identify participants for this study. The researcher received institutional review board (IRB) approval (see Appendix A) from Georgia Southern University and informed consent from all participants prior to gathering data. Following data collection, the researcher sought to identify commonalities in the participants' stories that led to an understanding of the impact of school situations and its role in shaping the participants' identities. The data were analyzed through coding, by which the interviews were labeled and organized to identify different themes and relationships between them. Chapter 4 presents the findings.

Research Questions

The primary research questions in this study were as follows:

1. What are the experiences of Haitian Afro-Caribbean women who have been educated in the United States?
2. What, if any, is the impact of intersectionality on the lived experiences of Haitian American women who have been educated in Haiti and the United States?
3. Does bicultural socialization and identity have an impact on their educational experience?

Significance of the Study

This study holds educational significance for advancing educational research on Haitian Afro-Caribbean women. Furthermore, it holds significance for advancing the field of curriculum studies. The significance of this study for each of these areas is detailed in the following sections.

Advancing Educational Research on Haitian Afro-Caribbean Women

Exploring the educational experiences of Haitian immigrant women allows for the accumulation of greater knowledge related to the lived experiences of this specific subgroup of Black women. This study advanced educational research by delving into Haitian Afro-Caribbean immigrant women's intersecting identities and educational experiences through an examination of how they navigated educational institutions. Few studies document the educational experiences of the different subgroups of Afro-Caribbean women, specifically Haitian women, or how their culture and socialization influence their learning in a foreign country with different norms and expectations. Educational institutions can use this information to further understand the cultural differences within the subgroups of Black women. This knowledge could play a valuable role in addressing the various needs of different subgroups as the one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate in addressing their various needs. As the women in the study recreated and retold their high school and postsecondary experiences, the researcher sought to ascertain commonalities that led to an understanding of the impact of school situations and their role in shaping their identities.

Advancing the Curriculum Studies Field: The Curriculum of Place

Place is simultaneously historical, cultural, and racial. Gender and race are related to place in that race, gender, or both can determine one's status in society (Edgerton, 1991). In this study, the researcher examined curriculum of place on multiple levels based on its numerous definitions. Under its most popular definition, the researcher examined curriculum of place from the viewpoint of the geographical location from which the Haitian Afro-Caribbean female participants migrated to the geographical location to which they emigrated. Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) stated, "Place is place only if accompanied by a history" (p. 8). The South is a geographic

location with a specific history tied to intersections of race, gender, and class (Ross, 2013). Callejo-Pérez (2013) referred to it as the Southern Mist, while Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) described it as a relationship between place and feeling. Place in curriculum can be associated with location, status, and belonging, as shared in the following sections.

Place as Geography/Location

Those who share a geographical place can provide insight into their lives, including the social and historical ties that link their lives to a particular place (Edgerton, 1991). In this context, both the home country of Haiti and the place where they immigrated to the southern United States held significance in the study participants' experiences. The concept of place served as a backdrop or setting. Just as a story's setting is vital to establishing the tone for the story written in a book, place is essential to examine the lived experiences of Haitian Afro-Caribbean immigrant women. How does one adjust to being in a place surrounded by people with a shared heritage and common culture to coming to a place where the color of one's skin can submerge one into a distinctly different culture? The Haitian Afro-Caribbean women who participated in the study came to a country where they were in the minority—actually several different minority groups—and they had to navigate this new place to survive.

Place as Status

Edgerton (1991) argued that that the concept of the *other* is crucial to understanding the concept of *place*, as place is linked with the construction of difference, them versus us. Place is important to curriculum studies, since those who are excluded have to be included in the curriculum. Understanding the place of others can assist in eliminating the urge to banish others due to their differences. Place can be used to study sameness, differences, identification, otherness, and alienation. Furthermore, it is linked to one's construction of oneself (Edgerton,

1991). Understanding “place” in this way suggests the process known as *making the familiar strange* (Greene, 1973), which implies that stereotypes and clichés need to be examined critically to ascertain their purposes and origins, and finally, challenge them if necessary. The researcher discovered how the Haitian American women in the study interpreted their status in the United States.

Place as Belonging

Place can be seen as where one belongs in the sense of where one senses they belong. Castenell (1991) described “place in the sense that lived experiences of people within a region give meaning to their political, economic, social, and religious orientations” (p. 155). Many immigrants speak of changing as they emigrate from their homeland to the United States. They maintain components of their homeland and acquire new elements in their new environment. Many speak of feeling a sense of in-betweenness (Potter & Philips, 2006). The process of immigration changes people. This study explored the change experienced by the Haitian Afro-Caribbean women participants through the processes of cultural adaptation and acculturation.

Organization of the Dissertation

This chapter served as an introduction to the study that addressed the need for educational studies that consider the unique viewpoints of Haitian Afro-Caribbean women immigrants to the United States. This chapter also provided the significance of the study to the field of curriculum studies.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on Afro-Caribbean educational experiences with a specific focus on the educational experiences of Afro-Caribbean women and Haitian Caribbean women. Chapter 3 delineates the methodology for the study and includes a history of narrative interview, a rationalization for its use in connection with the theoretical concepts

selected for this study, and a discussion of the procedures for data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and includes descriptions of participants, their stories accompanied by participants' quotes, and analysis of their narratives examined from a thematic perspective. Chapter 5 provides a discussion and interpretation of the major findings identified during the data analysis, the implications of the study for the field of curriculum studies, study limitations, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with a general history of the Caribbean and Haiti, specifically. Discussed is the impact of colonialism, capitalism, slavery, and patriarchal influences on the people of the Caribbean and the role each played in the development of the cultural identity of Haitian women. Also, briefly covered are recent events that occurred in Haiti and led to a mass exodus of Haitians to the United States. The second section of this chapter is a review of the literature of Haitian women in institutions of higher education in the United States. Due to the limited research available, the discussion begins with a broader discussion of education of Black women in the United States and an examination of Afro-Caribbean women education in the United States.

History of the Caribbean

Colonized by various European nations, people of the Caribbean have a heritage of ancestors from many nations, including Europe, Africa, China, and India to name a few (Dubois & Garrigus, 2006). Later, the arrival and settlement of West Africans sold as enslaved people and scattered across the Americas to help build the colonial empires and harvest crops on plantations throughout the Caribbean islands further expanded the ancestral gene pool of the people in the Caribbean (Vickerman, 1999). After the abolishment of enslavement (starting in the islands under British control), other groups of people, such as Asians and Indonesians, migrated to the islands as indentured servants or cheaper labor (Vickerman, 1999; Wilson, 2002). Although individuals of African descent make up the majority of the Caribbean's population and their influence is documented in national customs, identities, and cultures of their perspective countries (Dubois, 2004; Vickerman, 1999), the settlement of these various groups further

diversified the people of the Caribbean. Collectively, these various groups were responsible for forming the dynamics of this region via genetic contributions, language, cultural practice, and customs (Vickerman, 1999; Wilson, 2002).

Enslavement, colonialism, migration, and exile are all components of Caribbean history and help to weave a complex and diverse history of the countries in the Caribbean region and their people (Premdas, 2011; Torres-Saillant, 2006). Because the Caribbean is a region of differences, studies and references often focus on a specific locality, island community, or nation. Although collectively called the Caribbean, each island is unique and has its own identity (Premdas, 2011). The convergence of colonialism, capitalism, and the social dynamics of enslavement greatly influenced the countries of the Caribbean (Beckles, 1999).

Colonialism

Colonialism is the umbrella under which other aspects of Caribbean society were manifested. Although Portugal, Sweden, and Denmark also held possession of various islands at different times, the four leading powers that colonized the Caribbean were the Spanish, English, Dutch, and French (Blank, 2013; Vickerman, 1999). Consequently, each of these European countries contributed to the languages, religions, and economic activities of the Caribbean.

Colonialism had a significant impact on the Caribbean in numerous ways (Vickerman, 1999). It drastically altered the ethnic makeup of the Caribbean, thereby creating a social hierarchy in which those of European descent were at the top of the socioeconomic pyramid, controlling most of the wealth and power, although they were the minority population. The middle class consisted of mulattos, people with both African and European heritage, while those of African heritage comprised the majority of the lower economic class (Vickerman, 1999).

In relation to capitalism, colonialism led to its rise and, in large, part provided the economic foundation of the Caribbean. In western society, capitalism is based on producing goods and services at a low price and selling them for a profit (Moore, 2003). During colonial times, the only thing better than cheap labor (indentured servants) was free labor (enslaved people), thus the colonial powers also engaged in the slave trade (Blank, 2013; Vickerman, 1999). The various migratory routes dispersed enslaved people throughout the Caribbean and others in the United States, creating very distinct groups of people. Because the sugar cane plantations that dominated the region required labor to plant and harvest the crops, enslaved people were transported to the region to work (Moore, 2003). Thus, enslavement was a consequence of capitalism (Moore, 2003). Once enslavement was deemed illegal, indentured servants were brought to the region from Asia (Moore, 2003).

Colonialism also played a vital role in the development of the cultures and languages of the Caribbean. Colonization had a significant influence on the established norms of Caribbean people. Caribbean customs differ in each country, but their cultures are a fusion of customs from each island's inhabitants: the natives, the colonizers, the indentured servants, and the enslaved people (Vickerman, 1999). The diversity of people led to a blending of cultures; therefore, biculturalism is present within the different countries, including Haiti.

Some could argue that colonialism had both positive and negative effectives on the Caribbean. Colonial influences can be seen throughout the cultures of the different Caribbean countries in addition to African and native influences. Jamaica Kincaid, an author from Antigua, frequently wrote about the negative effectives of British colonialism as she noted that England tried to turn natives into English, with little regard to the island's native culture. Her people adopted behaviors of colonialism, and her book, *Small Places*, addressed the impact of

colonialism and the influence of homeland on identity and culture (Kincaid, 1988). Kincaid (1988) wrote the following about colonialism in the Caribbean (specifically the island of Antigua):

What I see is the millions of people, of whom I am just one, made orphans: no motherland, no fatherland, no gods, no mounds of earth for holy ground, no excess of love which might lead to the things that an excess of love sometimes brings, and worst and most painful of all, no tongue. (For isn't it odd that the only language I have in which to speak of this crime is the language of the criminal who committed the crime? And what can that really mean?) For the language of the criminal can contain only the goodness of the criminal's deed. The language of the criminal can explain and express the deed only from the criminal's point of view. It cannot contain the horror of the deed, the injustice of the deed, the agony, the humiliation inflicted on me. (pp. 31-32)

Memmi (1957) stated of the colonized, that their memories, history, and language are not that of their people but of those who colonized them. Kincaid's (1988) accounting of the Caribbean people as orphans can apply to many people who have been colonized. The lost knowledge of a people's history, language, and customs leaves individuals feeling as though they do not belong, or at least wondering where they truly belong. Kincaid (1988) and Memmi (1957) explained how colonized people are taught from the perspective of those who colonize them. The teaching frequently discusses the good that came out of colonization, again from the perspective of those ruling over the native inhabitants. The few accounts told from the perspective of the colonized are often disregarded and deemed as not as important as the view shared by the colonizer. The colonized inhabitants who receive schooling are taught about people, places, and the history of their overseers; again, their history is often lost if not preserved through historians

in their culture and passed through generations in oral and/or written forms. These thoughts are supported by Memmi (1957), who questioned, “By what else is the heritage of a people handed down?” (p. 104), to which he answered, “By the education which it gives it children, and by language . . . Traditions and acquirements, habits, and conquests, deeds and acts of previous generations are thus bequeathed and recorded in history” (p. 104).

The native language, or mother tongue, is often lost as the colonized are forced to learn the language of their rulers in order to have any chance of finding work and finding a place in their society. The colonized must bow to the masters’ language, and he can either forget or hide his native tongue (Memmi, 1957). The mother tongue disappears eventually, since it has no value in the country or to the rulers. Because of this, the colonized people often develop a biculturalism and bilingualism that serve as a means for them to participate in two physical and cultural realms. They exist in both worlds. Memmi (1957) contended that bilingualism is necessary as a condition for “all culture, all communication, and all progress but the colonized suffers a cultural catastrophe from which they can never fully recover from” (p. 107). Morris (2016) explained that the cultures of colonized peoples “are erased by colonizing powers. The colonizer’s culture is abandoned as they are forced to learn the culture of the colonizing culture. Language and identity are inextricably intertwined, so by erasing language, part of one’s identity is also erased” (p. 214).

Furthermore, Morris (2016) claimed, “The first way to (mis) educate people is to take away their language and erase part of their identity” (p. 215). Depriving a group of people of their language and history serves to strip away their identity and cultural knowledge, making them feel as though they do not belong. In the words of Haitian American author, Edwidge Danticat (1998), “We’re an orphaned people . . . They say some people don’t belong anywhere

and that's us" (p. 56). The people of each Caribbean nation learned customs from their colonizers and maintained customs from their ancestors. While ancestral customs led to strong familiar bonds, colonization introduced education as a means for upward mobility (Vickerman, 1999). Kincaid (1988) noted that one positive aspect of colonialism was a good educational system that could help the people improve their lives, although she stated that Antigua had failed to promote the importance of education.

The colonized people in the Caribbean, who were often on the lower end of the socioeconomic rungs, were denied citizenship and thereby banned from the political areas and capital gains of enterprise (Vickerman, 1999). They were usually at the opposite end of the continuum when compared to their European colonizers, who were privileged, politically empowered, and at the top of the socioeconomic ladder (Memmi, 1957; Vickerman, 1999). Many of the people on the middle and lower rungs saw education as a way to move up the ladder both economically and socially (Vickerman, 1999). The manner in which the colonized were able to overcome these barriers and retain knowledge of their culture during colonial times may have had a major influence on how the cultural identities of their future generations developed. The formation and fight to maintain their cultural traditions unified the people of each island region. While all of the Caribbean islands experienced colonization and enslavement, one rose to successfully rebel: Haiti.

Saint-Domingue Colony

The indigenous Taino people, who emigrated from South America, were the original inhabitants of the island of Hispaniola (Dubois, 2004; Girard, 2010). Christopher Columbus founded the European settlement, La Navidad, on the northeast, and the French established settlements on the western part of the island. After encountering the Taino people, Columbus

concluded several things. He believed that they would make good servants and embrace Christianity because it appeared that they had no religion (Girard, 2010). Furthermore, they could be taken into captivity and taught Spanish so that they could serve as translators (Girard, 2010). The Conquistadors forced the Taino people into enslavement and made them convert to Christianity; those who refused to convert were killed or their villages burned. Columbus and other Spanish explorers executed the Taino chieftains and enslaved large groups of Taino people to work in the fields and gold mines where they were overworked, mistreated, and underfed (Moya Pons, 1995). Many of the Taino people died from hunger and disease. Others committed suicide, and pregnant women aborted or killed their own children to prevent them from becoming enslaved people (Moya Pons, 1995). Brutal treatment, disease, starvation, and war nearly eradicated the Taino people within two generations (Girard, 2010), leading to the importation of African enslaved people to satisfy labor needs (Moya Pons, 1995).

By the 17th century, most of the natives were dead and the small amount of gold was gone, leaving only a small Spanish presence remaining on the island (Girard, 2010). As other Spanish explorers moved on to Mexico and Peru, those remaining raised cattle in the east, while the western side of the island remained largely uninhabited except for the cows and pigs left by the Spanish until the French arrived and established settlements there (Girard, 2010). The area, ceded to France in 1697, was named Saint-Domingue (Dubois, 2004; Hall, 2012). The colony was one of the richest in the world due to French colonists establishing sugarcane plantations worked by enslaved people, who were the original inhabitants, and Africans brought over during the transatlantic slave trade.

During the 18th century, as France's most prosperous colony, Saint-Domingue became known as "the Pearl of the Antilles" (Girard, 2010, p. 13). However, the French slave owners

were some of the cruelest, and many enslaved people died from malnutrition, exhaustion, and disease. Furthermore, birthrates were low and infant mortality was high. Consequently, the French continuously imported enslaved people from Africa to replenish the work force (Beckles, 1999; Dubois & Garrigus, 2006).

During the French Revolution (1789-1799), enslaved people and free people of color launched the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), led by a former slave and the first Black general of the French Army, Haitian General Francois-Dominique Toussaint Louverture (Girard, 2010; James, 1989). The Haitian slave revolt was the only successful slave revolt in history (Geggus, 2014; James, 1989), and it led the way for other slave revolts, which caused concerns for countries like France and the United States that utilized slave labor. The introduction of the new republic of Haiti (land of high mountains) in 1804 was the first country run by freed enslaved people (Dubois & Garrigus, 2006; Geggus, 2014; James, 1989).

However, Haiti encountered obstacles from other countries, including France, the United States, and the Dominican Republic, which impacted their diplomatic relations in the future (Dubois, 2004; Geggus, 2014; Girard, 2010). The United States and France, along with other countries, refused to acknowledge Haiti as a sovereign independent nation (Dubois, 2004; Geggus, 2014; Girard, 2010). The United States feared revolt from the enslaved people in its southern states, since the 13th amendment abolishing slavery the United States would not occur until 1865 (Dubois, 2004; Geggus, 2014). Even though the United States refused to recognize Haiti as a new nation, it continued to trade with them, importing agricultural products and exporting U.S. products to Haiti (Dubois, 2004; Geggus, 2014; Girard, 2010). The trade agreement was unfavorable to Haiti, causing Haiti to be in massive debt to France and the United States very early during its new independence. Haiti was forced to pay huge reparations to

France if it wanted to receive diplomatic recognition from the major countries (Dubois, 2004; Geggus, 2014; Girard, 2010). The United States' refusal to recognize Haiti's independence had detrimental effects on the new, struggling nation (Dubois, 2004; Geggus, 2014; Girard, 2010).

One Island, Two Countries

The Caribbean island of Hispaniola is home to two countries: Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The two countries have a troubled history due to numerous conflicts that continue to present day (Girard, 2010). Originally, the French colonized the west side of the island, which would later become Haiti, and the Spanish occupied the east side of the island, which would become the Dominican Republic. During the colonial period, the island was called Santo Domingo (Dubois, 2004; Hall, 2012).

In 1492, the Spaniards landed on the island and forced the indigenous people into labor to produce sugar and mine for gold. Shortly after the Spanish invaded the island, the indigenous people were annihilated due to disease and harsh treatment. Spaniards kidnapped and brought Africans into Hispaniola as enslaved people, the first to arrive in the Western Hemisphere (Girard, 2010). The numbers of enslaved people would grow over the decades. Meanwhile, the French established a colony on the western side of the island, causing conflict between France and Spain. Eventually, the island would be divided into Saint-Domingue on the French side and on the Spanish side, Santo Domingo (Girard, 2010).

Originally, both colonies produced sugar, but the people of the Dominican would become cattle farmers. Although they still used slave labor, the relationship between master and owner was different than the traditional slave/master relationship (Pollack, 2011, Eller, 2016). Haiti defeated the French and gained their independence in 1801, then officially became an independent nation January 1, 1804. The Dominican Republic was under Haitian rule for 22

years. After successfully gaining independence from Haiti, the Dominican Republic shortly returned to Spanish rule before gaining their independence from Spain (for the second time) in 1865 and becoming the Dominican Republic (Eller, 2016).

The two countries have many stark contrasts to each other. Haiti, steeped in French culture, embraces its African heritage as well. The Dominican Republic is influenced more by its European mix and Spanish heritage (Pollack, 2011). An aerial view of Hispaniola reveals polar opposites, as Haiti is barren in many areas due to deforestation and coffee production in earlier times, whereas the Dominican Republic is a land full of tropical forests. The amount of rainfall that either side receives is also a contributing factor. Both countries have endured loss of life and bloodshed through fighting throughout their history. The Parsley Massacre occurred when the leader of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Trujillo, ordered Haitian and Dominicans associated with Haitians, killed in 1937. *The Farming of Bones* (1998) by Edwidge Danticat is a historical fiction detailing the massacre.

The troubling history continues to this day, for the citizenships of many Haitian and Dominicans of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic have been revoked. In 2013, the Dominican Supreme Court retroactively removed the citizenships of Dominicans with undocumented Haitian parents, even if they were born in the Dominican Republic (Conde, 2021; Rojas, 2013). Prior to the ruling, citizenship was granted to all children born on Dominican soil once the birth was registered, except those considered in transit (Conde, 2021; Rojas, 2013).

In 2004, the government expanded the definition of “in transit” to include the children of immigrant citizens without documentation. The distinction was finalized in 2010 and passed in a new constitution. The new ruling leaves the immigrants stateless, most of whom are of Haitian ancestry, although other immigrants from Europe and China are also affected. Many of the

immigrants affected by the ruling only know the Dominican Republic as home and have never been to the country of their ancestors (Conde, 2021; Rojas, 2013).

As Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the same island, it is unlikely that they can exist in isolation. Although the countries have a long relationship dating back to colonial times, there will continue to be conflict between the countries until they reconcile their differences which may begin with coming to terms with their past.

Haiti Economic and Social Hardships

Haiti's unstable government and indebtedness to France for their independence created economic hardship during the 19th and 20th centuries, causing a considerable number of Haitians to migrate to the neighboring countries of Cuba and the Dominican Republic in search of work (Girard, 2010). Furthermore, the U.S. occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934 following the assassination of the Haitian president resulted in discriminatory social class distinctions and graft. The U.S. administration in Haiti favored the elite class of Haitians over the working class, and U.S. businessmen capitalized on Haitian resources (Girard, 2010).

In 1937, the Dominican Republic's slaughter of Haitian laborers working in the Dominican Republic and near the border of the two countries exacerbated the tensions between the two countries (Loescher & Scanlan, 1984). Known as the Parsley massacre, this event demonstrated the Dominican perception of Haitians as an inferior race and culture (Danticat, 1998). In addition, the Dominican Republic's declaration of independence from Haiti in 1844 intensified the contention between the two entities over resources, territory, and governance (Geggus, 2014; Girard, 2010).

Between 1937 and 1957, Haiti had numerous presidents and provisional councils of government, until the election of Francois Duvalier in 1957 (Charles, 1995; Loescher & Scanlan, 1984). Large groups of Haitians began fleeing their country under the father and son Duvalier regime, which started in 1957 and continued until 1986 (Charles, 1995; Loescher & Scanlan, 1984). Francois, known as Papa Doc, ruled until 1971 when his son, Jean-Claude, nicknamed Baby Doc, took over until he was overthrown in 1986 (Charles, 1995; Loescher & Scanlan, 1984; Wakhisi, 1994). Francois Duvalier campaigned on extending political and economic power to the Black masses, not just the mulatto elite who dominated at that time (Snyder, 1992).

In the course of his dictatorship, Francois named himself president for life and bestowed that title upon his son, Jean-Claude, prior to his death in 1971 (Charles, 1995; Loescher & Scanlan, 1984; Snyder, 1992). Haiti could be considered a police state during his reign, leading to a mass exodus of Haitians immigrating to the United States and strained relations with the United States after years of the United States providing millions in aid to Duvalier—supposedly for Haiti. Most of the proposed projects were not completed, and no one could account for the money (Abbott, 1988, Fergusson, 1987, Girard, 2010). Kennedy's withdrawal of aid from the country in response to Duvalier's repressive regime further damaged this relationship (Charles, 1995; Loescher & Scanlan, 1984).

During Duvalier's reign, he rewrote Haiti's constitution; reduced the size of the army due to mistrust and concerns of being overthrown; and declared his son as his successor (Girard, 2010; Snyder, 1992). He created his private army, known as Tontons Macoutes (Creole for Uncle Baskets, the Bogeyman of Haitian folklore), that received free rein to torture and assassinate anyone who opposed Duvalier (Abbott, 1988; Fergusson, 1987). Duvalier's regime led to large numbers of Haitians leaving the country to seek refuge in other countries, primarily

in the United States, Canada, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic (Girard, 2010; Snyder, 1992). Edwin Danticat's novel, *The Dew Breaker* (2004), addresses the emotional trauma of the victims tortured and those ordered to carry out the brutal beatings and murders during the repressive rule of Francois Duvalier.

President Kennedy was against Duvalier's corruption and human rights violations. During John F. Kennedy's presidency, the United States actively encouraged Haitians to immigrate. The first to arrive were the upper class who directly threatened the Duvalier regime and their visas were approved by U.S. consular officials (AAME, n.d.; Haggety, 1989). Following Kennedy's assassination, policy changed as his successor Lyndon B. Johnson focus on combating communism. Duvalier support the United States against Fidel Castro therefore the United States government ignored Duvalier's tyranny and stopped encouraging Haitians to immigrate (AAME, n.d.; Haggerty, 1989). The Immigration Act of 1965 (Hart-Cellar Act) which went into full effect on July 1, 1968, launched a new wave of immigrants from the Caribbean. The law permitted legal residents to bring close relatives to the U.S. and also lifted the quotas for countries in the Western Hemisphere, including Haiti and Cuba (AAME, n.d.; Baxter & Norwasteh, 2021).

Duvalier's son, Jean-Claude (Baby Doc), succeeded his father after his death in 1971. He was 19 years old when he became president for life (Abbott, 1988; Fergusson, 1987). Although it is written that he was not as repressive as his father, Haiti continued to suffer greatly economically (Abbott, 1988; Fergusson, 1987). In 1972, boat loads of Haitian refugees began appearing off the coast of Florida. They told stories of political repression and economic deprivation. The Haitian refugees were treated differently than Cuban refugees and they were often returned to Haiti after their requests for political asylum were denied (AAME, n.d.).

In 1986, Jean-Claude and his family boarded a U.S. cargo plane and were exiled to France, ending the Duvaliers' regime (Girard, 2010; Snyder, 1992). Although the French government asked him to leave after granting his temporary asylum, he remained there after no other country would accept him (Girard, 2010). After the devastating earthquake in 2010, Jean-Claude returned to Haiti in 2011 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023b). He died of a heart attack in Port-au-Prince, Haiti in 2014 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023b).

Following the Duvalier era, Haiti has had numerous heads of state in what continues to be a country in turmoil (Girard, 2010). Another President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was exiled from 1991 to 1993, reinstated as president, and reelected, only to be exiled again in 2004. Again, the United States military occupied Haiti from 1994-1997. The reasoning provided for the occupations was to restore democracy and establish peace (Ballard, 1998). The tumultuous leadership and foreign intervention contributed to Haiti's unstable government and economy which played a role in plunging Haiti further into poverty.

Sustained Poverty in Haiti

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (Girard, 2010; Ferguson et al., 2024). More than half of the population lives under the poverty line and relies on subsistence farming to feed their families (Girard, 2010; Ferguson et al., 2024). Multiple factors contribute to Haiti's poverty: years of political instability and corruption; outside interference from other countries, including France and the United States; overuse of its natural resources; deforestation; illiteracy and poverty; devaluation of human capital; and its currency, the gourde (Girard, 2010). Tourism has declined due to concerns with violence and safety and the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

The fact that Haiti gained its independence from France failed to stop foreign powers from intervening in Haiti's affairs. Haiti had to pay reparations to France, which caused a majority of Haiti's revenues to be appropriated for paying off debt (Geggus, 2014; Girard, 2010). The United States would occupy Haiti twice after their independence, during which time it controlled their security and finances.

The country has misused both its natural resources and human capital. Mass deforestation, beginning during colonial times to create plantations and continuing in modern times due to overpopulation and the need for money, has caused erosion that has led to poor crop harvesting and exposed towns to flooding as the rain comes off the mountainous terrain (Girard, 2010). The floods polluted the rivers and other water sources, which damaged the fishing industry.

In 1982, a significant outbreak of the swine fever amongst Creole pigs led to the Duvalierist police killing all of the pigs at the behest of the United States due to fear of it spreading to the United States. The United States donated American pigs which they felt would be better than the smaller Creole pigs (Girard, 2010). Instead, the American pigs required more care, such as feed and medical care. The pigs died from inadequate care, leaving the farmers without any form of livestock and more destitute (Girard, 2010). Without income, many farmers were unable to pay for their children's tuitions and illiteracy increased during those years. Poverty and illiteracy led to more problems because it has made exploitation easier (Girard, 2010). As a country, Haiti has few employment opportunities.

The different governments reigning over Haiti also misused their people, human capital. Earlier leaders sent peasants to the Dominican Republic to cut sugar cane for a predetermined per person fee. Later the strain from economic and political problems caused mass exodus from

the country, first of the professional and educated Haitians and later the poor who were so desperate that they were willing to risk their lives on almost anything that would float in hopes of reaching the other islands or the United States for a chance to start over (Girard, 2010).

The country is heavily dependent on external revenue, including trade, funding for disaster-relief, and development programs. The United States is Haiti's largest trade partner, followed by Canada and Mexico (Girard, 2010; Pierre, 2020), yet it imports more than it exports. In addition to the devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake near the capital in 2010 and the 7.2 earthquake that struck the southwest of Haiti, the country is prone to hurricanes, flooding and landslides. Although aid is offered by other countries and humanitarian agencies, the mismanagement of aid funds means that the country experiences little relief. In recent times, natural disasters, the impact of violence and the worldwide pandemic have impacted tourism. The political instability and economic woes have caused the devaluation of the gourde (Girard, 2010; Pierre, 2020). These numerous factors have all contributed to Haiti's persistent poverty and also significantly influenced the treatment of Haitian women.

Present Day

Haiti is currently facing ongoing political, social, and economic challenges, marked by rising violence, economic crises, and natural disasters. The assassination of President Jovenel Moise in July 2021 has contributed to a further deterioration of the government, with the United Nations warning about the spreading violence and lawlessness in the country ("Haiti president's assassination," 2024). Recent events include the takeover of two prisons by gang members, resulting in a reported mass escape of nearly all 4,000 inmates in the Port-au-Prince prison (Meredith, 2024; Merancourt & Taylor, 2024). A state of emergency has been declared, and temporary leadership assumed by Finance Minister Boisvert, as Prime Minister Ariel Henry is in

Kenya seeking assistance. The turmoil has prompted various responses from neighboring countries, such as the Dominican Republic reinforcing its border fence, the Bahamas recalling embassy staff, and the U.S. and Mexico issuing travel advisories for their citizens to leave Haiti. Brazil is advocating for a multinational force, while Haiti seeks international assistance to combat the escalating gang-related issues (Morland, Hilaire, and Isaac, 2024).

Subordination of Haitian Women

Although both women and children were subject to violence during the Duvalier's rule, the impact was especially significant on women. Prior to the Duvalier's rule, the code of Haitian patriarchy relayed the perception of women as weak (Charles, 1995). These acts played a role in restructuring and redefining gender roles and creating two categories of women: (a) the Marie Jeannes, named after a rebellious slave woman, represented daughters of the revolution who served members of the state paramilitary forces, and (b) the women who were not loyal to the Duvalierist cause, and considered enemies of the state (Charles, 1995). A few Black middle-class women experienced social mobility as members of Tonton Macoute, Duvalier's special operations unit. Other women were silenced or fell victim to the regime.

The Duvalierist state used gender symbols to assert power and domination (Charles, 1995; Girard, 2010). Charles (1995) argued that this new role within the political framework became possible, as massive numbers of Haitians immigrated to the United States and Europe, creating Haitian diasporas. Haitian women in communities across North America gained a new consciousness of empowerment that favored the growth of women feminist groups (Charles, 1995).

In the 21st century, gender roles and household relations still reinforce Haitian women's subordination, even in households where women have a relatively independent economic role.

Poor and middle-class women continue to be the most exploited groups in Haitian society (Charles, 1995). One of the female ministers of the Aristide government, Myrtho Celestin-Sorel, stated, “What is being a woman in Haiti? We have to be women in a society of deprivation and poverty, of survival and misery, of repression and corruption” (as cited in Charles, 1995, p. 142).

Throughout the history of Haiti, women have played a role in the fight for independence and economic improvement. They have actively participated in agriculture, commerce, and industry and suffered from Haiti’s political instability (Beckles, 1999; Charles, 1995; Girard, 2010). Although often under documented, the status of Haitian women continues to be impacted, similar to that of other Afro-Caribbean women during and after enslavement (Beckles, 1999; Henry, 2017).

The government in Haiti is classified as unstable due to numerous attempts to overthrow the leader in power, regime changes, internal conflicts, and assassinations of its presidents. Despite its instability, or perhaps because of it, Haiti has produced several notable figures.

Notable People of Haitian Descent

Over the course of Haiti’s rich history, it has given rise to legendary figures in art, music, and literature. There are numerous famous people with Haitian heritage, from actors and singers to writers. The people discussed in this section are a sample of the numerous Haitian people who influenced art, music, and writing.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

Jean-Michel Basquiat was an artist popular in the United States during the 1980s. Born on December 22, 1960 of mixed heritage, his father emigrated from Port-Au-Prince, Haiti and his mother was born in Brooklyn, New York to Puerto Rican parents, his artwork was rumored to mimic his conflict with his heritage. His artwork often reflected tension between polar opposites

such as Black and White, rich and poor, and inner experiences versus outer experiences.

Basquiat was fluent in French, Spanish and English. He also spoke Creole. Although his career was short-lived—he died at the age of 27—he collaborated with artist Andy Warhol and others of the time. His artwork often reflected Haitian, Puerto Rican, African and African-American history and the impact of colonial influences and continue to be well-known today (Hoban, 1998).

Ti Manno

Antoine Rossini Jean-Baptiste, born Emmanuel Jean-Baptiste, was born on June 1, 1953 in Gonaives, Haiti. He was known as Ti Manno and dubbed the Prophet due to his songs and lyrics outlining the condition of the Haitian people, power harassments, discrimination, and sexism (Mocombe, 2019). He was not only a singer but he played the guitar, keyboard and percussions. He was the lead singer of the DP Express, one of the most popular Haitian bands of the late 1970s (Opamusic.com, 2004). He died in 1985 at the age of 31.

Garcelle Beauvais

Garcelle Beauvais was born the youngest of seven children on November 26, 1966 in Saint-Marc, Haiti to Alex Jean Pierre, a lawyer, and Marie-Claire Beauvais, a nurse. When her parents divorced at the age of three, her mother moved to Massachusetts with the children. Originally, Beauvais spoke French and Creole but learned English after coming to the United States (Restavek Freedom, 2017). When she was 17, she became a model (Restavek Freedom, 2017) and later an actress, television personality, and children's author. She had starring roles on the *Jamie Foxx Show* and *NYPD Blue*. She also appeared in the movie, *Coming to America* (1988), *White House Down* (2013), and *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) (TMDB, n.d.). At age 46, she started a jewelry business for children (Restavek Freedom, 2017).

Roxane Gay

Roxanne Gay was born on October 15, 1974 in Omaha, Nebraska to Michael and Nicole Gay.

Both of her parents were of Haitian descent. Her father was a civil engineer, and her mother was a homemaker (Ostberg, 2024). Roxanne is a writer, professor and editor. Her writings address complex topics such as feminism, identity, and privilege. In 2016, Marvel Comics announced Gay, along with poet Yona Harvey, as writers for *World of Wakanda*. The six-issue comic series is a spin-off from the *Black Panther* title (Ostberg, 2024).

Edwidge Danticat

Edwidge Danticat was born on January 19, 1969 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti to Andre Danticat and Rose Danticat. Her parents moved to the United States, leaving her brother and her in Haiti with an aunt and uncle. At the age of 12, she joined her parents in the United States (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023a). She had difficulty adjusting to her new life in the United States and used writing as a way to escape. Her parents wanted her to have a career in medicine, but she became a writer instead. She writes about Haiti and its people. Her novels are often based on events that happened in Haiti although the characters are fictional. Her writings focus on women and their relationships, while also addressing the complexities of immigrant experiences and the issues of poverty, power and injustice. Her book, *Krik? Krak?* (1995) tells the stories of various Haitian families as they experience painful events or recall haunting memories. Danticat addresses historical events, such as the Haitian boat people fleeing Haiti, the Parsley Massacre and the experience of being an immigrant in New York (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023a).

Wyclef Jean

Wyclef Jean, the son of Yolando Jean and Gesner Jean, was born Nel Ust Wycliffe Jean on October 17, 1969 in Croix des Bouquets, Haiti (TheHistoryMakers, 2016). At the age of nine,

he and his younger brother joined his parents in New York after being raised by relatives when the parents immigrated to the United States earlier (Pallardy, 2023). His father was a Nazarene minister, and Wyclef was in the church choir. He would become a member of a group known as the Fugees with Lauryn Hill (TheHistoryMakers, 2016) and later become a Grammy Award-winning artist, known as a Haitian rapper, producer, and philanthropist. As an activist for Haiti, he played a role in raising funds when a catastrophic magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti in 2010 (TheHistoryMakers, 2016). He collaborated with one of the co-writers of *We Are the World*, Lionel Richie (the other writer, Michael Jackson, died in 2009), to produce *We Are The World 25 for Haiti* (Pallardy, 2023). The song featured a host of celebrities singing lyrics from the original song and words written to address the calamity in Haiti (see Appendix B).

The Arts in Haiti

Similar to other areas of Haitian history, vodou and social class had an impact of the Arts in Haiti. Skin color played a role in the determination of social class because the affranchise (free persons of color) consisted of milat (light-skinned), and nwa (dark-skinned) became the new elite after the Haitian Revolution. Other factors also influenced one's social class: family name, a person's education, phenotypical features, and the ability to speak French (Largey, 1994).

Music

The development of Haitian classical or "learned" music (*misik savant ayisyen*) was shaped by Haitian elites and the rural Haitian masses as their relationship with foreign powers led to changes in attitude toward Haiti's national identity (Largey, 1994). Although the French were driven out of Haiti, remnants of French music remained. The previous French-owned theaters housed performances, which included pantomimes and dance troupes, that reflected the new political climate of the country (Largey, 1994). In subsequent years, the Haitian government

became the primary sponsor of musical activity, thereby shifting away from the French models of musical performances (Largey, 1994). These music groups, known as fanfa-yo (wind bands), provided the music for military drills and parades. Intended for a larger, socially diverse audience, the music was often performed in free outdoor concerts in an effort to promote political agendas (Largey, 1994).

In the early 1800s, the Haitian government oversaw music education, which was offered at the elite schools. In 1860, shortly after a concordat signed by President Fabre Nicolas Geffrard with the Vatican established Roman Catholicism as the official religion in Haiti, Catholic parochial education came to Haiti (Largey, 1994). This move officially opened up the country to European powers for the first time since the Haitian Revolution. It would bring in a group of trained teachers to supplement the poorly funded education system. It would be funded by European religious orders, thereby relieving the Haitian government of the financial burden of paying for education. Haiti's president would open a national school of music open to all Haitian people (Largey, 1994).

In the 1920s, during the U.S. occupation of Haiti, resentment against the occupation continued to grow. While the light-skinned elites advocated for partnerships with the U.S. government in hopes to maintain political power once the United States left, the dark-skinned elites developed a cultural movement, *le mouvement indigene* (known as Negritude outside of Haiti), a new racial ideology that suggested distinct mental and physical characteristics for Black people and encouraged the development of unique Haitian poetry, art, and music (Largey, 1994; Wilcken, 2005).

Led by writers such as Jean Price-Mars and Emmanuel Paul, the movement turned to Haiti's African heritage for their cultural artifacts and ancestry. It would also be called upon to

use musical materials more closely associated with their African ancestry, namely the music of the vodou ceremony, which contrasted with the anti-vodou attitudes of the Haitian elite (Largey, 1994; Wilcken, 2005), who associated vodou with the abitan (people outside, i.e. marginal) and distanced themselves from abitan both spiritually and geographically (Largey, 1994; Wilcken, 2005). Vodou included music and dance. Numerous Haitian musicians would create music influenced by vodou and rara (street festival bands). Artists such as Tiga, composer Gerard-Merceron and music groups, Foula, Sanba-Yo and Sakad have incorporated these music forms into their work (Largey, 1994).

Visual Art

Haiti's art is a balance between African culture and European influences. The artists are divided by self-taught artist and academic artists, correlated to issues of class that are evident throughout Haiti (Morris, 2005). Petion Savain was the first Haitian modernist. His work was influenced by Dr. Jean Price-Mars (Morris, 2005).

In 1928, Dr. Jean Price-Mars published a Haitian folklore book, *Ainsi Parla l'Oncle (So Spoke the Uncle)*, that reflected cultural pride and played a role in changing the colonial consciousness, for it would be one of the cornerstones that would later lay the foundational roots for the growth of Black Pride and Civil Rights movement in the United States (Joseph, 2011). In Haiti, Mars is often regarded as one of the most important Haitian intellectuals in the 20th century for launching a cultural nationalism and anti-imperial movement against the U.S. occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934 (Joseph, 2011). He fostered national unity among Haitians, regardless of social class, as they rebelled against the occupation of the U.S. military in Haiti. The book examined the Vodou faith (Joseph, 2011).

Although influenced by Europe, Haitian art is tied to a nationalistic interest in its own culture, and it has become a subject of artists all over the world, including writer Andre Breton from France, the Cuban painter Wildredo Lam and the Martiniquan poet Aimé Césaire (Morris, 2005). The underlying source of Haitian art materials is drawn from its slave roots, African and French heritage, Catholicism, and vodou to create a diverse range of art. Filtered through a Caribbean lens, many works depict market scenes, workers, landscapes and religious imagery. Other Haitian artist based their work on issues of colonialism, self-recognition, self-determination, and local events (Morris, 2005). The work of Jean -Michel Basquiat, a Haitian artist living in New York, often reflected Haiti's history and the influence of colonialism (Hoban, 1998). African American artists were influenced by Haiti as well. Jacob Lawrence, a visual artist in Harlem, created his Toussaint L'Ouverture series. The 41-panel piece depicted the story of Haiti's struggle to become the second republic in the Western Hemisphere (Thompson, 2007).

Literature

Haitian literature, deeply steeped in the political history of Haiti, serves as an inspiration for the country's literature (Dash, 2005; Merriam, 2015). The people, revolutions and upheavals, and rites of Haiti's rich history create a large selection of material from which intellectuals can choose to write. Vodou is intertwined throughout Haiti's culture, as religion, music, visual art, and literature. It is a part of the country's literature and oral history as much as it is part of the country's faith (Merriam, 2015).

Haitian literature is becoming more prolific in recent times, although there have always been authors willing to write about the country and its people. In earlier writing, there was a strong French influence. Any work that would be widely available would have to be translated in French, Spanish, or English, which limited books in Creole since many of the people of Haiti

were illiterate (Merriam, 2015). Educated elites writing in French did most of the writing. Writings in Creole did not gain enough of a following to warrant translations, and most people who spoke Creole relied on oral traditions since they could not read or write (Dash, 2005). Creole is frequently used in poetry and theatre because more can enjoy it since it is can be spoken (Dash, 2005).

The National novelists, comprised of Frederic Marcelin, Fernand Hebbert, and Justin Lherisson, sought to create a unique Haitian literature, as they were aware of Haiti's problems and foreign criticism (Romain, 1997). They focused on the representation of Haitian women, incorporating images of women from all backgrounds and lifestyles in Haiti. Women were used to normalize Haiti's culture as women engaging in the same daily activities as women around the world and countering the exotic views of mystic religions, and corrupt politicians. The National novelists wanted to portray a realistic picture of Haiti's people, which entailed exploring the Afro-Haitian customs (Romain, 1997).

The Duvalier era impacted Haitian literature just as it left it imprint on other areas of Haitian life. As there was a mass exodus from Haiti as many Haitians fled to live in exile in fear of their life due to speaking out against the leaders, Haitian authors abroad wrote of displacement, dreams of returning home, and refinement of Haitian identity (Dash, 2005; Tachtiris, 2012) The younger generation of Haitian writers living in Canada and the United States explored a freedom with writing that many did not have in Haiti without fear of retaliation (Dash, 2005; Tachtiris, 2012).

Today, numerous women authors incorporate Caribbean life in general and Haiti specifically into their literature. Some of these authors are from Haiti, such as Edwidge Danticat; others like Roxanne Gay are second-generation Haitians living in the United States, or those

born in the United States of mixed heritage, like Vanessa Riley, who writes about Haitian and Caribbean characters. Zora Neale Hurston, an African-American author and trained anthropologist (Trefzer, 2000), visited Jamaica and Haiti in the late 1930s and wrote novels about each country as well as novels about Black women in the south. Her novel, *Tell My Horse* (1938), documents her travels through Haiti and Jamaica as she researched Vodou practices in both countries.

Religion

The primary religions practiced in Haiti are Catholicism and Vodou. Vodou is not considered a separate religion but one that is practiced within Roman Catholicism. Both religions were brought to the island by way of the European colonizers or African enslaved people.

Roman Catholicism stems from colonialism, while Vodou is birthed from the African diaspora.

Catholicism

Roman Catholicism became the official religion of Haiti in 1697 and remained the official religion until 1985. Francois and Jean-Claude Duvalier, father and son dictators, broke the reign of Catholicism as Haiti's established religion (Largey, 1994). The Episcopal, Baptist, Protestant and Methodist church groups have grown significantly in recent years. As one of the oldest Christian religions, Roman Catholicism has played a key role in Haitian history. European missionaries brought Catholicism to the island and reinforced its practice (Largey, 1994; McAlister, 2002)

Vodou

Vodou is a syncretic religion that combines aspects of the West African Vodun religion and Roman Catholicism by the descendants of the Kongo, Yoruba, and Dahomean, and other ethnic groups that were enslaved and transported to colonial Saint-Domingue (Largey, 1994,

McAlister, 2002). Later, these groups would be partially Christianized by Roman Catholic missionaries (McAlister, 2002). In the language of the Dahomey, the word Vodou means spirit or deity.

The fundamental principle of Vodou is that everything is a spirit. Humans are spirits who inhabit the visible world and the unseen world is inhabited by spirits, mysteries, angels, the invisibles and the spirits of ancestors and the recently deceased. All of the spirits live in a cosmic Africa, which is a mythic land called Ginen. The creator of both the universe and the spirits, is the God of the Christian Bible. The spirits were created by God to help Him govern humanity and the natural world. The activity of Vodou, involving music, song and dance, is to offer prayers and perform various devotion rites directed to God and particular spirits in return for health, favor, and protection. The goal is to *sevi lwa* (serve the spirits). The goal of the rituals is to restore balance between people and the spirits of the unseen world (McAlister, 2002).

Wilcken (2005) explained that Vodou has been an oral tradition, communicated by a people who are not literate. Since early times in Haiti, literacy implies privilege, and the Haitian elite and foreigners have monopolized the written accounts of Vodou. Vodou dance is known as the “meditation of the body” (Wilcken, 2005, p.195). Wilcken (2005) stated, “Vodou has been largely a spirituality and a dance of Haiti’s masses, embodying specific experiences of marginality, oppression, and resistance, in contradistinction to the Haitian intellectual’s experiences of privilege” (p. 207).

Role of Women Within the Caribbean Community

Caribbean women have an invaluable role within their community. Committed to educating future generations, they are the primary care givers. They maintain, reform, and pass on their culture. They engage extended family and other relationships within their community in

the rearing of their young. They maintain strong ties to their African heritage and cultural traditions (Wilentz, 1992). The mother's role as primary educator in daily life and the formation of traditions is evident throughout Caribbean and African culture. In their home country, many women-led households rely on multiple generations of women within the kinship (i.e., grandmothers, aunts) or mothers of the community (older women) to help with child rearing responsibilities. Throughout the Caribbean, women often raise children that are not their biological offspring to help other families cope with challenging economic circumstances (Blank, 2013). In addition to taking care of the home, women may earn income outside the home with small jobs or businesses such as street vending (Wint & Dunn, 1997).

The matrifocal family unit is common throughout the Caribbean. In a matrifocal household, the mother is the center of the domestic domain but not in a dominant manner. Mothers and their children form the basis of the family unit, as the men tend to be marginalized. Women are the main providers economically, as well as the decision makers regarding the needs of the household members. Women may have complete control over the income and spending money within the household, or they may be the primary earner but not the only earner in the home (Blank, 2013). Men may live in the home or be absent from the home. If a man is present in the home, the woman may defer to his authority. Women rely on other female family members, such as their mothers or siblings, to help care for the family (Blank, 2013).

Typically, young Caribbean women outperform young men in secondary education, but they are more likely to be underemployed or unemployed after graduation, which contributes to the likelihood of them and their children living in poverty (Spencer, 2021). In interviews of Caribbean women conducted by the World Bank Group (2019), the women attributed their success to the support of their family. Many noted that although their parents did not receive a

formal education, they instilled in them the importance of getting a good education and being a role model for the next generation. They were also self-motivators who wanted a better life, so they worked hard to obtain it.

Haitian women maintain family patterns similar to their French colonizers. The women play a large role in the economy, as they often engage in work outside the home, ranging from selling goods at the market, domestic work, working in factories, or offering services as a midwife or childcare services. Many Haitian women are the head of their household, since they may live without a husband with their children and other relatives. Although this may be the case, Haitian women are still in a subordinate role and still defined in relation to home and domesticity. Even in households where women may have a relative independent economic role, the authority resides with the senior male, if he is present (Charles, 1995).

Haitian Women History: Afro-Caribbean Women Status

The slave women of Santo Domingo led similar lives to those of other Afro-Caribbean women during that time. They are rarely mentioned separately; therefore, this section describes the lives of Afro-Caribbean women in general. Although midwifery was one high-status position for enslaved females of the Caribbean (Madrigal, 2006), the majority worked in the fields, as household servants, and as a reserve sexual labor force (Beckles, 1999; Green, 2006).

Afro-Caribbean women did most of the hard labor on the sugar plantations, which often led them to be injured, impaired their health, caused infertility, and resulted in low-life expectancy (Madrigal, 2006). According to Green (2006), some theorists argue the absence of White women on the Caribbean plantation afforded Afro-Caribbean women a slightly different status than their U.S. counterparts. The offspring of slave women and European Creole, or free Black males, were classified as mulatto, colored, or Creole. They inherited their mother's slave

status unless they were set free or bought and granted freedom by their fathers (Madrigal, 2006). Despite being excluded from the most valued crafts and skilled jobs and apprenticeships, which were reserved for male enslaved people and new world-born enslaved people (Madrigal, 2006), Afro-Caribbean women historically existed as the backbone in their African-descent communities. Currently, they exhibit economic and domestic independence, regardless of their varying languages, histories, and geographic locations (Henry, 2017).

Enslavement's Impact on Family Dynamics

Although Madrigal (2006) noted evidence of strong family bonds within Caribbean slave communities despite their owner's separation of family members and reported "cases of entire families headed by a female or by a couple, who were able to buy their freedom together" (p. 18), plantation life altered the family dynamics for enslaved people and indentured servants. The characteristics associated with family did not apply to enslaved people, who the enslavers considered property to breed in order to produce more enslaved people for labor or sale. Furthermore, the separation of men and women, which not only altered what Europeans considered a typical family unit but also had a profound impact on Africans who had specific cultural practices, kinship ties, and ideologies of morality, prohibited a proper union in the African context of (Bush, 1990).

These altered family dynamics persisted after the end of enslavement. During the abolishment of enslavement, marriage was not seen as an essential aspect of social acceptance, and Afro-Caribbean women were reluctant to marry for fear of losing the privilege of strong parental domination over their household and their children (Momsen, 1993). Originally, enslaved women were subject to the patriarchal dominance of European and African men. As men became less involved in Afro-Caribbean women's lives, women received new opportunities

(Momsen, 1993; Vickerman, 1999). With the end of enslavement, women were able to use some of their skills such as cooking, sewing, and other domestic chores to provide income for their families while continuing to take care of their families. After enslavement, Green (2006) contended,

Caribbean women continue to negotiate between hegemonic constraints and opportunities for autonomy within their own tradition of independent economic agency. They continued to endure the backlash regarding male disadvantage. It was the latest in a long line of periodic demands of a discursive realignment of besieged gender models that would preserve male privilege and female marginality. (p. 27)

As men migrated to find work in different trades, or different islands and locations, Afro-Caribbean women were more or less confined to the domestic role of raising children and managing the affairs of the household with the support of other family members, while the men established networks outside the home. This family structure mimicked the European values of women being homemakers and kept within the home and the man being the breadwinner and the representative of the family (Green, 2006). Many Afro-Caribbean women engaged in economic opportunities while taking care of their families. The jobs outside of the home provided money, which the women often used to educate their children (Green, 2006; Vickerman, 1999). This family structure was significantly different from the Afro-American family. Women had to work outside of the home to support their family because their men often were unable to find work to support their family or because many men left their homes due to the guilt or inability to take care of their families (Green, 2006; Girard, 2010).

Although enslavement was pervasive in both the Caribbean and the United States, one major difference was that Blacks (enslaved people and freed Blacks) in the Caribbean were

aware that they outnumbered their masters. According to Vickerman (1999), the plantation owners were aware as well, and many plantation owners were unable to deal with the tropical climate. Efforts to keep a set ratio of Whites workers on the plantation to manage the slave labor were unsuccessful, as indentured servants and apprentices paid off their service debt and left the plantation (Beckles, 1999; Vickerman, 1999). Therefore, many Afro Caribbean enslaved people and plantation workers received more autonomy. More autonomy allowed for increased industry and opportunity, which led to families having the opportunity to buy freedom and later education. Hence, colonialism played an influential role in Afro Caribbean people seeking education and economic opportunities as a way out of poverty. Colonialism influenced patriarchy in Haiti, and the patriarchal system had a significant impact on how women were treated (O'Connor, 2014).

Patriarchal System's Effect on Educational Access for Women

The history of Afro-Caribbean women and access to education is intertwined with European colonialism. Afro-Caribbean women existed in a colonial system based on a patriarchal system, yet females were part of a family structure where men were often marginal and absent (Momsen, 2002). These conditions gave way to female-headed households and female economic autonomy. Most women could only access lower-skill job opportunities as they worked to earn wages and take care of their families (Momsen, 2002; O'Connor, 2014).

Gender inequality is one part of systemic inequalities linked to patriarchal systems due in part to the history of colonialism (Momsen, 2002). The capitalist and patriarchal systems have continuously lowered working conditions and pay and created a sexual division of labor, thereby contributing to gender inequality. The jobs and duties performed by women are undervalued, a phenomenon that has served to reinforce the beliefs that women are not equal to men (Momsen,

2002; O'Connor, 2014). Although throughout slavery women enslaved people were expected to perform to the same expectation as men regardless of whether they were pregnant or nursing, women were often labeled unreliable. The placement of women in subordinate and economically dependent situations as they were confined into distinct roles created a hierarchy, in which males were at the top (Momsen, 2002). Some of these viewpoints continue to this day as many women are forced into positions defined as “woman’s work,” such as nursing, teaching, and domestic work, while in other professions, women performing the same duties as their male counterparts do not receive equal pay. Many positions, characterized by low status and low pay, maintain the patriarchal hierarchy (Ramos, 2012). Patriarchal societies impact the opportunities afforded to women and how women are treated (O'Connor, 2014).

Freeman (2005) asserted that colonial indoctrination devalues the Black culture and continues to hinder the educational experiences of Blacks around the world. With that said, the experiences of Afro-Caribbean women are as diverse as the countries they represent; therefore, a generic “one size fits all” model of Afro-Caribbean women’s college experiences does not provide an adequate understanding of ethnicity, racial, and gender differences that exist among Afro-Caribbean women attending U.S. educational institutions. Similar to other Afro-Caribbean people, many from Haiti see education as an opportunity for economic and social mobility (Vickerman, 1999; Waters, 2001). Within that group, transnational women from Haiti living in the United States understand the importance of education as well, although few studies exist that document their educational experiences in the United States.

Education and Afro-Caribbean Immigrants

African American women can experience intersecting oppressions based on race, gender, social class, ability, and other social markers of identity (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991).

Crenshaw (1991) coined the term *intersectionality* to define the multiple factors of disadvantage and barriers and their compounding effect on African American women. Fourmillier et al. (2013) argued, “The use of overarching/umbrella categories of race/ethnicity that are currently used to identify migrant and minority groups fail to address the distinct real-world perspectives, sociocultural practices, and identities that exist in authentic ways with which individuals may identify” (p. 263). Often the way an individual identifies themselves is not taken into consideration. Intersectionality allows for an examination of the various ways in which social constructs and categories frame an individual’s identity (Cho et al., 2013)

Using the theory of intersectionality, this study contends that Haitian women face compounded complexities of ethnicity, gender, and immigration status. Although women of African descent often face similar challenges, subgroups and individual Black women differ in how they experience educational barriers and its significance on their lived experiences. They have both collective and individualized experiences and understandings of being a Black woman that Collins (2000) described as unity within diversity.

Although many Afro-Caribbean immigrants are aware of the harsh history of Afro-Americans in the United States, they do not necessarily share the same attitudes or concepts of Blackness as their African American counterparts (Vickerman, 2016; Waters, 2001). Waters (2001) explained that Afro-Caribbean immigrants have high ambitions and expectations since they come from a society with a majority of Blacks, many in high positions; thus, they are often conditioned to the concept that education increases opportunity for upward mobility. They are aware of the racial problems in the United States, so they expect there will be difficulties, and they are prepared to address them. However, education is a process to prepare members of the next generation to take their rightful place as future leaders (Coleman-Burns, 1989). Therefore,

the benefits offered through education outweigh the difficulties that they are willing to encounter. In their home country, socioeconomic standing—not race—is deemed the primary dividing factor of an individual’s upward mobility. The World Bank Group (2022) asserted, “Education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and lays a foundation for sustained economic growth” (para. 1). Therefore, access to education increases one’s chances of having a higher socioeconomic status.

Similar to other U.S. citizens, Blacks sought to use education as a tool for liberation and equality. The purposes of education for African American women were often broad and constantly changing (Vickerman, 2016; Waters, 2001). As educational attainment, especially a college degree, tends to contribute substantially to an individual’s economic, social, and political success, Black women (African American, Afro-Caribbean, or African) have become one of the most successful minority subgroups in attaining high school and college diplomas (Kaba, 2008).

As the Afro-Caribbean immigrants become versed in the customs and ways of the United States, they become transnationals, defined by Skerret and Omogun (2020) as people who live their lives across two or more nations and hold strong, multiple attachments to their nation-states (Skerret & Omogun, 2020). Black immigrants have ethnoracial identities composed of unique mosaics of culture, history, language, geography, and other factors (Skerrett & Omogun, 2020) and understand their diversity, but they do not comprehend why and how they are assigned to a monolithic category of Black in the United States; thus, they oppose it. Their experiences with discrimination—whether it is racial, cultural, or linguistic—demonstrate that race continues to operate as a social fact in school and society (Doucet, 2014; Henry, 1998; Smith, 2019). Black immigrants living in the United States have made comments such as “I understood class and gender. Race I had to learn” (Johnson, 2016, p. 32). Many Haitian transnationals have similar

experiences and as a community have united because they recognize the unfairness and inequality of their circumstances in the United States as many continue to suffer insults and endure stereotypes (Wakhisi, 1994).

Educational Experiences of Black Women

A review of relevant literature that focused on the educational experiences of Black women (immigrant and non-immigrant) revealed an array of different studies. Search topics included “Black immigrant women and education;” “transnational Black women and education;” “foreign-born Black women and education;” “Afro-Caribbean immigrant studies;” “Haitian women and education;” and “second-generation Afro-Caribbean students.” Many of the studies did not distinguish between African American, Afro-Caribbean, and African students.

K-12 Education

Although the number of studies conducted about the education of Black women has increased, research regarding the education of Black women often fails to distinguish between subgroups, such as African American, Afro Caribbean, or African. Research on Black transnationals’ educational opportunities and outcomes in U.S. institutions are limited, since race, nativity, and ethnicity data are often not collected (Cokley et al., 2016). Studies that do distinguish between the groups frequently examine the educational characteristics of Black immigrants in comparison to Black children born to U.S.-born parents (Hudley, 2016; Thomas, 2009). These studies concluded that children of Black immigrants typically fare better than do children of U.S.-born, Black parents. The results were similar for first- and second-generation immigrant students, since both groups were less likely to fall significantly behind in comparison to African American students (Thomas, 2009). Hudley (2016) noted that members of all of the subgroups—Black immigrants, second-generation and non-immigrant, Black student

subgroups—experienced deficiencies in their K-12 education regardless of their immigrant history. Neither study focused solely on women. Hudley (2016) reported that Black immigrant students achieved higher scores in math overall, while African American students achieved higher scores in reading. The research ascertained that Black students (regardless of subgroups) experienced deficits in their K-12 educational experiences, yet their postsecondary academic achievements were not the same when the data were separated by subgroups (Hudley, 2016).

In their study of Black Caribbean immigrants to the United States, Taylor et al. (2019) concluded that Black Caribbean immigrants may experience discrimination due to shared phenotypes with African Americans once they are in the United States that they may not have experienced in their homeland. In their study of ethnic minority students attending predominately White secondary schools, Chapman and Bhopal (2018) discovered these students faced unique challenges in their learning environment and complex sets of experiences related to their status as Non-White students. For examples, school staff often stereotyped and engaged in over-surveillance of African American and Black Caribbean students. Using representational intersectionality as the framework as it focuses on stereotype construction that impact women's relationship with groups and individuals and examines their perceptions of themselves (Crenshaw, 1991), the researchers concluded that African American and Black Caribbean students' experiences were stratified by race, social class, and gender. The intersection of race with gender and class resulted in different educational experiences for the students and often & Bhopal, 2018). The study highlighted that the complexities faced by both groups of students not only impact their academic achievement but also their self-esteem and self-efficacy.

In another study of K-12 education of Black individuals, Neal-Jackson (2018) highlighted the experiences of young, Black women. Some of the women stated they felt unfairly

handicapped in their K-12 educational endeavors due to school staff perceptions of their Black femininity as a hindrance rather than a resource. Neal-Jackson (2018) argued, “By constantly attributing the young women’s school-based challenges and academic underperformance to problems inherent in the young women themselves, the institutionalized racism and inequity that the students encounter was rendered invisible” (p. 538).

Thomas’s (2009) study suggested that educational institutions face the dilemma of how to respond to the children of Black immigrants (both first and second generation): treat them “as either native-born Blacks or as a distinct cultural group” (p. 530). Hudley (2016) proffered that immigration history may partially explain observed differences in postsecondary indicators such as influence on motivation and future expectations.

Postsecondary Education

Hudley (2016) used both the segment assimilation theory and cultural ecological theory to examine similarities and differences in the postsecondary education academic and achievement of Black immigrants, second-generation, and non-immigrant Black students. Hudley found that the individuals of all subgroups had difficulties in their K-12 education, although there were varying degrees of success in postsecondary college. Hudley (2016) attributed the differences in postsecondary college success were due to influences unique to each group.

Kim (2014) conducted a study on the experiences of Black immigrant students as they navigated through a predominately White college. Study participants shared experiences on how they handled the challenge of adjusting and how they identified sources that could offer academic and social supports. Kim (2014) noted that Black immigrant students have distinct cultural identities and sometimes the experiences of second-generation Black immigrants varied

from first-generation Black immigrants. Although immigrant Black students face numerous challenges while attending U.S. colleges and schools similar to African American (non-immigrant Blacks), they fare better than do their African American counterparts. Kim (2014) concluded the results were possibly due to differences in cultural identity or immigrant Black students' ability to identify and use supports within the college system.

The studies of Hudley (2016) and Kim (2014) support the conclusion that Black immigrant students are more successful than African American students in postsecondary education contexts. Both researchers posited that perceived cultural identities played a role in the level of success achieved by the different groups. Both studies considered the impact of certain factors such as support, resources, expectations, and motivation (Hudley, 2016; Kim, 2014). Kim (2014) further concluded that first and second-generation immigrant students face numerous challenges, such as microaggressions.

Solórzano et al. (2000) conducted a study of Black students at a four-year university in which the students described experiencing microaggression within the college environment, both in and out of class. Study participants described feeling invisible to professors, while others described the need to prove their academic abilities because their White peers questioned the role affirmative action played in their acceptance to college. The study did not distinguish subgroups of Black students in terms of African American or Afro Caribbean.

Studies of Afro-Caribbean Women and Education

McFarlane (2017) examined the experiences of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women of color within the U.S. higher education system and evaluated the influences of intersecting identities (gender, race, class, and nationality) within the context of social contexts that change. Afro-Caribbean women shared the effects of patriarchal dominance, race, and class

discrimination in their lives both in and outside of U.S. educational institutions. Although many of the participants persevered to complete their education, McFarlane (2017) cautioned against overlooking that the difficulties they encountered in school and within the larger cultural context of the United States, including unsupportive educational environments.

Furthermore, McFarlane (2017) highlighted the importance of considering gender roles and traditions of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women when examining how identification with their social, cultural, and physical environment related to their social integration within the educational system. As women shared their experiences, the relationship between gendered cultural identities, social identities, and traditions emerged, as well as the significant impact on the lived experiences and personal identities of Black women (McFarlane, 2017).

In another study of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women, Esnard and Cobb-Roberts (2019) documented the experiences of five Afro-Caribbean immigrant women with careers in U.S. universities. Using intersectionality and narrative inquiry, Esnard and Cobb-Roberts (2019) examined the extent to which cultural constructions influenced the women's professions and their responses to the barriers they faced. The researchers delved into the use of social axes of power, as well as the politics of space and identity for the women. The study highlighted the complexities that Afro-Caribbean women who immigrate to the United States encounter in the host society.

Murray-Johnson's (2013) autoethnographic study examined her experiences as a Black Afro-Caribbean female in a U.S. university. She indicated that there was a perception of differences between Afro-Caribbean and African American women by both the staff and the women themselves. She identified several reasons why tensions may exist between Black Afro-Caribbean and African American women. First, Murray-Johnson identified the lack of cross-

cultural information among each group as a reason for tension, for they lacked knowledge of the others' shared experiences or aligned causes. In other words, Black women from different cultural backgrounds may not know enough about the different groups' history to identify their shared experiences. Closer examination might reveal differences, but it could also show that they have much in common as women of color (Murray-Johnson, 2013).

Regardless of their cultural Black group, women of color must be willing to counter their misperceptions of each other or they run the risk of reinforcing the same patriarch-constructed concepts that Black feminist thought seeks to eliminate. hooks (2000) wrote, "Women need to learn each other's cultural codes. This is true for women of the same skin color or different racial backgrounds" (p. 58). To this effect, Murray-Johnson (2013) suggested that an open dialogue between U.S.-born Black women and Afro-Caribbean-born Black women could facilitate the development of a critical consciousness as they gain knowledge about each other in an effort to come to terms with the identity of the self and other. By modeling unity, Murray-Johnson (2013) noted, the groups will avoid reinforcing the negative, patriarch-constructed ideologies that women of color are challenging.

In summary, research examining the K-postsecondary educational experiences of Black students (both African American and Afro-Caribbean) indicated they experienced varying levels of difficulties. Black women, regardless of subgroups, reported feelings of being stifled based on how others viewed them as Black women. Transnational women from the Caribbean also dealt with concepts of immigration status and sometimes language. Although research on Haitian women specifically was scarce, Haitian immigrants have triple minority status: Black, immigrant, and non-English speaker (Fanfan et al., 2020; Remy, 1996). Furthermore, Haitian women who immigrate to the United States have the added minority status due to gender. In

addition to their minority status, they can also face stressors due to their skin color, social stigma, and cultural differences that differ from the host culture (Fanfan et al., 2020; Stepick & Swartz, 1998).

Summary

Although research has been done on the importance of ethnic and cultural identities and the role they play in academic achievement. Limited research has been done on the different subgroups of Black women and their experiences at universities as they emigrate to the United States. Focusing on Afro-Caribbean women, the researcher selected Haitian women specifically. An examination of the history of Haiti and a review of literature for research on academic achievement for Afro Caribbean women and Haitian women concludes that a multitude of factors are involved in the formation of cultural identity. Cultural identity is complex and rooted in multiple contexts such as heritage, family, geographic region, language, cultural background, social mobility, and social class (Gollnich & Chinn, 1994; Saylor & Aries, 1999). Therefore, this study expands the limited body of research previously conducted on the motivation and experience of Haitian immigrant women at U.S. universities. It adds to existing studies that pertain to this group of students, while encouraging further research on various subgroups of Black women to establish useful data regarding academic experiences at universities and ways to best support them as they progress through their studies. The next chapter details the methodology used to engage this research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to record the experiences of a group of Afro-Caribbean women from Haiti as they discussed their schooling experiences in Haiti and the United States. This qualitative research employed narrative interview, as the study shares the perspectives and the experiences of Haitian women's educational experiences in the United States. This chapter includes a description of the research design, rationale, and methodology. Also included are explanations for the selecting participants, collecting data, and analyzing data collection, as well as a discussion of the role of the researcher. The chapter concludes by addressing ethical considerations and issues to consider when using narrative interview.

Research Design: Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is an interpretative approach concerned with exploring phenomenon and taking the perspectives and accounts of research participation as a starting point (Ritchie et al., 2013). Qualitative inquiry focuses on the purpose of the study while providing a method to determine and analyze the study's ultimate objectives and goals (Maxwell, 2008). A qualitative design allows the researcher to discover why, how, and in what direction a given situation has evolved as it attempts to synthesize human, cultural, historical, sociological, economic, and other factor that were determinants of the situation being researched (Hewlett-Thomas, 2009).

Methodological Approach: Narrative Interview

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explained that narrative inquiry is both phenomenon and methodology. Further, it facilitates the forming of an understanding of how people live and relate to others. Narratives are stories of individual experiences that probe into the individuals' identity

and how they view themselves (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). One of Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) earliest definitions of narrative inquiry was as follows:

[Narrative inquiry is] The making of meaning from personal experience via a process of reflection in which storytelling is the key element and in which metaphors and folk knowledge take their place. Narrative is the temporal, past present and future, and, as in all storytelling, is a reconstruction of experience. It is a putting of "the mind in the body" and "the body in the mind." The whole, for us, is the narrative that each person tells of herself/himself, or that is told through processes of inquiry. (p. 16)

Narrative inquiry is closely linked to life history and biography. It seeks to capture the stories or recount how individuals interpret events and actions in their lives and in relationship with society (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Unlike other methods, it accounts for the human experience. Narrative interviews permit the hearing of the voices of individuals (usually marginalized groups) and assigns value to their knowledge, a knowledge that has not always been valued (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; McAlpine, 2016). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explained, "People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in social context" (p. 2). Thus, it is necessary to consider individuals in relation to or in social context to others and their environment. Narrative interviews allow researchers to reflect on the continuity and wholeness of an individual's life experience in the present and past, as well as a three-dimensional concept in terms of people's lives as they intersect with others, institutions, and things (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Narrative interviewing is a method of qualitative data collection whereby a story is generated through the interview. While narrative inquiry collects stories and analyzes the stories,

narrative interviewing collects data and generates the story through the interview (Kartch, 2017). The purpose of narrative interviews is to provide an opportunity for the participant to narrate his or her experiences for the researcher. The roles are conceptualized into narrator – listener instead of interviewer-interviewee (Kartch, 2017). Narrative interviews can be used to investigate how people interpret their individual experiences in relation to social and cultural context (The narrative interview is a method commonly used in narrative research and emphasizes the collection of narratives in order to make sense of the data collected to assign meaning to lived experiences (Kartch, 2017).

Addressing the personal, lived experiences of individuals adds a humanistic aspect to the researcher's repertoire, which serves as another dimension or layer to the knowledge that can be gleaned and used in the field of curriculum studies and other fields. Narrative interview's holistic approach enhances the value to people's experiences, a dimension previously difficult to use in research (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Because of this, narrative interview works well with a cultural Black feminist framework.

The use of narrative interview allows for the women to share their experiences and memories as a fluid retelling of lived occurrences / events to provide insight on their lived experiences as they navigated through their university in the United States. Narrative interviews allow the women to share their perspectives of the various obstacles they encountered and share the supports that assisted them in reaching their educational goals.

Narrative interviews allow for themes to be identified and allows for stories to be constructed. When telling a person's story, the research methodology must allow for a fluid, less structure open ended method, not a process since the researcher does not know what they are searching for nor do they have a hypothesis of the end results or findings. Frequently, methods

that utilize less structured design approaches are marginalized in favor of more traditional methods using deductive strategies (Bruce et al., 2016). Narrative interviews allow for themes to be identified and allows for stories to be constructed.

Narrative research is primarily used to capture the detailed stories or life experiences of one or a small number of individuals (Creswell, 2013). Due to its collaborative nature, relationships between the researcher and participants may be formed. This relationship can be a pro and con to the research. As the researcher works to restory the information received into a concise format, the researcher often gains insight into his or her own life as well (Creswell, 2013). As narratives allow for personal and social life experiences to be rendered in a meaningful way, both the participants and the researcher are often impacted in a manner that allows them to gain a greater understanding of the interconnectivity of one's experiences and identity. Collins (2000) implied that the use of this dialogue implies an ethics of caring and the presence of empathy and compassion.

Narrative interview is holistic and therefore does not require the researcher to separate from her or his own experiences, nor does it assume that separating one's thoughts from one's feelings is possible. Black feminist epistemology requires personal accountability and narrative interview focuses on human experience and has a holistic quality. It is relative in curriculum studies since curriculum studies examine the social connection of curriculum and its impact on the lives of the people that are either exposed or denied access to such studies and to studies within intuitional environments, as well as outside in the form of social media, stereotypes, and more.

According to Eppert (2008), Levinas described "narrative as a communicative ethics which binds narrator and listener, author and character, or reader and text" (p. 76). The

interconnectedness between narrative interview approach and Black feminist thought epistemology make narrative interview an ideal methodology for my study as they complement each other. Connelly and Claudin (1991) stated, “Life’s narratives are the context for making meaning of school situations” (p. 124). Narrative interviews answers questions that seek a holistic view of a particular area, such as education experiences, illness, and social inquiries. It is best used to answer questions that statistical data or objective examination cannot fully answer.

Challenges

Narrative interview also presents challenges in research. One of the problems that remains unresolved when using narrative interview is that it may not solve the problem or concern of the individuals who have shared their stories with you or leave them in a better place. There is also the concern of what is left out of the story due to the limited number of experiences and individual accounts.

Because of the relationship that often forms between the researcher and the participants, the researcher has to be mindful of the connections so that it does not skew the outcome of the research. The researcher has to strike a balance between finding attachment to gain an understanding and being able to analyze and retell the story in an unbiased manner. It requires the researcher to recognize their biases and assumptions, address them and keep them in perspective so that the individual’s story can be told, not the researcher’s created story. The researcher has to be careful not to impute meaning. By using coding and themes and consistently referring to the codes and themes that the research reveals, the researcher should be able to counter biases that may occur.

Another challenge is that the nonlinear path that draws a researcher to use narrative interview also causes difficulties, since it does not have a definite process to follow. Researchers

can begin to question if the data being collected is genuine data or if they are being too subjective, instead of telling the intended experience of the participants. This also leads to another concern regarding the use of narrative interview—the reliability of the participants’ recollection of their experiences. The recounting of memories always has some element of concern regarding whether or not the memory is accurate. This is the same for narrative interview. Narrative interview is sometimes shunned as a research method because it does not have a structured process.

This study sought to gain a specific understanding of Haitian women immigrant students’ academic experiences in educational institutions in the southern United States. In addition, the study examined how their experiences and cultural backgrounds shaped their identities. To gain this information, the researcher conducted individual interviews guided by open-ended questions designed to gather data regarding the lived experiences of the participants. This approach was relevant to the nature of the research under investigation, because it allowed for an in-depth, holistic view of the subjects through their narrative voices by way of their participation, perception, and personal experiences, which are seldom expressed in today’s literature (Moustakas, 1994). In addition to individual interviews, participants engaged in a follow-up focus group to promote clarity and encourage further elicitations from the participants.

Participant Selection, Demographics, and Procedures

Prior to identifying participants for the study, the researcher sought approval from the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board (IRB). After receiving IRB approval, the researcher began the process of identifying participants, which involved the use of snowball sampling (Noy, 2008). The criteria for each participant included Haitian women between the

ages of 30 and 45 years old who attended school in Haiti and university in the United States.

Four participants provided their consented to participate in interviews.

Each of the participants attended college in the southeastern region of the United States (Florida). Recruitment of participants involved the following steps. Using the method of snowball sampling, the researcher contacted Haitian women she knew and asked them to refer other Haitian women who might be interested in the study. Next, the researcher contacted each woman by phone or email to determine if she met the criteria for the study using the demographics questionnaire (see Appendix C) and expressed interest in participating. The researcher used a recruitment script (see Appendix D) to ensure that each participant received the same initial information via email. Prior to the interview, participants received a description of the study and an informed consent document (see Appendix E). Each participant provided verbal consent for the interview and selected her pseudonym prior to beginning the interview. Table 1 depicts pertinent information of the study participants.

Table 1

Participants' Profiles

Participant (Pseudonym)	Age When Immigrated to the U.S.	Age at the Time of the Study	Occupation
Nicolette	17 years old	40	Corporate Level in Fortune 500 Company
Roseline	14 years old	43	Middle Management in a Corporation
Nadia	10 years old	36	Healthcare Field
Darlene	15 years old	35	Healthcare Field

Recruitment

For this research, the recruitment efforts targeted a specific group of Black Caribbean immigrants: Haitian women with schooling experiences in Haiti and the United States. The

sample size included four females who self-identified as Haitian. The research was limited to four participants in order to keep the data to a manageable amount.

To identify participants, the researcher invited the Haitian women she knew to determine if they met the criteria, then incorporated snowball sampling to find others who met the criteria of the study. Snowball sampling is a widely used method to recruit study participants due to its reliance on networking and social capital (Noy, 2008). Individuals who met the criteria and agreed to participate in the study helped recruit future subjects for the study, a form of recruiting known as snowball sampling (Noy, 2008). The use of snowball sampling is effective when recruiting marginalized populations or those who may be hard to access (Woodley & Lockard, 2016). Furthermore, snowball sampling method uses a natural interaction component and is often viewed as non-intrusive (Woodley & Lockard, 2016).

The researcher gave the recruitment flyer, which included the selection criteria, to Haitian women that she knew to pass on to other Haitian women they knew. Once the participants were identified, the researcher contacted the interested parties, asked them to carefully read and agree to the informed consent form prior to their engagement in the research, and then scheduled the interviews. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher asked each participant demographic questions that related to the number of years they were educated in Haiti and the United States; schools they attended or communities they lived in; the communities they came from in Haiti (rural or city); their education, training and work; and the education of their parents. The researcher also informed participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. To protect their identity, each participant selected a pseudonym to be used by the researcher when developing and disseminating the data analysis and interpretation portions of this study.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection consisted of individual interviews guided by an interview protocol of demographic and open-ended questions, which the researcher presented to all participants. The researcher conducted interviews via Zoom Video Communications. The Zoom platform allows for video and audio recording and transcriptions. It also provides additional security by requiring a password-protected signature. Table 2 lists the interview questions.

Table 2

Interview Questions

No.	Question
1	Please provide your background: Where you were born, grew up, and what age did you immigrate to the United States?
2	Do you think your educational experiences have been typical of other Haitian women? Could you say a bit more about that?
3	What were you taught about the Haitian Revolution?
4	Is Haitian Independence a topic that came up a lot while you were living in Haiti? How frequently does the topic come up in the U.S.?
5	What are your thoughts about educational attainment for women in Haiti?
6	What memories do you have about attending school in Haiti?
7	Can you describe how it was to attend school in Haiti?
8	Can you share some of the differences between attending school in Haiti and in the U.S.?
9	Thinking about the time you spent in schools in the U.S., are there any memories that really stand out for you?
10	What are your thoughts about the importance of education? What significant people in your life influenced your thoughts about education?
11	Is there anyone else that you feel had a major influence on your education? If so, can you share how they influenced you?
12	Can you think of an experience with one or more of the significant people in your life that had an impact on your education?
13	Can you provide examples of supports and resources that you felt were valuable while attending college in the United States?
14	How would you describe cultural attitudes in Haiti about education? Do you think these norms influenced your educational goals? Could you say more about that?
15	Do you think that your heritage and culture influence your identity? If so, could you share some examples?
16	Which term(s) do you use to identify yourself (Haitian, Haitian American, etc.? Why? Immigrant? Afro-Caribbean? Haitian? Haitian woman? Phenotype (Black woman)?
17	Can you discuss your perceptions of the following?

	How is American culture different from Haitian culture?
	How is Haitian culture different from African American culture?
	What is your experience with balancing the different cultures?
18	Please share experiences of how you handle living with the Haitian culture at home and the American culture outside the home.
19	Can you tell me about friendships and personal connections you made while attending college in the U.S.?
20	After experiencing what is it like to be Haitian American in America, what advice would you give others?
21	Is there anything else that you would like to share or want me to know? Do you have any questions for me?

Following the individual interviews, participants engaged in a focus group that was conducted on the Zoom platform and facilitated by the researcher. Information collected from the focus group provided another source of data for this study. One of the benefits of focus groups is to allow participants to speak freely on the topic (Given, 2008). When individuals of similar backgrounds and experiences converse, there are opportunities for open, reciprocating dialogue on the topic that allows participants to hear others and possibly expand on their initial responses (Given, 2008; Patton, 2002). Table 3 lists the questions posed by the researcher for focus group discussion.

Table 3

Focus Group Questions

No.	Question
1	Based on your experiences, did your university environment promote bicultural competence for international students? If so, what factors promote or facilitate bicultural competence? If not, what factors hinder the development of bicultural competence?
2	During your college experience, who did you feel most comfortable socializing and interacting with?
3	Considering your college experience and your ability to preserve through that time, which supports do you feel helped you the most?
4	Do you have anything else that you would like to add or discuss before we close?

Conducting interviews using Zoom may pose some challenges due to unforeseen circumstances and others that may be predictable but uncontrollable. Recognizing that we cannot

control the interview environment, and instead need to work with a potential bevy of unforeseen circumstances, is a concession that perhaps may diminish with repeated exposures. One major concern is connectivity issues and overall quality of the video and sound. If the participants are having to frequently repeat themselves or the frame is freezing, it may take away from the overall information received from the interview. The inability to hear what is said or see what is shown can make one question the value of the interview and make it difficult to transcribe and understand information in context and get the details needed.

There is also the concern of missed opportunities for the researcher to observe subtle nuances such as body language and facial expressions, as these components are part of the interactions and conversations (Olfiffe et al., 2021). The best way to counter some of the concerns is to plan ahead by testing the Zoom interview to consider common technical difficulties and providing technical information as needed to the participants. Have a backup plan in case issues arise that cannot be resolved in a timely manner and plan for distractions, such as children and other interruptions that may occur on the participants' end, but try to eliminate these distractions on the researcher's side (Gray et al., 2020). Basic interviewing and conversation skills, such as building rapport and presence, have to be established on Zoom interviews in a similar fashion as they would be established with in-person interviews.

Data Storage

The researcher stored data from the interviews, in the form of audio recordings and transcriptions and saved with the pseudonym of each interviewee with pertinent data, such as date and time, on the Zoom platform. During the research, no other persons had access to the recordings. The master file containing the participants' names and their pseudonyms were in a

locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office. The researcher will discard the data collected two years after the completion of this research.

Data Analysis Procedures

Creswell (2005) explained that data analysis is the process in which data are taken apart and then put back together to examine, interpret, and summarize the findings. To understand the schooling experiences of Haitian women educated in Haiti and the southeastern United States, the researcher analyzed the interview data to identify and code categories and subcategories. A priori coding was used to identify themes based on the conceptual frameworks selected for this research (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2021). A priori coding is an efficient way to organize and analyze data while ensuring that the same criteria are used to categorize and analyze the data. The priori coding method is flexible and allows the coding categories to be adjusted as needed by the researcher (Bingham, 2023). In this research, the priori codes were developed based on the conceptual frameworks. Since this research was based on human experiences, generalization was difficult to establish, as each participant had unique experiences and processed the experiences differently (Merriam, 2009). Thus, while analyzing data, the researcher placed emphasis on the individuals' common experiences and their significance (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). The researcher's goal was to build a general explanation that fit the individuals' experiences, although the specific details of experiences varied (Yin, 2014). With this in mind, after an examination of the data, the researcher sought to interpret the findings of the categories and describe how the categories were connected. The researcher relied on the framework for codes to help counter potential biases.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this analysis.

Limitations of the Study

Narrative interview allows for an individual to share her life experiences. However, it relies on the person's memory and perceptions of the events, which can impact the accuracy of the information provided. The researcher must have a clear understanding of the context of the individual's life while being able to reflect on personal biases that may influence the retelling of the story of the participant's account (Creswell, 2013). Due to the extensive amounts of information that must be collected, analyzed, and coded, the researcher has to consistently apply the methodology to ensure for trustworthiness and credibility. This research is an accounting of the participants' experiences; therefore, a study with another group of participants may not have the same outcome or results.

Role of the Researcher

I am an African American woman who attended some schooling in the southern United States. I was led to this topic because one of my daughters-in-law is from Haiti. Over the years as I listened to stories about her family, I grew to respect her and her family for overcoming many of the barriers they faced as they immigrated to the United States. As I selected a research topic, my interest was in Black women and the barriers they face as they attend universities. In my initial research, many of the studies did not distinguish between the subgroups of African American, Black Caribbean, and African women. My interest in this area grew, and I decided to research the subgroup of Afro-Caribbean women. I originally wanted to include Afro-Caribbean women from different countries but decided to focus solely on Haiti after my research revealed vast differences between each Caribbean country. I felt it would be too broad of a study to attempt, so I selected women from Haiti since my daughter-in-law's story had initially piqued my curiosity.

Few studies document the educational experiences of Haitian women or how their culture and socialization influence their learning in a foreign country with different norms and expectations. The intent of the research was to place a spotlight on the topic to generate more inquiry and promote interest in research on the subgroups of Black women and their college and university experiences. Hopefully, this research will lead to other research of the subgroups of Black women and assist institutions of higher education in understanding the perspectives of each subgroup. Although the experiences and perceptions of the experiences of each individual are unique, staff and administrators can interact with these students to help them attain their goals.

Secondly, the intent of this research was to help the subgroups gain knowledge of each other's experiences. Documenting the cultural influences of Haitian women as a subgroup of Caribbean women provides an understanding of the impact of historical contexts and captures the complexity and uniqueness of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women's intersecting identities. Being conscious of both the benefits and deficits of knowing some of the participants compelled me to discuss reliability and validity strategies to employ to limit bias or influences on the outcome of the study.

Validity and Reliability

In qualitative studies, the concepts of validity and reliability are described using various terms such as quality, rigor, and trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mishler, 2000). Some qualitative researchers have argued that validity is not applicable in qualitative research, but some type of qualifying measure is necessary (Golafshani, 2003). Davies and Dodd (2002) identified the term *rigor* in research in reference to the discussion of reliability and validity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that sustaining the trustworthiness of the

research of the issues under study is the substitution for the terms *validity* and *reliability* used in quantitative research. They suggested trustworthiness is determined by establishing confidence in the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and (Mishler, 2000) proffered the concept that the idea of discovering truth through measures of reliability and validity is replaced by the idea of trustworthiness. To increase validity, Creswell, and Miller (2000) recommended utilizing triangulation, a “procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (p. 126). With this in mind, the researcher used the same open-ended interview questions for all of the study’s participants and triangulated the participants’ responses. In addition, participants engaged in member checking to verify the researcher’s interpretation and accuracy of the information gathered (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Furthermore, in an attempt to account for and offset the influence of personal bias, the researcher engaged in reflexivity by bracketing her assumptions and personal bias through memoing and discussion of her role as the researcher (Ahern, 1999; Tufford & Newman, 2012). This also added to the credibility and trustworthiness of the research.

To promote reliability, the researcher subscribed to Merriam’s (2009) contention that reliability refers to the extent to which the findings of a qualitative research study can be replicated. Therefore, the researcher created an audit trail to provide accurate details regarding data collection and analysis procedures. These actions—clearly providing the protocol and strategies followed, the documented decision-making processes used, and the built-in assurances that accounted for the researcher’s biases throughout the entire research process—facilitate the replication of the study by future researchers.

Credibility

In qualitative research, credibility refers to the confidence in the truth of the investigation's findings (Yilmaz, 2013). In an effort to enhance credibility, the researcher asked each participant to review her transcribed interview for accuracy prior to a second conversation with the researcher. Subsequently, the researcher addressed and corrected any misconceptions and misunderstandings. This allowed the participants to provide feedback concerning the accuracy of the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the interview (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In addition, the researcher provided thick, rich description so readers could feel "they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 129).

Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the findings of a qualitative research study can be transferred to other settings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). One way to ensure that a study can be replicated is by providing detailed descriptions so that the findings can be confirmed. Therefore, the researcher provided descriptions in context to reflect each participant's experience as reported. Although each participant's experiences and perspectives were different, the steps outlined within the research can be replicated.

Ethical Considerations

There is an expectation that ethical standards of research are adhered to when conducting research. Ethical procedures and considerations should be applied. The researcher adhered to the procedures, rules, and regulations outlined in Georgia Southern University guidance for dissertation completion. I attempted to interpret the data collected without personal bias. The

primary ethical consideration for this study was to ensure participants' confidentiality of their identity and their interview responses.

Upon gaining IRB approval, the researcher recruited participants and provided the consent form to review and sign to those who met the study criteria. To protect participants' identities, the researcher conducted individual interviews via Zoom. The participants selected pseudonyms so that their actual names would not appear in the data or the study report. By assuring the participants of confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher hoped the participants would be willing to freely cooperate and share their experiences. Following the interviews, the researcher provided access of materials and written interpretations to the participants for review and feedback.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the research design and procedures for conducting this study. The researcher employed a basic qualitative design using open-ended interview questions as the instrument and narrative interview as the methodology. The recruitment process involved inviting individuals known to the researcher who met the study criteria, then the use of snowballing to increase the pool of participants. Participants engaged in individual interviews with the researcher. The data analysis procedures involved coding of categories and subcategories to generate themes. The researcher discussed her role as the researcher; measures taken to promote validity, reliability, credibility, and transferability, and ways she maintained ethical standards and participant confidentiality. This study yielded practical insights for understanding the experiences of Haitian women who attended school in the southern United States after emigrating from Haiti. The next chapter reports the findings that emerged from this study.

CHAPTER 4

REPRESENTATION OF DATA

The purpose of this research was to engage in dialogue with Haitian women who attended school in Haiti and university in the United States. Four Haitian women between the ages of 30 and 45 years old met the selection criteria and agreed to participate in this research. This chapter presents emergent themes from interviews and a focus group conducted with the four participants who shared their educational experiences as they attended university in the United States. Using a methodology that focused on narrative interview, the researcher utilized the data gathered from individual interviews to gain insight into the participants' personal experiences. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher conducted a focus group with the four participants to allow them to collaborate in constructing knowledge for this study.

This presentation of findings is divided into three sections. The chapter begins with a review of the research questions, and individual profiles of each participant. The next section presents the interview questions and participants' responses, followed by participants' responses in the focus group session, and ending with the coding process utilized by the researcher. After this, the researcher provides a description and discussion of the major themes that emerged from the participants' responses as they related to the questions posed in the research. The last section is a compilation of the analysis of the identified themes collected from the interview and focus group data and a summary of the data.

Review of Research Questions

The research questions guiding the study were as follows:

1. What are the experiences of Haitian Afro-Caribbean women who have been educated in the United States?

2. What, if any, is the impact of intersectionality on the lived experiences of Haitian American women who have been educated in Haiti and the United States?
3. Does bicultural socialization and identity have an impact on their educational experience?

Participants' Profiles

Four Haitian women participated in individual interviews and a focus group session. Participants selected their own pseudonyms: Nicolette, Roseline, Nadia, and Darlene. This section presents a brief overview of their profiles.

Nicolette

Nicolette was a 40-year-old, married woman with two children. Her father came to the United States first and then brought Nicolette and her two siblings to the United States. Their mother did not come to the United States until Nicolette and her two siblings were adults. Nicolette attended school in Haiti and immigrated to the United States at the age of 17, finishing high school in south Florida. She graduated with a bachelor's degree from a university in south Florida. At the time of the study, Nicolette worked at the corporate level for a Fortune 500 company.

Roseline

Roseline was a 43-year-old, single woman with one child. She attended school in Haiti and immigrated to the United States at the age of 14 with her mother and siblings. Roseline completed her secondary education in Florida and graduated from a four-year college in Florida with a bachelor's degree. At the time of the study, Roseline worked for a corporation in middle management.

Nadia

Nadia was a 36-year-old, married woman with two children. She attended school in Haiti and immigrated to South Florida at the age of 10 years old with her family. Nadia completed upper primary, middle, and high school in the United States. She attended university and medical school in north Florida. At the time of the study, Nadia worked in the healthcare field.

Darlene

Darlene was a 35-year-old, married woman with two children. She emigrated from Haiti to south Florida at the age of 15 with her parents and siblings. After graduating high school, Darlene attended university in north Florida, where she earned her bachelor and master's degree. At the time of the study, Darlene worked in the healthcare field.

Data Collection and Analysis

This section begins with the interview questions and the participants' responses to each. Table 2 in Chapter 3 lists the interview questions, but they are also listed in this section for context and the reader's convenience. The individual interviews took place virtually through recorded video calls on the Zoom platform. After each interview, the researcher transcribed the recorded responses then emailed the transcription to each participant to review for validation.

The second source of research data derived from a focus group conducted with the participants. Focus groups allow for the ability to foster meaningful conversation of individuals with similar backgrounds and experiences and afford the participants the opportunity to speak freely in reciprocating dialogue (Given, 2008). In addition, focus groups present the possibility for the participants to hear the perceptions and experiences of the other participants and possibly expand on their initial responses (Patton, 2002).

The researcher conducted the focus group virtually through the Zoom platform. The focus group afforded the participants an opportunity to add or provide any additional information that was relevant to the topic. The questions focused primarily on their college experiences and asked if they felt supported by their university, with whom they socialized, and which supports were most helpful in college. Table 3 displays a list of the focus group questions.

The section ends with a description of the researcher's coding process. The coding tables for the individual interviews and the matrix for the focus group session analysis are located in Appendices F and G, respectively.

Interview Questions and Responses

This section contains the participants' responses to the interview questions and a summary of codes gleaned from the individual's interview and the group as a whole. The first question allowed the participants to expand on their background and share any additional information not shared in the demographic questionnaire. Participants' answers to question 1 were used to develop the participant profiles shared previously. The remaining interview questions were grouped as follows: questions 2-14 addressed the participants' education in Haiti and the United States and their perceptions of education; questions 15-20 addressed cultural influences and social relationships while in school in the United States; and finally, question 21 served as a closing question to wrap up the interviews and address any additional information or questions.

Interview Question 2

Figure 1 displays interview question number 2. The purpose of this question was to have the participants reflect on their educational experiences and perceptions of the educational experiences of other Haitian women.

Figure 1

Interview Question 2

2. Do you think your educational experiences have been typical of other Haitian women?
Could you say a bit more about that?

The four participants indicated that they felt that Haitian women had similar educational experiences, although three of the women indicated that the similarities may be based on age groups, noting that older Haitian women may have different experiences due to having had less access to formal education when compared to younger Haitian women.

Darlene indicated, “Younger women in Haiti, I think most of them get an education, some sort of education. Older women like my mother and grandmother, I would say no.”

Roseline shared, “Younger women and women my age, better. Oh, previous generations may not have attended school or have as much schooling.”

Two participants mentioned some of the differences between Haitian and U.S. educational systems. In Haiti, education focused on memorization, while in the United States, it focused more on understanding. In addition, both indicated that in Haiti, the education system emphasized ranking and competition and oral presentation of learning materials, whereas the U.S. education system focused on application of knowledge in various ways, comprehension, multiple choice and written tests, and letter grades instead of class ranking.

Nicolette commented, “One, in Haiti, it is all about memorization, and not necessarily understanding the material. Here, it’s more about reading and understanding what you’re reading.”

Nadia detailed:

So, our school system there [Haiti] is based sort of like every quarter, or so you would be ranked. Everything in Haiti, all of your examinations are oral, so everything that you study, all of your tests and everything, are oral exams. Here [the United States] it's more about sort of test taking strategies and things like that, and I didn't have any of that where I came from.

All the women participating in the study commented on having to adjust to new learning styles and taking ESOL/ESL (English for Speakers of Other Languages /English as a Second Language) classes when they started school in the United States.

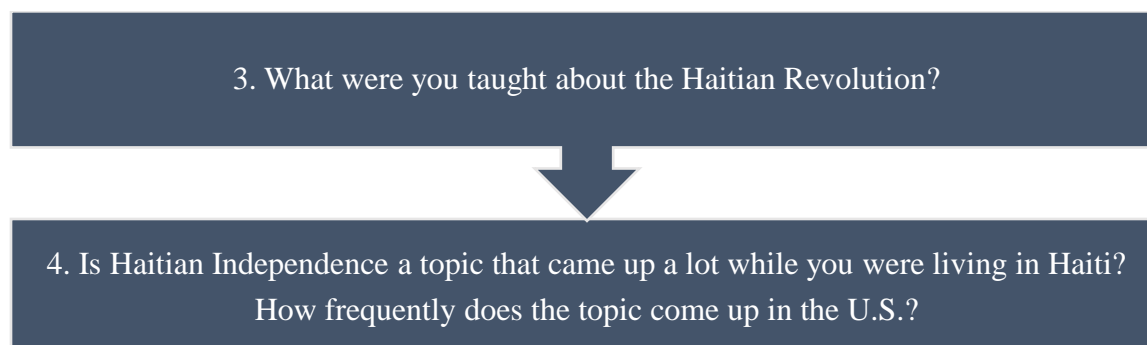
Nadia reflected, "There's a language barrier . . . big focus on ESOL and teaching me English. English was like, I had to go to those classes, a couple of times . . . I think it was like once or twice a day."

The women recognized that they encountered significant differences in the educational systems and learning approaches between Haiti and the United States. Each noted that they had challenges in adapting to these differences, due to language barriers and the need to incorporate new learning styles.

Interview Questions 3 and 4

Figure 2 displays interview questions 3 and 4. The researcher grouped questions 3 and 4 together to gain an understanding of how much information the participants knew about the Haitian revolution and independence and to discover if it was taught in Haitian schools or at home. Also, the researcher wanted to know if the participants were taught about the Haitian Revolutions and Haitian Independence in U.S. schools. The researcher sought to gauge what the participants knew about Haiti's history and from where they learned the information: school, home or both.

Figure 2

Interview Questions 3 and 4

One of the participants indicated that she did not recall either of the topics as taught in school or talked about at home. Nicolette expressed, “I guess you lived and celebrated it, but it’s not nothing we, you know, studied in books or anything like that. I guess they just expected you to know it.”

The other three participants indicated that they learned about Haiti’s history in school while in Haiti.

Nadia stated, “Ohm, I think in a lot of ways, maybe I was [taught about Haiti’s revolution].” And in regards to Haiti’s Independence, she indicated, “Yeah, that was part of. Like our history classes growing up.”

All four women stated that the Haitian revolution or independence was not taught in the schools they attended in the United States, although the U.S. schools they attended a significant Haitian population. Nadia disclosed:

No, not really. I mean. When I first came here, this was what, 20 years ago? Even though we grew up in Miami, even though we were in Miami, and there were a lot of immigrants, and there were Haitians. The school system didn’t necessarily really try to incorporate our history or really try to teach us about our cultures or anything like that. It

wasn't like that at all. So, it wasn't something the school, sort of incorporated into the curriculum or talk to us about. They brought up or anything like that. Everything as far as, like history that I learned in this country when I moved here, when it came to other Black countries and stuff like that was all about slavery, it wasn't. It wasn't to that regard about Haiti and the revolution or anything like that.

All the women indicated that they continued to celebrate Haitian holidays (including Haitian Independence Day) while living in the United States. Roseline commented:

Haiti's independence does not come up a lot. I mean, we didn't talk about it. We celebrated it, I guess, similar to the way you would celebrate the 4th of July in the United States. We had, you know, our Flag Day and different things as such, but I don't really remember it being spoken about. And in the United States, it's the same thing. You know, my family has traditions that we go through and we celebrate every year.

Darlene recalled:

We were taught about Haiti's history, like I said earlier. In regards to Haitian independence, we celebrated Haitian Independence Day. Haitian Independence Day was like a national holiday similar to the 4th of July is in the United States. Once I moved to the United States, we still celebrate those days, but I don't remember learning the history of Haiti in the U.S. schools.

All four of the individuals indicated that they celebrated Haitian holidays and had some knowledge of Haitian history, especially as it related to Haitian Independence Day. They indicated that these traditions were celebrated within their families, but the historical context was not always discussed. The participants' answers varied in regards to learning about Haitian

history and independence in Haiti, but all noted that the U.S. educational system did not place an emphasis on teaching Haitian history.

Interview Question 5

Figure 3 displays interview question 5. This question was asked to ascertain how the participants viewed how women are educated in Haiti and to what degree do women achieve their educational goals.

Figure 3

Interview Question 5

5. What are your thoughts about educational attainment for women in Haiti?

All four participants indicated that their parents and families encouraged education, and there was an expectation that the children graduate from high school and go to college. They understood that an education equated to better job opportunities. They indicated that most women attend school in Haiti unless they are too poor. Also, they noted that this was a change from previous generations, as many women could not read or write. Beyond high school, women may not go to college since college is expensive in Haiti, and resources such as financial aid, scholarships, or loans do not exist. Women are encouraged to become nurses because careers in healthcare are perceived to be good-paying, respectable jobs. Three of the participants commented that Haiti had limited resources, jobs, and opportunities, and therefore, some women who had an education and training were unable to secure a job in the area in which they had skills. Nadia expressed,

In Haiti. I think what you want to do in Haiti doesn't necessarily align with what you're able to do in Haiti, so the lack of resources, the lack of jobs, and, you know, just the

country itself is not structured where you can have all of these opportunities. So, a lot of times, women would go to school like everyone else. You would go to school, you would try to go to college and do all of these things. But there wasn't an opportunity to do anything else with it afterwards. Like we, we have a lot of family now who are educated, who have finished primary and secondary schools in Haiti, and they have done college in Haiti, and then they're done, and there's nothing to do with it.

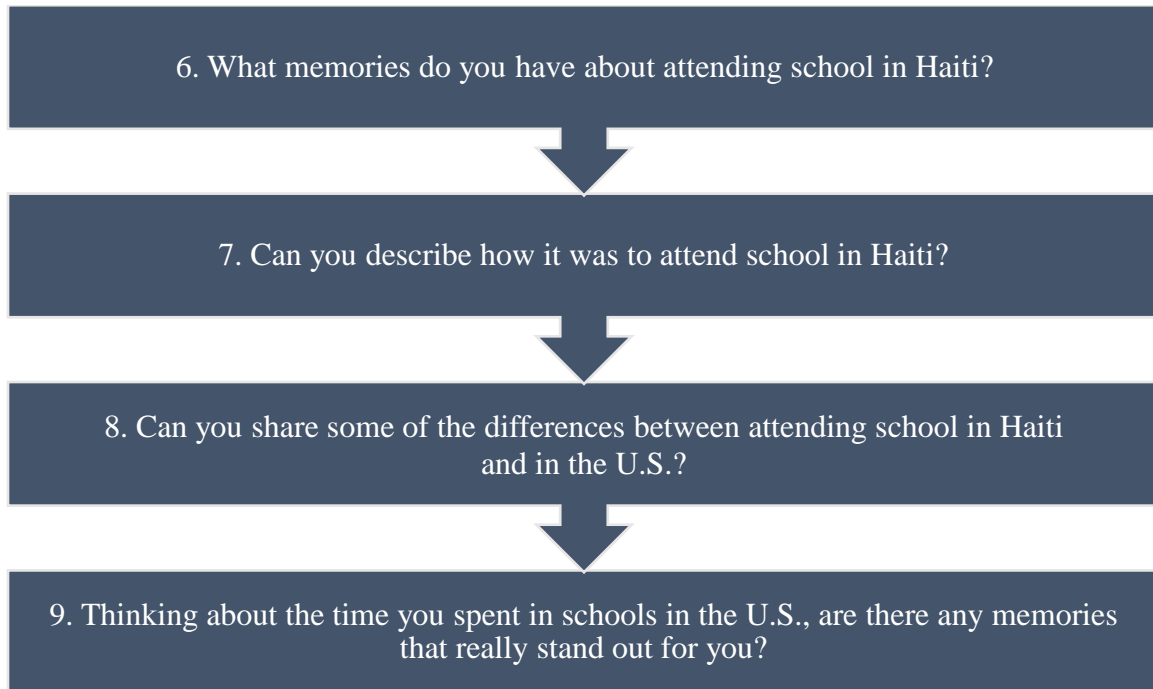
In general, education for women has progressed in Haiti. Families encourage the younger generation to graduate from high school and pursue higher education and specific career paths. The parents and extended family play an integral role in sharing career expectations for the children, strongly suggesting careers in nursing and healthcare. The participants also indicated that in Haiti, women often face challenges and limitations in terms of opportunities, jobs and resources.

Interview Questions 6-9

Figure 4 displays interview questions 6 through 9, which asked the participants to describe their memories and schooling experiences in Haiti, their memories and schooling experiences in the United States, and the differences that they encountered in each educational system. The researcher asked these questions to gain an understanding of the participants' educational foundation in Haiti and gain a general knowledge of Haiti's educational system through the eyes of the participants. It also allowed for the researcher to see which similarities and differences the participants recalled as they transitioned from one educational system to another.

Figure 4

Interview Questions 6-9



Two of the participants described school days in Haiti as being longer. Nadia started with the physical aspects as she described her school being behind a large gate with a guard out front and a large concrete area outside where they recited the national anthem at the beginning of the school day, ate lunch, and played at recess. All of the participants indicated that their peers and teachers were Haitian, which was a noticeable difference from when they attended school in the United States, where there was more diversity, since students and teachers were Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, or Haitian.

Roseline recalled:

The thing I remember the most is although I went to U.S. schools that had a high Haitian student body, it was still a more diverse group. I had students who were Haitian, and who were of Hispanic heritage. There were African American students and there were White students. Pretty much we were the four, the majority of the student body every now and again, there was an Asian student or something, but for the most part those were the

students I interacted with. That was very different from Haiti, where Haitian students was the majority.

Nicolette remembered having the same group of peers in class all year long and the teachers rotated classes. She indicated that she enjoyed having the same classmates, which was different when she came to the United States. Her ESOL class was the only class where she had the same peers for the entire year.

Roseline noted similar details. She spoke of her teachers and classmates being Haitian and there being a strong expectation for academic excellence:

Most of the children you interacted with on a daily basis were similar to you, and my teachers were basically Haitian as well, and there was an expectation that we had to do well, so you know, we had to work hard.

Each participant stated that her parents and extended family members emphasized the importance of education, both in Haiti and the United States. All participants indicated that they were good students in Haiti, but when they came to the United States, the language barrier impacted their grades in school. The four participants indicated that they were in ESOL/ESL classes in the United States.

Darlene noted that regardless of which country she was in, she liked school because it was a place she knew: "I wanted to go to school because moving from one country to a different country, school was the place that I could identify in both."

Roseline mentioned that she received more homework in the United States. This may have been due to the difficulty of learning subjects in both English and Creole and the emphasis on application rather than rote memorization. Although she did not have specific memories from school that stood out, she remembered the challenges of adapting to the education system in the

United States. She also recalled that her siblings and cousins often talked about their aspirations and future careers, such as being doctors or nurses. They desired a better life and respectable professions. She, her siblings, and her cousins understood that their parents worked hard to provide for the family. Roseline emphasized the importance of family support. She mentioned that her family's experience of immigrating to the United States led to a sense of responsibility to assist other family members to join them there or to support those who remained in Haiti.

Roseline's parents, aunts and uncles always emphasized the importance of education. She and her siblings were taught that it was important for them to succeed in education. The support of parents and family while maintaining high expectations for a good education was a common thread with all four participants. They understood that a good education increased their chances of having a good career, which was their best opportunity for a better life. Roseline reminisced:

I do remember, my siblings and my cousins, we would talk about the things that we want to do when we grew up. We would talk about what we were going to become, if we were going to become a doctor or a nurse or things like that, because we would always say how we wanted to have a certain type of life, and we could see how hard our parents work to provide for us. Later on, I realized how hard our parents worked to get us from Haiti to the United States, and when they got here, they had to work even harder because they had limited education and limited experience, and they spoke limited English, so they had to work a lot of jobs to make ends meet.

The four participants agreed that Haiti's educational system focused on rote memorization where students memorized lessons and later recited them back to their teachers, while the U.S. educational system focused on understanding and applying the concepts learned. Nadia recalled Haiti's education system was competitive and based on class ranking. Haitian

schools required a lot of memorization and oral exams, whereas the U.S. education system emphasized letter grades, utilized multiple-choice tests and test-taking strategies, and lacked the competitive ranking seen in Haiti. Nadia stated that the transition was challenging as she adapted to a new way of learning and grading. She explained:

Here. When I first got here, I was in fifth grade, and I remember, like, my first day. It was terrifying because, I mean, you don't speak the language, you don't know any of these people. You're just sort of like taken from this country, and everything that you know, and then you're just like, "Look, this is a new environment," and you figure it out. And I got dropped off at school and that was it.

Nadia added:

You're being graded on this letter grade system, and you don't speak this language. So, I went from a place where I was like always ranked top three in the class up to now, to like failing things in the classroom, and that was very hard like because I mean, I didn't know the language. I couldn't answer the questions that they were asking me. I didn't know what I was doing, so I was failing a lot of things outside of my ESOL class. Right. I was just like, getting bad grades on things, and unless it was math, I was not doing well, and that was very hard to come to terms with because you just feel so incompetent. Compared to everyone else in the classroom. And they call on you to, like, read, pick up the paragraph and read, and you don't even know. So yeah. It was hard. . .

Now thinking back on it, why would I be graded on anything outside of the ESOL class? It's hard to be part of the reading class and get graded on certain things and terminologies and stuff like that when I didn't even know the language, I mean, I don't think it should have been incorporated until I was at a certain level in my ESOL [class]. In the

beginning, yeah, I remember, like, failing everything and it was hard. I would come home, and I would cry because I was used to doing well; if I didn't do well on something, it was like, devastating.

In regards to cultural and social differences, Nicolette indicated she encountered obstacles while attending U.S. schools. She elaborated by saying she felt that she and other Haitian students were treated differently, with fewer resources and supports compared to Hispanic students in her ESOL classes. This was her first encounter with some form of discrimination or bias, and she struggled to fit in socially during her high school years. Nicolette described how she did not have many friends in school:

The ESOL teacher, he was Cuban, and his daughter was also in the class. So, his class was pretty much divided between the Hispanic kids and the Haitian kids because the school was mostly Hispanic and Haitian, but he would go out of his way to help, you know, his kids, the Hispanic kids. The Black Haitian kids didn't get any help. It was like, "Hey, this is the lesson. This is it. This is what you got." That was the first experience. So, I think, I mean, I don't know to what extent your education covers on any of that stuff, I mean. I guess that was my first experience with . . . you know some type of . . . I mean, I don't want to say racism, but that was just my introduction to it. My first experience with that.

Nicolette further explained that she could not go home and tell her father about these types of incidents or the fact that she did not have many friends. She stated, "My father emphasized education over making friends therefore I prioritized my studies during my high school years." However, despite the academic and social challenges she encountered when she started school in the United States, Nicolette made friends in college.

Similar to Nicolette, Roseline also indicated that she felt somewhat isolated initially at school due to being a recent immigrant, but over time, she began to interact with a diverse group of friends, including African Americans and Hispanics students, along with other groups as she progressed through college.

Nadia explained that her school was a private school and one of the better schools in Haiti. Some of the students spent time in the United States and spoke English, although she did not speak English. Like most of peers, Nadia communicated in Creole and French. She remembered that there was a difference between the students who traveled between Haiti and the United States and the other students who did not. Nadia commented,

Not really [to having a lot of friends]. Everyone is, I think, of Haitian descent, but the school that I went to because it was a private school, and it was actually one of the better schools in Haiti, it was known, and because of that, a lot of some of the kids were from, like, children of, like, the politicians in Haiti. So, they would spend actually, some, some of their time in the U.S., so they knew English. And so they would spend some time in Haiti. They would spend some time in the U.S., so they knew English at the time. I didn't. I wasn't of that background, but our primary, like, language in the school system is French, so everyone spoke French and everyone sort of spoke Creole at home or a different dialect version of Creole at home. But then in my school in particular, some of the kids also spoke English because of what their parents did for a living.

Nadia recalled that her father constantly reminded her that she was not African American and she could not dress like them or act like them:

But when I used to go to school when I was younger, my dad would drop me off at school, and it was like I couldn't wear certain things. I couldn't act a certain way because

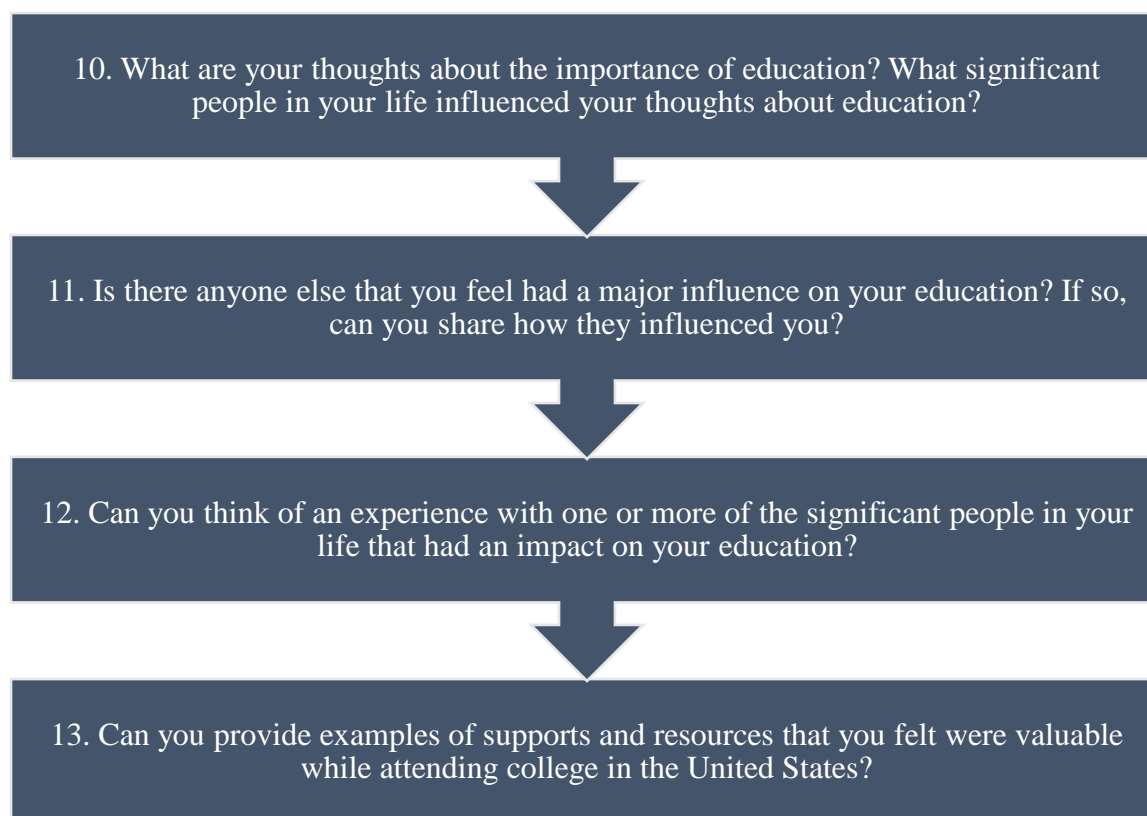
he's like, "You're, you know, you're Haitian, you're not an African American. Like your pants can't slide; you can't wear flip flops."

Interview Questions 10-13

Figure 5 displays interview questions 10 through 13. The researcher grouped these questions to ascertain the participants' thoughts of the importance of education and significant people that influenced their thoughts about education.

Figure 5

Interview Questions 10-13



The participants were asked to think of experiences with significant people in their lives that had an impact on their education and finally, to provide examples of supports and resources that they found to be valuable while attending college in the United States. Without hesitation,

the four women indicated that their parents and family members had influenced their thoughts about education.

Nicolette voiced,

Definitely my father. All my dad knew was his limitations in this country by not having an education because when he came here, dad probably only had a third-grade education. So, he knew how much harder he had to work without having an education. . . . He knew some of the reason he was struggling so much was because he didn't have one, and he didn't want the same for us. He couldn't help us with homework or anything, but he would tell us, "Figure it out."

Nadia became emotional and paused for a moment to compose herself (her mother recently passed away while she was finishing her medical residency). She spoke of watching her mother and cousin as she grew up. Her mother had little to no formal education, and her cousin, who was educated, often helped them with their school work. Nadia recalled,

This one's a little emotional, but hold on (pausing to compose herself). Okay. I think. I think for me personally I had two sides of the coin where we grew up in a house where it was my mom, and it was also our cousin. It was our cousin, Poatley, and at the time she was very, she was very educated. She was always in school, and she had a nine-to-five job. It was sort of like this corporate job, so seeing her when we grew up and being in a house with her, it was like, "This is what you should aspire to do," and you know and part of it, too, the other side of it was that my mom was the exact opposite. She was someone who, who had a very hard life because she'd never got access to any sort of education. So, growing up, Mom was, Mom was the one that like grew up in the country, and half of her family never got an opportunity to sort of like be in the city or go to

school. So, she grew up, she was illiterate her entire life and sort of watching that I think she always felt to some level in her life. She always felt incompetent because she couldn't read. She couldn't write. She couldn't do certain things, and I think she really heavily pushed on us to not have that kind of life, so yeah, it was a combination of sort of like watching Poatley, and then like what you can, what you can do, what you can aspire to do, and also knowing like, what my mom was not able to do and feeling like, okay, now, like, she didn't have these opportunities, but we do. So, it was always like you felt like you had to take advantage of an opportunity because she didn't have access to these things, and now you did. So, it was like I was taking advantage of it for myself, but also for her.

The four women also shared that their families emphasized the importance of having an education. Nadia recalled that her father and his siblings did not really have an education. She indicated that her generation was the first to finish school and that she was one of the first of the group of the oldest ones to do so. Darlene commented that her parents and family stressed the importance of taking the opportunities given to them in the United States and using it to the best of her ability. She reflected back on teachers in Haiti that would tell her to be a good student and the teachers that helped her once she arrived in the United States. She indicated that they all influenced her by encouraging her to do well and keep going. Nadia recalled that she had two women in college who served as mentors to her and helped her maneuver through medical school. Each of the women indicated that they understood the importance of what an education could do for them in the future.

Roseline commented,

We realized very early on that education was going to be the avenue that we needed to have in order to have a better quality of life and to be better off financially than our parents are and some of our relatives and definitely better off than we were in Haiti. . . .

Education seemed like the easiest way to get a certain type of job.

Darlene stated,

My parents were the greatest influence about education. They taught us that it was very important to have an education because that's our best chance to have good opportunities, a good job, and to live a life that you could be happy with. They pushed education.

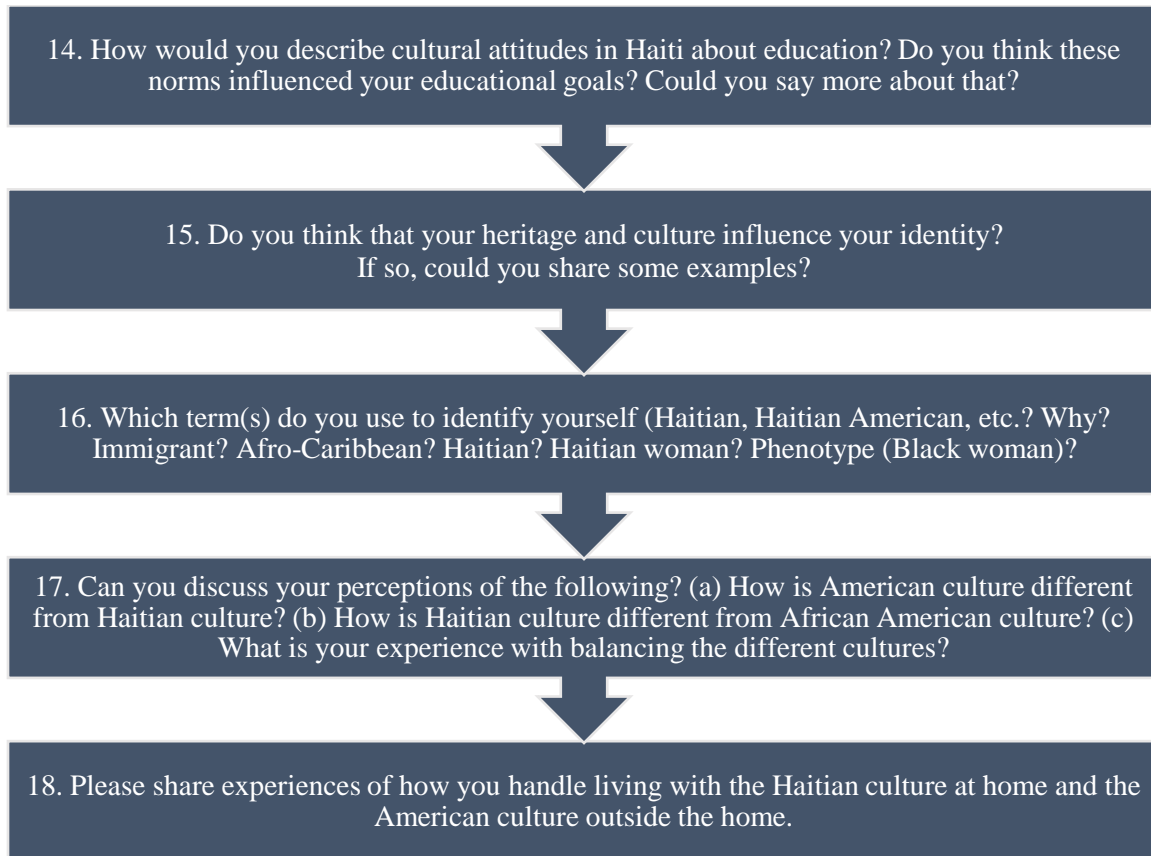
Education is one of the best ways to not live in poverty.

Interview Questions 14-18

Figure 6 displays interview questions 14 through 18. These questions addressed the young women's perceptions of their culture and identity.

Figure 6

Interview Questions 14-18



The four participants proclaimed that their Haitian roots and heritage had a major impact on their identity, values, and cultural attitudes. Three of the women indicated that they identified as Haitian American, while Nadia identified as Haitian.

Nicolette said that her Haitian heritage had a significant impact on various aspects of her life, including her cultural practices and traditions. She indicated that her Haitian upbringing shaped her identity and her values and credited her resilience and determination to overcome challenges to values instilled by her parents. Nicolette exclaimed,

100%. 100% I mean, as much as I say, I mean from what we eat to the music, I listen to the . . . I mean, I can say that, you know. You know, once you move here, you kind of expand on that. But I think a lot of my ways being born in Haiti and, you know, is what grounds me. A lot of it. It's, you know, the way you care for people, or you know or have

a sensitive spot to people who have less than you, you know, and stuff like that. All that comes from there.

Nicolette identified herself as a blend of different identities, primarily Haitian American. She acknowledged that her life experiences, family, and marriage to an American had shaped her identity. She commented,

I would say Haitian American because I mean. At my age now, I'm at a point where I spent most of my life here. You know, shoot. I'm married to an American. I have two American children. So, so yeah, we would definitely say Haitian American, but I mean, you know, I could be all of them too. You know, a little piece of you identify with a lot of it.

Nicolette discussed the cultural differences she had observed. The Haitian culture places a strong emphasis on close-knit family connections. Extended family is as close as immediate family. There is an expectation that family members support other family members in both Haiti and the United States. She stated that she felt as though the support and unity were more pronounced in Haitian culture versus American and African-American culture.

In regards to balancing two cultures, Nicolette indicated that when she was younger, she felt that she had to balance her cultural identity as she tried to fit in with peers. Now that she was older, she was comfortable with her identity, and she embraced her uniqueness. She indicated that she was comfortable with her husband's family as well, which indicated she was able to interact within two different cultures.

Roseline spoke about how her cultural attitudes and heritage had influenced her educational goals and all aspects of her life. Education was a vital part of her upbringing and was not optional or negotiable, and she intended to raise her children with the same values,

emphasizing education and ensuring that they carry on the legacy of their family. Haitian culture had a significant impact on her life and had created a strong sense of cultural identity for her. She expressed a strong connection to her Haitian heritage and stated it was an integral part of who she was and she was proud of her Haitian identity. She passed on the traditions, culture, and Creole language to her children. She wanted to take her children to Haiti to connect with their roots. She appeared determined to honor her parents' hard work and pass the knowledge on to future generations.

Roseline expressed that the term she most identified with was "Haitian American". She had been in the United States longer than the time she was in Haiti. Although her identity as a Haitian American did not come to forefront of her thoughts on a daily basis, when asked about her background, she acknowledged her Haitian heritage.

When discussing the difference between U.S. and Haitian cultures, Roseline recognized the heterogeneity of American culture, whereas Haitian culture was more homogenous. She also discussed the diverse opportunities and resources available in the United States for various aspects of life in contrast to Haiti's limited access to resources and fewer options for financial support and earnings. She indicated that life in Haiti was simpler, but it could be challenging due to limited resources, which in turn could lead to a lower quality of life for those without financial resources. In a comparison of Haitian and African American cultures, she noted that there were both similarities and differences but suggested that individual circumstances play a significant role, making it challenging to generalize.

When asked if she balanced Haitian and American culture and if so, how, Roseline explained that she adapted to different norms and behaviors depending on the context. For example, she spoke Creole at home and English in public or at work. She also mentioned that her

visit to Haiti involved adjusting to a different set of cultural norms and expectations, such as helping on the family farm and preparing meals. She indicated that balancing the two cultures was not deliberate but rather a natural part of her life experiences. She concluded,

I've been over here more years than I was in Haiti. But at the same time my Haitian identity is a part of me that I'm never going to give up. I don't want to give it up, you know, I'm proud to be of Haitian heritage, and I shared that with my children as well.

Similar to Nicolette and Roseline, Nadia also acknowledged that her views and values of education came from her parents and Haitian heritage. She explained,

Most Haitians parents are pushing education. Like I said earlier, you are either too poor and have no access to education, or your parents are pushing education. Watching the condition of people in Haiti makes you understand that you need that education to have a better life. I think it is my Haitian heritage that pushes me to keep trying, I don't give up. I think, being from where I am, there's just a level of resilience that I have. So regardless of what obstacles or what kind of things have been in my path, and it hasn't been an easy journey, I think I've always sort of found a way to maneuver and get around it and figure out how to keep pushing forward because that's just innately part of being myself and part of being Haitian and just part of being from where we are, you know. So, I think a lot of it, where I am, I would say I count 90% of it to just being resilient and having the work ethic from seeing, like from seeing it in my family, from seeing how hard my dad worked, from seeing how hard my mom worked even though she had, like nothing.

Nadia identified as Haitian. She indicated that she has never identified as Haitian American, since both of her parents were from Haiti, and she grew up in Haiti. She stated a lot of her culture was still Haitian. She continued that she was surrounded by people who were Haitian,

and most of her traditions and foods were Haitian. She noted that she had always gravitated towards other Haitian people in college and med school. She closed with, “I look at my life and I think Haitian, even though I’ve spent most of my life in America.”

Like the other three women, Darlene admitted that the culture of Haiti had a great influence on her thoughts of what education is and her educational goals. She explained that she and her siblings were told that they needed an education. She commented,

I think every person in Haiti would send their child to school and make sure there are educated because there is a strong understanding that education leads to more opportunities. Along with an education, you have to have opportunities, jobs. I know women that were trained in certain jobs, but they were unable to get a job in Haiti that used those skills, and when they came over here, they had to learn different skills because their credentials were not accepted over here.

Darlene confirmed that her heritage and culture influenced her identity in every way. Although she considered herself Haitian American, she would always be Haitian first. She added that everything she knew started in Haiti, and both of her parents were from Haiti. She had a strong understanding of family and what she had to do to take care of her family. She elaborated that she taught her children things that her mother taught her.

When asked how American culture is different from Haitian culture, Nicolette did not want to overgeneralize American culture. She felt that her perception of American culture would be different from my perception, since she was not born in the United States, and she had experienced two different cultures. She explained that her family brought a lot of their Haitian culture with them; she indicated, “Taking a piece of Haiti with us here.” She spoke about celebrating holidays (Haitian and American) but indicated that the big difference was the

connection between family. She indicated there was no difference between immediate and extended family, it was just family. In regards to differences between Haitian and African-American culture, Nicolette felt that Haitian families stuck together more and explained that there was an expectation to help the family members in Haiti. She noted, "There is the lesson of never forgetting where you come from so you have to support your family back in Haiti and support yourself here. It's something you take with you forever."

In regards to balancing two cultures, Nicolette indicated that, when she was younger, she felt that she had to balance two different cultures, but now that she was older, she felt that she celebrated her heritage and who she had become and believed her experiences made her unique. She stated that she did not have to explain her values, giving the example of listening to parents at the age of 45.

Roseline suggested that the biggest thing about American culture versus Haitian culture was that the United States was more heterogeneous versus Haiti's homogeneity in regards to its people. She said, "American is much more *diverse*." As she discussed that there were more opportunities in the United States because that were multiple ways to reach your goals, she provided the example of going to college. If you cannot pay for college, you could get scholarships or loans in the United States. These options were not available in Haiti. She also mentioned mortgages to buy homes, and the stock market. She stated that although you have to learn and understand those different things, they do not exist in Haiti. She indicated that life was simpler in Haiti. Roseline closed by stating,

I think it's harder [in Haiti] just because you don't have access to those things. So, if you don't have the money or some type of resource to obtain that money or get assistance to help you, you know you're going to have a lower quality of life.

In comparing Haitian culture to African American culture, Roseline hesitated and stated she did not know. She continued by noting that within the Haitian culture, they stick together and work hard to make sure that they have a better life. Similar to Nicolette, she referenced that there was an expectation that you reach back [to Haiti] to help others. In regards to differences between African Americans and Haitians, Roseline stated she did not really know. She commented that she could see similarities and differences between both cultures but felt she did not know enough about African-American culture to expound or speculate. She continued that when Haitians come to the United States, they try to differentiate themselves from African Americans.

Nadia commented that she did not know what American culture was because of the large number of other immigrants. She indicated American culture was comprised of all of these immigrant cultures, like Hispanic, Haitian, Asian, and more. When asked to compare African American culture to Haitian culture, she expressed Haitian people are very prideful and patient, even if it was not the popular choice. She stated that Haitians always say, "We're Haitian." In regards to African-Americans, she stated that there was a lot of stigma about African Americans and going into African American communities, for they were seen as unsafe because the news was always reporting crime in African American neighborhoods. She commented that Haitians tried to distinguish themselves from African Americans when they come to the United States and felt that they worked harder than African Americans because African Americans are stereotyped as lazy. African Americans do not work as hard. They do not go after certain opportunities because they have all of these opportunities here and do not use them while Haitians work hard, and as immigrants they go for what they want because Haitians do not have these opportunities

in Haiti. She also realized that non-African American people group all the Black people as African American. She continued,

So as much as . . . like, I think. Americans or non-African American people in this country, like, look at every Black person and think, “Okay, you’re African American,” but the Black people in this country that are not from America actually try to differentiate themselves and say they’re from somewhere else.

Nadia indicated that her father always reminded her that she was not African American when he dropped her off to school when she came to the United States.

Darlene described one of the major differences in Haitian culture was that they take care of each other. She stated they were taught that they had to take care of family, while Americans were individualized. She also indicated that the United States has so many different people from so many different cultures that most people are taking things from their culture and things they learn in American and combining different things, so she stated that she could not necessarily identify specifics that were American culture. She concluded by saying everything over here moves quicker, and people were always working. She indicated that she was not sure about differences between Haitian and African American cultures.

In Darlene’s response to how she balanced cultures, she stated that she did not think she balanced cultures at this point in her life. She identified as a Haitian woman who grew up in Haiti and moved to the United States and became an American citizen, so she considered herself as Haitian American. She expressed that she was happy that she lived in the United States because she had a good life, and living in the United States had afforded her the opportunity to do many things. She stated when she was younger, she balanced both cultures, as she had one life at home and another life at school. She concluded her answer with the following:

When I went to school, I did things differently than when I was home. At my parents' house, I spoke mostly Creole, whereas when I was at college, I think I leaned more toward English unless I was trying to say something I didn't want somebody else to understand, and I was with someone else who spoke Creole; then I might convert to speak in Creole.

Interview Question 19

Figure 7 displays interview question 19.

Figure 7

Interview Question 19

19. Can you tell me about friendships and personal connections you made while attending college in the U.S.?

All four women indicated that they developed long-term friendships in college. Nicolette recalled that she met her friend while still learning English, and her friend helped her to maneuver college life and other things, such as opening a bank account. She exclaimed, "One of my closest friends, right now, we met in college. And 20, what? Twenty-five years later, we're still friends and you know I'm godmother to her kids, and she's godmother of my kids."

Nicolette, Roseline, and Darlene had friends from diverse ethnic backgrounds, while Nadia indicated that most of her friends were of Haitian ethnicity. Roseline indicated that she had a diverse social network that played a significant role in her life. She also emphasized the close connections that she maintained with her friends of Haitian ethnicity. Darlene indicated that she formed friendships with people of African-American, Hispanic, Caucasian, and Haitian heritage. She noted that she had continued friendships with some of them until present day.

Nadia stated that she had formed close friendships through her educational journey and most of those friendships were with others of Haitian ethnicity with few exceptions:

The people I'm surrounded by are Haitian, and a lot of ways I find myself gravitating towards are just my Haitian people to begin with. Even in med school, even in college . . . like if there was, ah, another Haitian person in the classroom or something like that, then I would have so much in common with them, that we just automatically sort of became friends, that kind of stuff. So, I look at it now, and even the people that I'm surrounded by, like a couple of my friends. The friends that I have remain friends with the people, that I have remained friends with from medical school, that I still talk to on like a weekly basis, they're all Haitian, with the exception of maybe one you know.

Interview Question 20

Figure 8 displays interview question 20.

Figure 8

Interview Question 20

20. After experiencing what is it like to be Haitian American in America, what advice would you give others?

When asked about the advice they would give to other Haitian women moving to the United States, the participants had a plethora of advice to offer. Nicolette's advice for Haitian women immigrating to the United States was to have a support system of people that wanted you to do well. You did not have to fit in; just be yourself. Your sense of culture would help you stand out. Nicolette advised,

Create a good support system. Have the people who want to see you do well and listen.

Also, don't try too hard to fit in because then you lose your sense of self and yourself,

and your sense of culture and all that with that. Don't try too hard to fit in. Don't try too hard to fit in. We're different, and that's okay.

Roseline emphasized the importance of hard work and resilience when dealing with obstacles. She acknowledged that everyone encounters challenges to varying degrees. She mentioned that gender may bring about obstacles but emphasized that individuals can help each other overcome challenges. Her advice included being self-aware—knowing who you are and being open to learning new things. She also noted that you have to be willing to accept help, help others, and use the resources that were available. You have to persevere and improve yourself. Roseline shared,

Um, in regards about advice to others that would be coming, I think it will sound very similar to things that my older generation told me in terms of my parents and my aunts and my uncles told me about different things, is that you just got to keep working, you're going to meet some challenges in life. You're definitely going to have those things, those obstacles that you have to get over, and the obstacles are . . . they're a lot of them. For some, more than others, but you take one obstacle at a time, and you jump that hurdle, and you get through it, and you keep working, I don't think that there is anyone that doesn't have obstacles. Someone could say, "Well, yeah, but you have more." Yeah, yeah, I had to learn English while I was still going to school and doing work in English; I had to learn a different culture and different things like that, but I also had people who could help me and to assist, and I still had to take it in and learn it so. Even if I had been born over here, I would have obstacles, and I think no matter what you deal with, you have obstacles; it's just you have to get through them. So in in terms of that, I would tell people to work hard and use your resources. First of all, know who you are, and that's

okay, be true to yourself, but also be open to learning because you're going to learn a lot of new things that you may not have known before. I also think the other part of it is knowing where to ask for help. Knowing how to interact with other people and knowing what your resources are. Finding those resources and using them so that they can help you to the best of your ability, but also being willing to be a resource to someone else. Because the same way or in some type of way, someone else is going to need help, and how could you help that person the way somebody helped you. So, I think that would be the advice that I would give.

Darlene's advice to other Haitian women immigrating to the United States was to take advantage of the opportunities that were provided to them and get an education. She suggested that they use resources and allow people to help. Finally, she stated that they should be willing to learn from what others are trying to teach them. Darlene closed with the following:

I would tell them to make the best of the opportunity if you are lucky enough to make it to United States. You take every opportunity that you are offered so that you can get an education and become whatever it is that you want to be in terms of having a profession.

Nadia summarized her experiences as a Haitian immigrant and a Black woman in the medical field. She highlighted challenges she had faced and stated that she occupied a unique position as a "minority within a minority within a minority." She described her journey as a first-generation immigrant Haitian woman working tirelessly for nearly 20 years to become a doctor in a field dominated by Caucasian men. She talked about the difficulty of not having a family background in medicine and how she did not have the same access or guidance as peers with family established in the field. She also talked about how difficult it was to transition to her subspecialty of medicine due to lack of representation in the field. She indicates that she had

“always been a minority.” She added that she had “learned to navigate through the various challenges while maintaining my unique identity and perspective in the medical field while facing discrimination and working in a field where I often stand out while continuing to break barriers.”

Nadia gave the following advice to Haitian women immigrating to the United States: you have to work hard and there are many fields you can go into beside healthcare where you can make a good living. Nadia ended her interview by saying,

One generation can make the difference from poverty to being in a certain tax bracket. In my country, we didn't have that. If you grew up poor and you were in poverty, your family died in poverty. So, it wasn't an opportunity to say, Oh, okay, we grew up poor, but I can go to school, and I can make these sacrifices and work hard for 10 years, and I will be somewhere different. That's not true. I could work hard for 10, 20 years in Haiti and still be in the same place of where I was before, which is very frustrating. So, this country is different. There are opportunities. You can change the outlook of your family, you can change everything in just one generation, which is a great thing, but it comes with a lot of hard work, and it comes with a lot of sacrifices. I think this idea of “you have to be a doctor” or “you have to be a lawyer.” These are the only things that you can do to provide for your family, or you don't have a good life. That's like absolutely false. There are so many other things you can do in this country. There are so many other avenues and fields that you can be a part of, and there's so many other ways that you can provide for your family. But we don't know those things because we've never seen those things. I didn't know what air traffic controllers were. The only thing that we know is like healthcare because that's the only thing that we see.

Interview Question 21

Figure 9 displays interview question 21.

Figure 9

Interview Question 21

21. Is there anything else that you would like to share or want me to know? Do you have any questions for me?

None of the women had any additional information to share. I thanked each of them for allowing me to interview them and explained how the focus group interview would be set up before ending the interview.

Focus Group Interview

The participants agreed that their colleges attempted to create environments that supported bicultural competence for international students. Nadia indicated that her college had organizations for different groups of international students, including a Caribbean student organization. The other women agreed. Also, they indicated that although these organizations existed, they met most of their friends in classes or other events where friends get together and get introduced to other friends.

Both Nadia and Roseline indicated that the supports were there, but they had to seek out the assistance and resources. Nicolette indicated that she was not sure if it was the college as a whole or individual teachers and staff. She recalled how she had a difficult first year because she did not know the policies or where to go for help. Her supervisor and a classmate who would become her best friend helped her navigate the college environment. Nicolette commented,

I think the university that I attended did surface level things to assist their immigrant students, but it was more like a one size fit all, but I also don't know if they could provide

different help to different student groups; that would be difficult as well. I think that they tried to help immigrant students.

Darlene agreed with Nicolette and added that one of her professors helped, as well as her friends who were going through similar things. Darlene stated that others going through what you are going through are one of the most important resources:

Regardless of whether or not it is a friend or staff member, having someone that can help you navigate through the process is so important. They can teach you things that your family may not be able to assist you with, and you will need to know those things so that you can make it through.

When asked about the people that they felt most comfortable socializing with in college, all of the participants indicated that they had friends from Haiti, and two of the women indicated that they had friends from diverse backgrounds. Nadia and Darlene indicated that they had more Haitian friends. While Roseline and Nicolette agreed that they had friends from diverse groups. Roseline and Darlene indicated that they had friends from different Caribbean countries. Nadia indicated that she had more friends from Haiti because she had always connected with other Haitians, while Roseline commented that she felt most comfortable with people from the Caribbean because they have something in common. Roseline explained,

I had some Haitian friends, but I also had friends from other Caribbean countries like Jamaica and Trinidad. I would say that I felt more comfortable with people that were from the Caribbean because we had something in common. When I met other students from Haiti, it was an almost instant connection because we could relate to each other: our heritage, food, upbringing, and language. Through the years, I made friends with students

from different backgrounds, so I have a variety of friends, but I feel most comfortable with people from Haiti and other Caribbean countries.

The third question asked the participants about the supports and resources that assisted them the most while attending college. All of the participants agreed that their parents and families were one of the greatest sources of report. This is consistent with the information gathered in their individual interviews. Other supports mentioned included friends and mentors in college. Friends and classmates understood what the participants were experiencing, and the women revealed things to them that they felt they could not tell their parents. Nadia responded,

I agree with the others, my parents and family. Seeing the poverty and what the lack of an education does to people, including people in my family, that was a great motivator. My cousin, being educated, was also a motivator. Once in college, the supports were friends helping each other get through, siblings encouraging you to keep going and helping in any way that they could and the mentors that I mentioned in my interview.

One participant also indicated that the opportunity to receive financial aid helped, for it would have taken her longer to get through college without it.

The focus group participants were eager to speak with each other. After introductions, exchanging pleasantries, and casual conversations, the interviewer asked the focus group questions. Nadia was the most outspoken as she answered questions number one and two first. Nicolette answered question number 3 first, and Roseline answered question 4 first. Roseline and Darlene generally agreed with Nadia and Nicolette's responses, with statements or examples added to their initial responses, but they often restated the initial respondents' comments. Nadia and Nicolette emerged as the more outspoken participants, and Darlene was the quietest part of

the group. The participants presented as attentive, open, and interested based on their facial expressions, body language, and tone.

Coding Process for Individual Interviews and Focus Group Session

The coding process for the semi-structured, individual interviews involved the researcher reading each participant's interview and identifying code words for each question. The list of codes was grouped by the question in which the answers were provided first, and then coded where the codes were applicable not necessarily in the question where the code was originally identified. The codes were examined to determine if they were associated with other questions, since the participants recalled memories and may have answered one question while answering a different question as the researcher did not interrupt the participants as they spoke. Next the researcher identified emerging themes and connected them to themes identified within the literature review. The researcher also identified sub themes within the data and summarized the data with supporting quotes from the participants.

Following this, the researcher began the coding process for the participants' focus group responses. The researcher placed the participants' responses in a chart format. The response of the participant who answered first was bolded and a matrix key provided to indicate the other participants' agreement, disagreement or neutral response was indicated. Key words were identified as codes and highlighted. The identified codes discussed in the focus group were summarized and compared with codes derived from interviews. Finally, the researcher reviewed the transcriptions and engaged in manual coding to find emerging codes and subsequent themes for both sets of data. The interview and focus group questions were linked to several themes based on the research objectives and the literature review.

Analyzing Participants' Narratives

The emerging themes resulting from the study summarized the educational experiences of the Haitian women as they emigrated from Haiti to the United States and attended college in the United States. The following themes emerged from analysis of the data: (a) *Cultural Influences*, (b) *Intersectionality of Educational Experiences*, (c) *Perceptions of Education*, (d) *Perceptions of Barriers* (e) *Bicultural Identity*, and (f) *Bicultural Socialization*. Table 4 displays the themes and the sub themes of the study. This section provides a discussion of the themes that emerged from coding the data.

Table 4

Themes and Sub Themes

Themes	Sub Themes
Cultural Influences	Cultural Bonds, Family & Community, Balancing Culture, Cultural Identity, Haitian pride, work ethic, resilience, heritage
Intersectionality of Educational Experiences	Non-English Speaking, First-generation, Women, Haitian Ethnicity, Immigrant, minority within a minority within a minority; phenotype—Black woman
Perceptions of Barriers	Language Barriers / Non -English Speaking, Differences in educational systems, transitioning to U.S., adjusting to new learning styles minority, hard work, immigrant, stigma/ stereotypes, academic challenges; limited opportunities in Haiti; lack of resources in Haiti
Perceptions of Education	Cultural Diversity, opportunity. Identify supports (family, mentors, teachers, friends), identify resources (homework support, financial aid), changing generational outlook; varied educational experiences of women vary depending on age; education and career path strongly influenced by parents and family
Bicultural Identity	Navigating dual cultures, balancing act, cultural adaptation, identity formation, identify with their Haitian heritage
Bicultural Socialization	Friends – Diverse & Haitian friends; long-lasting relationships, mentors, identifying support system & resources, peer and social dynamics, supportive connections; cultural bonds

The frameworks guiding this study were bicultural identity/socialization and two tenets of Black feminist thought: intersectionality and experience as knowledge. The concept of lived experiences as knowledge implies that the four Haitian women in this study were best qualified to describe their experiences and their perceptions of the impact of the different factors that may or may not have played a role in their identity formation in the United States. As they contemplated the idea of who they were when they arrived in the United States and who they were becoming, they possibly experienced feelings of in-betweenness (Vickerman, 2016). Potter and Philips (2006) indicated that many immigrants experience a feeling of in-betweenness, which is a sense of not belonging to their homeland or their host country. The participants in this study did not indicate that they had these feelings. Instead, they always knew that Haiti was their home, and they valued their culture and traditions while embracing new skills that were valuable to their journey in the United States. The experiences shared by the four participants provide knowledge that quantitative data cannot show.

The researcher implemented coding through thematic analysis for the data collected from the individual interviews and the focus group interview. Each participant referenced the impact of *Cultural Influences* on her ability to persevere through transition to education in the United States, secondary and postsecondary. Two sub themes emerged: heritage and family. Each woman spoke of her family's expectation of being successful, basically indicating that failure was not an option. They also spoke highly of their ethnicity. Being Haitian was an important facet of their ability to endure the obstacles that presented themselves as they navigated their way through school in the United States. The women also discussed the impact of limited opportunities in Haiti as a driving force for the need to be successful in the United States, as this

country is seen as the land of opportunity, although a person may have to work hard to reach their goals.

The next theme emerged in the discussions regarding the multiple barriers that each faced during their schooling experience in the United States. Each addressed numerous barriers: being an immigrant, not speaking English, being women, the negative connotations associated with being Haitian in school, and the impact of being a first-generation immigrant. For this study, the *Intersectionality of Educational Experiences* faced by the four Haitian women impacted their social identity and how they navigated the obstacles that they encountered. The numerous characteristics included nationality, ethnicity, class, gender, and immigration status and how the factors influenced the education experiences of the women after they arrived in the United States.

This intersectionality of barriers led to two additional themes: their *Perceptions of Education* and their *Perceptions of Barriers*. The participants saw barriers as inevitable and something that had to be addressed—not as something to become discouraged over. Their *Perceptions of Education* were also similar, as they felt it was their best chance to move upward and improve their quality of life. The women spoke of their experiences and the role the experiences played in shaping their identities. Although they understood that they were considered as minorities due to immigrant status, gender, and their ethnicity, the women did not indicate that negatively impacted their schooling experiences. Nadia indicated that she occupied a unique position as a “minority within a minority within a minority.” Finally, the themes of *Bicultural Identity* and *Bicultural Socialization* emerged as each participant elaborated on how they identified and what they had learned and incorporated from their home culture and the culture that they adapted and integrated in the United States.

As the researcher coded the data, another theme emerged that was not initially considered. The four women interviewed for this study were all successful students in school in Haiti. Each recounted that they were in the top of their class, they enjoyed learning, and they had relative success throughout their early school years prior to attending school in the United States. The *Impact of Their Success in School* has to be considered as a factor to why they would continue to work to achieve similar success while attending school in the United States.

Theme 1: Cultural Influences

All the participants consistently indicated that, although they faced numerous challenges, their family support and strong beliefs in their Haitian heritage were among the primary factors contributing to their ability to persevere through college in the United States. Cultural support from their family filtered through values and norms. Many Haitian families value education highly (Alfred, 2003; Moses, 2019). Some researchers attribute their value of education to a history of colonialism that portrayed education as a vehicle for social mobility (Alfred, 2003; Moses, 2019; Vickerman, 2016; Wilson, 2002). Cultural influences emerged as a major theme in all of the participants' interviews. They spoke of their Haitian heritage and family upbringing as having a significant impact on shaping their identity and building resilience. For example, Rosaline stated, "We have a strong heritage, we stick together and interact with each other." All four women were proud of their Haitian heritage, and they credited a large part of their success to it. Growing up in Haiti, they understood the meaning of hard work, and their families stressed the importance of education and striving for a better life. All of the women indicated that both their upbringing and teachings from their family and their Haitian heritage had a significant impact on being able to endure through college and graduate.

Heritage

The participants knew the history of Haiti and took pride in their Haitian heritage. Colonialism helped to shape the development of Haiti's culture, language, and customs (Vickerman, 1999). The diverse groups of people who settled the island led to a blending of cultures, which in turn led to specific cultural norms developing (Vickerman, 1999). The grandparents and parents of the participants worked to ensure that their children understood the importance of education while retaining knowledge of their culture. The participants spoke of the influence that their family and community had on their cultural identities. One aspect of colonialism was the concept that education could improve one's socioeconomic status and quality of life. The participants spoke of knowing that they had to be resilient, regardless of the obstacles that they faced. Nadia said,

I think I've always sort of found a way to maneuver and get around it [obstacles] and figure out how to keep pushing forward because that's just innately part of being myself and part of being Haitian and just part of being from where we are, you know.

Older relatives impressed upon the younger generation that a good education was the way for upward mobility and sought out ways to ensure that their children received an education.

Family

The participants described their families as large extended families. They grew up interacting with not just their siblings but also grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. The women spoke of spending summers in the country at their grandparents' home, which served as a meeting place for all of the children. The parents of the four women had little to no education but expressed the importance of education to their children. Older cousins who attended school often served as tutors and helped with homework. This trend continued when the women went to

school in the United States, although it was usually different cousins. Family members who had moved to the United States felt obligated to assist relatives left in Haiti. The assistance continued once the family arrived, since the family members often stayed close to relatives for support.

Each participant spoke highly of her parents, emphasizing that her parents wanted better for their children and worked hard to give their children better opportunities. Nadia became emotional about her mother, who could not read or write but ensured that they were safe and provided educational opportunities when they were young in Haiti. Nadia noted that they did not know how dangerous Haiti was when they were growing up, and they lived a happy childhood.

Nicolette spoke of how her father worked hard in the United States and sent his earnings back to Haiti so that they could live comfortably and attend private school. She and her siblings attended one of the better schools in Haiti. He worked and saved until he was able to bring them to the United States. Their descriptions of their childhood mimicked Green's (2006) account of the men migrating to find work in different locations and the women as the primary caregivers of the children, managing the home and raising the children. These norms were similar to the European values of women as homemakers and men as providers for the family (Green, 2006). The women spoke of their families' strong bonds (Madrigal, 2006) and often multi-generational approach to raising the children with the women expected to take on most of the responsibilities for child-rearing (Henry, 2017).

Theme 2: Intersectionality of Educational Experiences

The researcher attempted to ascertain if Haitian women attending university in the United States experienced intersecting barriers based on race, gender, social class, and other social markers, such as immigration status and ethnicity (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991). The participants in the study discussed numerous barriers they encountered that could be identified as

intersectionality as defined by Crenshaw (1991). The participants discussed multiple factors of disadvantages and barriers associated with being first-generation immigrants, Haitian, non-English speaking, and Caribbean women of color and their compounding effect on their educational experiences. A good education in Haiti was only the beginning, as the participants also understood that their families came to the United States because there were limited opportunities in Haiti, even for those with the proper schooling.

Haitian

The women spoke of their nationality being a barrier when they first moved to the United States because other students, including second-generation Haitian children, shunned them for being “new to American” and “unable to speak English.” One participant elaborated,

The other children did not want to have anything to do with us, including the Haitian kids that were already here and knew how to speak English. We were the Haitian kids that did not speak English. We made friends with the other Haitian children that were in our ESOL/ESL classes because they did not speak English either. The Haitian kids that were already here did not want interact with us.

One participant told the story of how one of her cousins ignored her in the hallway one day and quickly walked away as she called out to him.

At home, their parents taught them to be proud to be Haitian, and they were frequently reminded that they were not African American. Nadia recalled her father telling her daily as he dropped her to school that she was not African American and she was not to act or dress like them. The stigma associated with being African American, often portrayed through the media, was an obstacle that they did not want to have to overcome.

Non-English Speaking

Each participant gave accounts of how teachers or peers treated her differently at some point in her educational journey once she reached the United States, but the participants hesitated to use the term racism. They remembered the ESOL and ESL classes in which the teacher often was not of Haitian heritage, and the class was mixed with Haitian students and Hispanic students. If the teacher was Hispanic, they frequently worked with the Hispanic students more than they did the Haitian students. Nicolette recalled that her ESOL teacher was from Cuba, and his daughter was in the class as well. She stated that his class was divided between the Hispanic and Haitian kids because the school was mostly Hispanic and Haitian. Nicolette explained, “He [the teacher] would go out of his way to help his kids, the Hispanic kids . . . the Black Haitian kids did not get any help. It was like, ‘Hey, here is the lesson.’” That was her first experience of being treated differently. Nicolette would not call it racism. She stated, “I do not want to say racism, but . . . that was my introduction to it . . . I know I was being treated differently.”

In regards to how her peers treated her, Nicolette recalled, “So, I really did not have friends in high school. I did not have friends until I went to college, I did not fit in.” Nicolette continued,

Most of my high school years, I didn’t fit in. I just focused on my studies and focused on what I had to do, and then I kept hearing my dad’s words in my head. “Hey, I send you to school to get an education, not to make friends,” so I ended up pushing that aside, and that wasn’t important to me at that time. So, getting my education and getting out of there—priority number one. So, I went through high school and my only friends were really, my cousin? I didn’t really make friends in high school . . . didn’t make friends until college day. I can’t right now say I had friends, and they didn’t want to make friends

with the just comes from Haiti either. You know, they didn't want to be seen with us.

They didn't want to talk to us. They didn't want to be our friends. And I was, you know, you learn to live with it. Not that you were okay with it because I had friends in school in Haiti, and then all of a sudden, you know, you get okay, you go into another country, and then you come to this other country, and, you know, everything is different. And no friends and . . . and nobody wants to talk to you, and your teacher treats you differently. So yeah, it was. It was very different. That it was. It was quite an experience.

Darlene, Rosaline, and Nadia stated that their friends were friends that they made in their ESL classes and their cousins.

First Generation

Each participant, as first-generation transnationals, indicated that college had its obstacles as well, starting with the college admissions and applications. Darlene and Nicolette were the first in their family to go to college, so they remembered having difficulty with application, financial aid, and locating resources. One remembers losing her financial aid after her first year and working full time and going to school so that she could pay for her classes. Darlene and Nicolette concluded that things were harder because they did not have anyone to show them what to do or guide them through the process.

The other two participants, Rosaline and Nadia, were first-generation Haitian women as well, but they had older siblings or cousins who had experienced the college entrance process, so they were able to receive their guidance. Their difficulties came later, as they entered medical school. Each was the first in their family to go to medical school, and they had to address obstacles that their siblings had not encountered. One of the study participants spoke about how she went through her first three years of college just studying and getting good grades. When she

began the last year of her bachelor's degree, she realized she needed to be in clubs and activities so that she could add them to her medical school application. She stated that she did not know that she had to do other activities and clubs to look well-rounded. Similar to Kim's (2014) research conclusions, the participants' accounts highlight their resiliency and ability to find and use supports within the college system to assist in the completion of the academic goals.

Limited Opportunities in Haiti

Participants also understood that limited resources and opportunities in Haiti posed a major barrier to the people that remain in Haiti. The young people with an education often still do not have opportunities, resources, or jobs to improve their quality of life. The women spoke of the different barriers that they encountered. Nadia and Darlene explained that their families understood that a good education in Haiti was not enough because there was little opportunity in Haiti. All of the women stated that when given the opportunity to move to the United States, their families knew it would provide more opportunities for their families. These statements support the concepts proffered by Waters (2001) and Vickerman (1999) regarding Afro-Caribbean immigrants' recognition of the importance of education as an opportunity for upward mobility and their willingness to endure obstacles to reach their educational goals.

Women

Many women in Haiti are educated, and a number receive training to be nurses, for example, but they may not have the opportunity to practice nursing due to limited opportunities. Nadia stated that many of her family members still in Haiti were educated, but there was nothing to do with that education in Haiti. She elaborated that when they come to the United States, they think they can train and work as a nurse. Three of the women indicated that their parents pushed careers such as nurses and doctor. Having those types of jobs is a high priority because they are

seen as elite jobs. Nadia stated, “Women are urged to become nurses, and the males are impelled to become doctors or lawyers.” This statement demonstrates the viewpoints of patriarchal hierarchy instilled during colonization where women were assigned to certain jobs. Teaching and nursing jobs are often seen as work for women (Momsen, 2002; Ramos, 2012).

Some women have jobs in Haiti, but when they come to the United States, their schooling credentials are not accepted, so they have to start over or get a different type of job. Starting over often entails going to college. Darlene and Rosaline recalled stories of other Haitian women who had such experiences. Their stories provide one examples of the sacrifices that Haitian women are willing to endure to obtain upward mobility (Hutchinson, 2018). Nadia revealed two scenarios about growing up in Haiti:

You’re either from a very, very, poor family where there is no access to education, and you grow up illiterate and spend your entire life just managing to get through and find ways to support your family without actually having to go into the world, or you have a family that sort of pushed education and made sure that the children receive an education, even though their education may be limited, because that is the seen as the best way out of poverty.

Theme 3: Perceptions of Education

All four participants in the study shared a common theme in regard to the role of education during their interview, and the focus group reiterated this theme, *Perceptions of Education*. Education was seen as the primary path toward a better life. Darlene said one of the major differences between those who were poor in Haiti and those who had better jobs was that the ones with the better jobs were educated. Rosaline added during the focus group, “. . . even with limited opportunities, if you are educated or have training, you have a chance [to live a

better life], although you may have to leave Haiti to do so.” Education was a determining factor to change one’s socioeconomic status. The primary indication of class appeared to be economic status, and based on the influence of colonization, education was a solution to economic disparity (Kalmijn, 1996; Vickerman, 2016).

Theme 4: Perceptions of Barriers

Throughout the interview, the women identified barriers that each encountered. The fact that they encountered the barriers was expected, but their perceptions of the barriers were unique. The participants perceived the barriers as challenges that they had to overcome if they wanted to finish their degree and attain the career they wanted. All four participants told of times their classmates (both in secondary school and in college) treated them differently, but none of them attributed it to racism. Each woman described times when they felt both classmates and teachers treated them differently. None called it discrimination; instead, they saw it as another obstacle that they had to overcome. When asked what helped them to persist through those times, each participant stated that they recalled their parents and other family members reminding them that they were Haitian and that they had to persevere in order to complete their degree.

The instances of discrimination did not appear to impact the Haitian women as negatively as studies document the negative impact on African-Americans. Their strong ethnic identity appeared to be a buffer, for they indicated they understood things do not come easy since they grew up in Haiti, but they knew that the end result was worth encountering and surmounting the obstacles. They viewed African descent as normal and customary, since they came from societies where Blacks were typically the majority racial group. The participants did not perceive race as a hindrance to upward mobility. Blacks were located throughout the different socioeconomic status

in their home societies (Vickerman, 2016). Therefore education, occupations, and wealth had important roles in defining social status.

The four participants understood the history of racial tension and discrimination in the United States, but they did not want to connect themselves with that history. Each was aware of the tensions Black people faced in the United States, but they refused to be associated with the stereotypes assigned to African Americans. Nadia and Nicolette indicated that their parents told them that they were Haitian not African American; therefore, they were not to go to school acting like the African-American children.

Theme 5: Bicultural Identity

Similar to the research conducted by Woldemikael (1989), the participants in this study faced conflict in identities assigned to them by both the dominant and minority culture in the United States. If they accepted the identity they were given in the United States, it would most likely be based on race (Woldemikael, 1989), which they did not want. Again, similar to the first-generation Haitians in Woldemikael's (1989) study, the participants did not want to identify racism as having an impact on their life. They identified the barriers previously listed as obstacles that they expected, but they were willing to work to overcome, since the benefits outweighed the obstacles. The four women in the study depended on their Haitian upbringing to get them through difficult times but also observed mannerisms of the people in their new environment, adopting those behaviors they deemed necessary to navigate their surroundings.

When asked how they identified, two of the women stated that they identified as Haitian, and two stated that they identified as Haitian-American. When asked how she navigated between Haitian and American attitudes and customs, Rosaline indicated that she felt as though she switched between both cultures: Haitian and United States. She alternated between the two

cultures based on context. She explained that she acted one way when at work and another way at home, where she felt more relaxed and used more Creole. She compared it to changing clothes: at work she wore suitable work attire, but at home, she put on a comfortable pair of sweats and t-shirt. LaFromboise et al. (1993) would refer to Rosaline's bicultural identity as *alternation*.

The other three participants indicated they had adjusted to who they were in the United States, and they did not feel as though they switched back and forth. Nadia indicated, "My colleagues and friends know that I am Haitian, so I do things, for example, eat Haitian dishes, and other times, I eat foods that would be considered American, like French fries." The other two participants, Nicolette and Darlene, indicated that both cultures had influenced who they are, and they had embraced that identity. Nicolette stated that she used components from both cultures and attributed that to her being married to an African-American. She noted that she and her husband spent considerable time with each other's families, and there were times when both families were together at gatherings. Nicolette thought that was one reason why she used both cultures simultaneously, instead of switching back and forth.

Darlene spoke to the fact she used both cultures because there were aspects from both cultures that were important:

My parents taught me to be polite and remember my training from home, but in university, I also learned to speak up for myself and make my concerns known. I also enjoy the economic benefits [of] my American life: the clothes, vacations, and my home. In Haiti, I would more than likely be living in the country with a different life. I still speak Creole, cook Creole dishes, and so on and so forth. My Haitian upbringing

permeates every part of my life, and I passed it on to my kids, but I definitely think that I take things from both Haiti and American culture.

The cultural identities of Nadia, Nicolette, and Darlene would be considered as *fused* (LaFromboise et al., 1993) or blended (Birman, 1994).

Regardless of which bicultural identity mode the participants oriented toward, they all possessed a strong ethnic identity that had assisted them as they learned their second culture that they attributed to the United States. Since they valued their ethnic identity over racial identity, they viewed Blackness differently (Mwangi, 2014; Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015). All four participants exhibited positive self-identities, which they attributed to the social and cultural values instilled by their family and community. They expressed that they felt that their identity and value of education helped them to meet their education goals, despite facing numerous obstacles. Their reasoning concurs with King Miller (2017), which suggests that the foundation of cultural and social values provided by Caribbean communities in their home country equip Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the United States with the tenacity to overcome hurdles and finish their degrees. Completing their education was deemed to be one step closer to achieving upward mobility, which they felt an education afforded them (Bryce-LaPorte, 1972).

The participants' ability to form and maintain identities within multiple cultures was one of the major factors that helped them successfully navigate U.S. educational institutions (Berry et al., 2006; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012). By using information obtained from their new home and incorporating this knowledge into their daily lives while maintaining the culture from their home country, the women functioned effectively in their culture and the mainstream society in which they interacted with in various social situations. This helped them to adapt to situations that they encountered and navigate through the larger society, as they had acquired the attitudes,

norms, and behavior patterns of two or more ethnic groups (Padilla, 2006). As the women became versed in U.S. customs and ways in addition to Haitian customs, they became transnationals with strong, multiple attachments to both places (Skerret & Omogun, 2020).

Theme 6: Bicultural Socialization

Concepts of bicultural identity and socialization are relevant when explaining how Haitian Afro-Caribbean women are able to successfully migrate to the United States. Having a firm cultural identity and connection to their native country paired with the flexibility to interact with the majority group when they immigrate to the United States may be a determining factor in how they are able to overcome numerous barriers as they navigate dual positions (Vickerman, 2016). The Haitian Afro-Caribbean immigrant women in this study used *Bicultural Socialization* to acquire the skills necessary to function in their new society. Each participant discussed how they gained knowledge from fellow students, teachers, and friends within their community and university that assisted their maneuvers through their academic careers.

For the women in this study, their home culture acted as a protective layer and aided them in overcoming the different barriers they encountered as they worked toward their educational goals. Whereas the supports and assistance they obtained from others while learning American culture provided them with information that was not available from their home culture, their willingness to learn from their new culture facilitated their success in finishing university and achieving their educational goals. This finding aligns with studies that indicated culture was the link between Black immigrants and their educational success as they strived to affirm their identity and create social structures in their new home (Barnett et al., 2012; Mwangi & English, 2017).

Bicultural Identity and *Bicultural Socialization* are important concepts to explore in an effort to explain how the Haitian Afro-Caribbean women in this study were able to immigrate to the United States and obtain their degree from U.S. universities. All four women affirmed the importance of their cultural identity and Haitian heritage as major contributors to their success. However, their flexibility, willingness to interact within the majority group, and recognition of important factors from these groups once they were in the United States also factored in how they were able to overcome the numerous barriers they encountered due to their immigrating to the United States while learning dual positions (Vickerman, 2016). Ultimately, their *Bicultural Socialization* helped them to acquire new skills that were necessary for them to function in the United States. For the women in this study, these interactions often took place in the universities that they attended.

Summary

The study focused on the education experiences of four Haitian women who emigrated from Haiti to the United States and attended college in the United States. The emerging themes were (a) *Cultural Influences*, (b) *Intersectionality of Educational Experiences*, (c) *Perceptions of Education*, (d) *Perceptions of Barriers* (e) *Bicultural Identity*, and (f) *Bicultural Socialization*. The frameworks guiding this study were bicultural identity/socialization and two tenets of Black feminist thought: intersectionality and experience as knowledge.

The participants in the study shared their experiences and perceptions of the impact of different factors that may or may not have played a role in their identity formation in the United States. They mentioned their heritage and family expectations, as well as their ethnicity as an important factor in their ability to endure obstacles. The multiple barriers faced by the women during their schooling experience in the United States included nationality, ethnicity, class,

gender, and immigration status. The women also discussed the impact of limited opportunities in Haiti as a driving force for their success in the United States, as they perceived the United States as the land of opportunity. The intersectionality of barriers led to two additional themes: their *Perceptions of Education* and *Perceptions of Barriers*. The participants saw barriers as inevitable and something they had to address. Their perceptions of education were similar, as they felt it was their best chance to move upward and improve their quality of life. Finally, the themes of *Bicultural Identity* and *Bicultural Socialization* emerged as a result of the study's analysis. The participants' experiences and the role of their experiences in shaping their identities provide valuable insights into the experiences and challenges faced by these women in the United States. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings, as well as implications and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explored the experiences of Haitian women educated in Haiti and the United States. Through the participants' descriptions of their experiences, the study sought to examine how cultural norms and family values played a role in forming their identity and influenced their school experiences in the United States. Additionally, the study hoped to comprehend the role the participants' cultural norms and perceptions of education played in influencing their college completion. Finally, the study examined how participants' cultural norms and perceptions impacted their college experiences in consideration of overcoming barriers, identity formation, and socialization. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the major findings of this study based on the theories informing the study and the research questions explored. Relevant applications associated with this study are addressed in the form of discussions, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research.

Data collection emphasized the responses of four Haitian women who obtained their earlier academic schooling in Haiti and then attended college in the United States. Each participant of the study graduated from a college in the southern United States. The instrument used to collect the data was a 45- to 60-minute interview using semi-structured questions. Finally, the participants engaged in a focus group discussion to clarify any information provided during their interview and add any additional information that they felt was pertinent to the study. Participants shared their experiences, which were found to be relevant to the conclusions reached in this research study.

Several themes and sub themes emerged from analysis of the participants' interview and focus group responses. These themes were as follows: (a) *Cultural Influences*, (b)

Intersectionality of Educational Experiences, (c) *Perceptions of Education*, (d) *Perceptions of Barriers* (e) *Bicultural Identity*, and (f) *Bicultural Socialization*. Sub themes included significant influences of parents and family; cultural expectations of the importance of education; strong sense of heritage, and influence of cultural values on their academic achievement; strong cultural identity and a sense of community; and supports and resources to assist in overcoming barriers.

The purpose of this study was to understand how Haitian women who immigrated to the United States and attended college in the United States describe their schooling experiences. The interviews revealed that participants strongly associated their motivation to obtain their college degree with cultural experiences, family expectations and upbringing, social class, and a strong sense of identity. In addition, these first-generation participants discussed obstacles that they faced and their lived experiences as they journeyed through college in the United States. Past research has shown that first-generation students have unique challenges in comparison to second-generation students (Woldemikael, 1989).

Participants reported their experiences at university as both challenging and fulfilling. Their advice to other women with similar backgrounds was to accept the challenge and use the experience to make their lives better. They stated that their hard work and discipline gave them the opportunity for upward mobility and benefitted them and their families. Participants attributed the achievement of their goals to family support, cultural perspective, socialization, and a strong self-identity, as all played a role in their intrinsic motivation to complete their degree. As the participants described their lived experiences, each revealed that their Haitian parents had instilled in them the value of education and reinforced that academic achievement and a college degree played an important role in their upward mobility. This finding supports previous research that Caribbean immigrants value education (Vickerman, 2016; Waters, 2001).

Discussion of Findings

This section addresses the data results that pertain to the study's research questions, which were as follows:

1. What are the experiences of Haitian Afro-Caribbean women who have been educated in the United States?
2. What, if any, is the impact of intersectionality on the lived experiences of Haitian American women who have been educated in Haiti and the United States?
3. Does bicultural socialization and identity have an impact on their educational experience?

Finding for RQ1

The first research question was as follows: What are the experiences of Haitian Afro-Caribbean women who have been educated in the United States? The data revealed the following **finding: remaining grounded in their Haitian heritage, the women embraced the strong work ethic instilled by their parents while navigating the challenges of integrating with American culture.** An intriguing narrative emerged in exploring the connection between *cultural influences*, *perceptions of education*, and the *barriers* faced by four first-generation Haitian women in the United States. The participants' interviews revealed similarities in shared cultural values and practices that significantly shaped their behaviors in U.S. schools and framed their educational perspectives. The women proudly maintained their cultural identity. Within the theme of cultural identity, the sub theme of resilience emerged. The four women spoke of how they relied on their Haitian heritage to overcome the obstacles of navigating a minority status in the United States.

As the other themes of *perceptions of education* and *barriers* are explored, the role of the participants' early school success in Haitian schools is discussed in relation to their adaptability to a new educational environment while surmounting language barriers and feelings of being shunned. This study examines the profound impact of *cultural influences* on the participants' educational outcomes in pursuit of academic success.

Theme: Cultural Influences

The participants' interviews highlighted *Cultural Influences* shared by the women, for they relied on their values and practices to shape their behaviors in U.S. schools and their perceptions of U.S. education. Their parents instilled the idea that education was their best chance for upward mobility and ingrained in the young women a strong work ethic that they relied on when faced with difficulties. The women indicated that the foundation for their motivation to be successful academically started during their Haitian school career, where hard work was expected. All the women expressed pride in their Haitian heritage and identified with their Haitian culture while integrating with the American culture. While being exposed to the diverse cultures in the United States, the women acknowledged challenges and experiences as they navigated their minority status, yet they took the difficulties in stride, again attributing their resilience to their Haitian heritage, one of the sub themes.

Although the families strongly influenced the women in the study, the participants also explained that their cultural norms and heritage were contributing factors. It was instilled in them early on that they had to work hard and persevere through tough times. They expected obstacles and perceived them as something to overcome. They were taught to be proud of their heritage and not focus on what others thought of them. Each talked about remembering things their parents told them and used those memories as motivation during hard times. The parental and

family expectations, paired with strong cultural norms, enabled the women to develop the required skills to succeed in school and university in the United States. These findings further support the theme of *Cultural Influences*.

The four participants acknowledged that their parents made great sacrifices to pay for private Haitian schools for them to attend. Each participant spoke of her family's high value on education, as they perceived it as the primary determinant for upward mobility. The sub theme of family was evident throughout the interviews as each recalled their parents and other family members encouraging them to do well in school and graduate college. All the participants believed that their motivation to succeed academically started while attending school in Haiti. In addition, all noted they had performed at the top of their class in Haiti, which provided them with positive educational experiences and reinforced their belief that they could do well in school, setting the foundation for their school success in the United States. Therefore, their *Perception of Education* and *Cultural Influences* profoundly impacted their educational outcomes.

Theme: Perceptions of Education

The study found that although the four first-generation Haitian women's experiences varied, similar responses emerged from the interviews. The four women in this study openly discussed their experiences in the schools they attended in Haiti and the United States. Each described the learning process in Haiti as primarily rote learning. They had to memorize much of the information, yet it was also very competitive, as evidenced by frequent testing and ranking of students. Since most students who attended were of Haitian heritage, homogenous groups comprised the classrooms in their Haitian schools.

Without diminishing the effects of their parents and family's expectations and strong bonds to their cultural norms as reasons for participants' academic achievement, it is also

important to examine another factor. All the women interviewed in this study recalled success in their early schooling in Haiti. Phrases used to describe their school memories in Haiti included “challenging but fun;” “there was a lot of memorization and rote learning, but it was easy;” “I always scored at the top of my class, competitive but I always did well;” and “I always had good scores (grades).” The researcher speculated how their early success had shaped their feelings about school and how much of an impact their positive feelings about school and their abilities to do well in school had on their continued success once they came to the United States. The fact that they knew they could do well in school likely significantly impacted them pushing through the obstacle of learning a new language and continuing to do well in school in the United States. Their school success added an additional layer to why they were successful as students in the United States. They had experienced success in school early on in addition to their parent and family expectations and cultural pride of being Haitian.

The *Perceptions of Education* theme was notable as each participant recalled the education systems in each country and how they fared in each environment. The participants reported that when they arrived in the United States, they faced expectations to perform academically despite their limited English, so they used their previous schooling experiences and passion for learning to motivate them to adapt to their new school environment. The four women in the study each detailed that their grades fell when they arrived in the United States as they adapted to being taught and completing assignments in English while learning to speak English. Each had an intrinsic motivation to perform well in school; therefore, the change in setting did not deter their desire to meet their academic goals. Conversely, it further motivated them to achieve their academic goals because they felt that being in the United States offered opportunities unavailable to them in Haiti. Each woman discussed that their early school

experiences and support from their teachers, extended family members, and parents helped to reinforce the importance of education and the values of excellence.

Theme: Perceptions of Barriers

The four participants in this study further discussed challenges in secondary school and college. Learning a new language and feeling excluded at school when they started school in the United States were concerns for all four of the women. They attributed their ability to concentrate on the long-term goal of achieving their educational objectives as a guiding force to overcome the two concerns and keep moving forward. Each participant shared how the children who arrived from Haiti experienced ostracism in school from the other students, including other Haitian children who had been in the United States for a while and those who were born in the United States. They spoke of feeling excluded by African-American, Caucasian, and Hispanic students as well. Participants agreed that focusing on their academic achievement and interacting with their peers in their ESL/ESOL classes helped them to ignore some of the initial isolation.

Dealing with the impact of receiving less than stellar grades when they first arrived was another hurdle that each interviewee discussed. The participants reported crying when they received their first bad grade, since they had done well in school in Haiti. Because they did not believe failure was an option, and their parents and older family members reiterated that belief, their response to the poor grades was to study and work harder.

The results of this study and the 2018 Hutchinson study had similar findings. The participants of both studies encountered challenges and barriers while attending U.S. universities, but they were resilient and determined to overcome the barriers they encountered. Both sets of participants indicated that their families were supportive, and they spoke of an education equating to opportunities for upward mobility. The women relied heavily on their cultural

identity and heritage while attending school. Finally, both studies acknowledged that the participants understood the need to interact with their peers and faculty members to assist them with navigating their new academic environment.

Esnard and Cobb-Roberts's (2019) research on the experiences of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women with careers in U.S. universities explored the impact of social constructs and identity of the women. The study examined the complexities that Afro-Caribbean women encounter when immigrating to the United States. The study aligns with the discussions and studies about the barriers, challenges, and factors influencing the lives of the Haitian women in this study. Both studies contribute to the understanding of the intersections of gender, ethnicity and immigration status on the experiences of Caribbean women in various contexts.

Table 5

Finding	Themes (Subthemes)
Finding 1: Remaining grounded in their Haitian heritage, the women embraced the strong work ethic instilled by their parents while navigating the challenges of integrating with American culture.	Cultural Influences Perceptions of Education Barriers

Finding for RQ2

The second research question was as follows: What, if any, is the impact of intersectionality on the lived experiences of Haitian American women who have been educated in Haiti and the United States? The data revealed the following **finding: the participants' awareness of numerous barriers during their college experiences, rooted in their ethnicity, language proficiency, gender, and immigrant status, forms a complex web of intersectionality.** With the exploration of RQ2, the researcher probed the impact of intersectionality on the lived experiences of Haitian American women educated in Haiti and the

United States; a combination of challenges, resilience, and cultural identity unfolded. Despite recognizing the potential for different treatment based on various identities, the women chose not to conform to stereotypical perceptions but viewed such challenges as obstacles. Their narratives defy conventional notions of racism, attributing negative interactions to a lack of understanding of Haitian culture rather than racial bias.

The theme of *Perceptions of Barriers* emerged as the participants attributed their success to a robust cultural identity and perseverance, emphasizing the importance of social networks and resources beyond academic excellence. Moving into the *Intersectionality of Educational Experiences*, the participants detailed the compounding effects of being first-generation immigrants, non-English speakers, and Haitian Caribbean women of color. The theme unfolded through their accounts of challenges related to their Haitian nationality, language barriers, and the unique hurdles of being first-generation transnationals. Additionally, the participants recognized the disparities in opportunities between Haiti and the United States, clarifying how limited resources in Haiti acted as significant barriers to education and career advancement. This exploration examined the complex interconnectedness between intersectionality and the educational journey of Haitian American women, shedding light on their triumphs over multifaceted challenges.

The participants indicated that they encountered numerous barriers and disadvantages while attending college. Some of their disadvantages were directly related to their gender, ethnicity, failure to speak English, and the fact that they were immigrants. Although they were aware of the different identities that could be assigned to them, they did not conform to the perceptions that others might attribute to the identities. The women were aware that one or more of their identities might lead to different treatment, but they chose to treat that as another

obstacle to surmount. Neither of the women would openly say that they had experienced racism, and they did not refer to race but ethnicity. When discussing the negative ways some people interacted with them, they attributed it to other people's lack of knowledge of Haitian culture. They said they often countered those opinions by demonstrating their knowledge and work ethic. Each explained that their Haitian heritage taught them they had to keep fighting and could not give up. However, it also played a part in their refusal to be identified as one large group—Black—based on physical traits and assigned to a social construct of race instead of being recognized by culture and ethnicity. Their strong cultural identity helped them overcome these additional facets of identity in the United States and allowed them to view them as challenges to overcome. Two of the women specifically stated that they realized in their current career that older White men who dominated their field surrounded them. However, they refused to be intimidated by that fact. The pediatric anesthesiologist, Nadia, stated she was “a quadruple minority: Haitian, woman, immigrant, and English-language learner” in her current job placement. She added, “I did not mention my age.” In speaking with the women, it was not as important that they knew of intersectionality and the multiple identities that could cause them to be treated differently but how they chose to handle being treated differently.

Theme: Perceptions of Barriers

When questioned about the barriers they faced and how they overcame them, the participants shared that their strong cultural identity and perseverance helped them overcome their challenges. The women spoke about realizing that they had moved beyond their academic performance to complete college. Although high academic performance is essential, building a social network and bank of support and resources was imperative to their ability to overcome challenges. As mentioned, their social networks included other students and teachers from Haiti

and other Caribbean countries. Participants also formed relationships with people outside their cultural groups, including other international students and Americans. The idea that resonated between all four women was that barriers were seen as hindrances—something to overcome but not obstacles to stop them from achieving their goals.

Theme: Intersectionality of Educational Experiences

The four participants described similar obstacles and disadvantages of being first-generation immigrants, non-English speaking, and Haitian Caribbean women of color and the compounding effect these barriers had on their educational experiences.

Haitian

The young women in the study recalled their nationality also being a barrier. When they started school in the United States, the other students—including other Haitian children—teased them because they did not speak English and they were new to the United States. The participants also shared instances of being excluded and ostracized.

Non-English Speaking

All four participants expressed the impact of not being able to speak English. They were placed in ESOL/ ESL classes while simultaneously being expected to perform in their other classes that were taught in English only. The participants also talked about the effect of being non-English speaking on their grades when they started U.S. schools. Their grades dropped, which impacted them emotionally because they all stated they were good students in Haiti and enjoyed school. The fact that they did well in school in Haiti may have contributed to their ability to overcome the impact of their multiple barriers of being non-English speaking, first-generation Haitian immigrant women.

First Generation

As first-generation transnationals, the participants described the hurdles of being the first in their families to attend college. Nicolette described her difficulty completing college applications and financial aid forms and identifying all of her university's support, such as tutoring and academic support services. Nadia recalled studying diligently to excel academically in her medical courses. However, she did not know she needed to engage in extracurricular activities for her medical school applications. Being the first to attend college or medical school in the United States was one of many obstacles the participants had to overcome.

Limited Opportunities in Haiti

Each participant comprehended the importance of the opportunities in the United States. They also understood that limited resources and opportunities in Haiti were a significant barrier for the people in Haiti. Some people living in poverty cannot obtain an education, and others who obtain an education cannot secure a job in their field of study due to limited resources. Both are hindrances to improving the quality of life. All the women and their families understood that moving to the United States would provide their families with opportunities not available in Haiti.

Differences in Educational Systems

Each woman spoke about the differences between the two educational systems. In Haiti, students were expected to orally recite large amounts of memorized information in a highly competitive format. In the United States, the young women encountered learning that emphasized a deeper level of understanding, whereas being able to synthesize and comprehend the provided material went beyond rote memorization.

The research conducted by Murray-Johnson (2013) and McFarlane (2017) shared valuable insights into the impact of intersectionality on the lived experiences of Haitian-American women educated in both Haiti and the United States. The participants in this study revealed awareness of numerous barriers and disadvantages associated with their gender, ethnicity, language proficiency, and immigrant status. Their experiences align with the findings of Murray-Johnson and McFarlane, shedding light on the complexities these women face in navigating various social contexts. Murray-Johnson's 2013 study suggested the need for a feminist approach to address patriarchal and racial systems of oppressed African-American and Black Caribbean immigrant females. While Murray-Johnson focused on the struggle for identification within these groups, the participants' experiences in this study indicated a similar need for a subtle approach to intersectionality. The participants' refusal to conform to predefined identities and their emphasis on cultural identification resonates with Murray-Johnson's emphasis on engaging in open and honest dialogue to eliminate negative stereotypes.

McFarlane's 2017 research surveyed the complex influences of intersecting identities, particularly gender, class, race, and nationality, on Caribbean immigrant women's college experiences. The study emphasized the variation in experiences resulting from the diversity of gendered cultural traditions in the Caribbean. The participants' narratives of the current study reiterated McFarlane's findings, specifically in the challenges they faced as first-generation immigrants, non-speaking English speakers, and Haitian Caribbean women of color. The compounding effect of these barriers aligns with McFarlane's (2017) examination of how social roles, shaped by cultural traditions, can influence the experiences of Caribbean immigrant women in the United States.

The theme of *Perceptions of Barriers* aligns with Murray-Johnson's (2013) emphasis on the importance of dialogue and narratives as tools to recognize oppressive social forces that shape society and act against them. The participants' shared realization that barriers should be seen as hinderances to overcome, not obstacles that stop progress align with the idea of engaging in dialogue to model unity and avoid reinforcing negative constructs of patriarchal stereotypes.

The *Intersectionality of Educational Experiences* theme corresponds with McFarlane's (2017) focus on the influence of intersecting identities on Caribbean immigrant women's college experiences. The participants in this study faced challenges as Haitian, non-English speaking, and first-generation immigrants similar to the complexities outlined in McFarlane's research. Both Murray-Johnson and McFarlane's research contributes to understanding the impact of intersectionality on the lived experiences of Haitian-American immigrant women, providing a theoretical framework and insights that resonate with the narratives shared by the participants in this study. Their experiences align with the struggle for identifications, the need for approaches to address intersectionality, and the variations in experiences influenced by intersection identities as explored by McFarlane (2013) and Murray-Johnson (2017).

Table 6

Finding	Themes (Subthemes)
Finding 2: The participants' awareness of numerous barriers during their college experiences, rooted in their ethnicity, language proficiency, gender, and immigrant status, forms a complex web of intersectionality.	<p>Perceptions of Barriers</p> <p>Intersectionality of Educational Experiences <i>(Haitian, Non-English speaking, first generation, limited opportunities in Haiti, differences in educational systems)</i></p>

Finding for RQ3

The third research question was as follows: Does bicultural socialization and identity have an impact on their educational experience? The data revealed the following **finding: bicultural identity, whether characterized by alternation or fusion, played a vital role in shaping the women's resilience and ability to negotiate the educational barriers encountered in U.S. schools and universities.** RQ3 addressed the impact of bicultural identity and bicultural socialization on the educational experiences of first-generation Haitian American women. Delving into the significance of bicultural socialization and identity, RQ3 aligned seamlessly with the identified themes of *Bicultural Identity* and *Bicultural Socialization*. The participants in this study highlighted how their Haitian heritage and their adaptation to American attitudes, mannerisms, and customs combined to create both alternating and fused bicultural identities (LaFromboise et al., 1993).

Theme: Bicultural Identity

Regarding the context of *Bicultural Identity*, the participants struggled with conflicting identities assigned by both dominant and minority cultures in the United States. The research reveals that their bicultural identities influenced their responses to racial and cultural perceptions. The women's adeptness at navigating between Haitian and American attitudes and customs speaks to the flexibility of their bicultural identities, allowing them to integrate both cultural influences. Two participants identified as Haitians, while the other two identified as Haitian-American, which reflects the diversity within their bicultural identities. Examining how their women navigated between and integrate these cultural identities provides a deeper understanding of their responses to societal expectations and perceptions.

Theme: Bicultural Socialization

The participants exhibited an effective process of bicultural socialization, as they incorporated knowledge and skills from their home culture and their new U.S. environment. Their ability to interact successfully with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, paired with their strong ethnic identity, emphasized the impact of bicultural socialization on their adaptation and success within U.S. educational institutions. The study highlights the instrumental role of the participants' home culture as a protective layer enabling them to overcome barriers encountered in their pursuit of educational goals.

In conclusion, the themes of *Bicultural Identity* and *Bicultural Socialization* intricately intertwine with the exploration of RQ3, shedding light on how the bicultural experiences of Haitian American women shape their educational journeys. The participants' bicultural identities, whether alternating or fused, demonstrate the adaptive strength derived from maintaining connections to their Haitian heritage while embracing the new cultural influences in the United States. Bicultural socialization emerged as a vital process that equipped these women with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the challenges of dual positions in their educational pursuit, ultimately contributing to their success in American universities.

Poverty

Colonization, economic challenges, and political instability have contributed to the significant poverty experienced in Haiti. Similar to the history of other Caribbean countries, colonization often left those of African heritage comprising the majority of the lower economic class (Vickerman, 1999). After fighting for their freedom and becoming the first Black republic, Haiti would be burdened with an enormous debt load by France to pay for reparations. France and the U.S. negotiated unfavorable trade agreements with Haiti leading to massive debt and

economic hardships. The debt incurred from gaining independence and unfavorable trade agreements crippled Haiti's economic growth (Dubois, 2004). Haiti's political leaders have not looked out for Haiti's interest and frequently strip Haiti of its resources and money allotted to build its infrastructure.

There is a recurring pattern of poverty throughout Haiti's history. Colonization, oppressive regimes, for example the Duvalier's reign, and subsequent political instability have contributed significantly to the persistent poverty in the country. The country's lack of infrastructure had a significant impact of its funding of education and other important projects often funded by a country's government (Abbott, 1988; Fergusson, 1987; Girard, 2010). This has led to education and gender disparities whereas the poor citizens often cannot afford to send their children to school. Haitian women share in these socioeconomic difficulties.

Although young Caribbean women outperform young men in secondary education, they are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed (Spencer, 2021). The narratives of Nadia and Darlene seemed to support this statement. Both emphasized the importance of education as a means to escape poverty. Darlene's parents emphasized education as a way to secure good opportunities and a better life. Nadia contrasted the opportunities available in the United States with her experiences in Haiti, where poverty seemed to perpetuate across generations due to limited access to education. Their narratives also aligned with the historical context, whereas having an access to education was portrayed as a key factor to breaking the cycle of poverty and families went through great lengths to ensure their children received an education (Kincaid, 1988). The challenges faced by the study participants and their families outline systemic issues in Haiti, such as political instability, economic mismanagement, limited opportunities, and the continuous cycle of poverty that Haitians endure.

Haiti's history, marked by colonization, political turmoil, and economic challenges has resulted in persistent poverty. The narratives of the participants emphasize the critical role of education in breaking the cycle of poverty, while highlighting the systemic issues that hinder progress in Haiti.

Culture

Cultures are a fusion of customs from the island's inhabitants. The women in the study indicated that they celebrate Haitian holidays and continue to cook many Haitian dishes while living in the United States. Based on the conversations, food is a strong connection to their Haitian heritage. They also mention cultural expectations, such as respecting elderly family members and always listening to their parents and the expectation that you take care of family members. None of the participants discussed Haitian music, literature, or art in terms of cultural knowledge or its impact on their current daily lives. Further, participants did not discuss their religious beliefs or affiliations; therefore, its influence and impact are unknown.

Formal and Informal Education

Kincaid (1988) wrote about how colonization throughout the Caribbean had its destructive influences but also maintained that colonization provided the aspect that a good education could improve people's lives. The participants were a testament to Kincaid's idea. The study participants shared similar discussions of how their parents and other family members stressed the importance of obtaining a formal education, but all of the women experienced informal education as well from their families. The young ladies acquired their attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from their parents and families.

Nicolette emphasized the significant impact of her father, who had limited formal education in the United States but recognized the importance of an education. Seeing her father's

struggles without an education motivated her to work harder in her studies. Nadia shared that the dual influences in her home were her mother and educated cousin. Her mother's lack of education served as motivation for Nadia to take advantages of educational opportunities when she came to the United States, while her cousin served as a positive role model, demonstrating the possibilities with education.

All four participants spoke of their parental influence on their education but also acknowledged that their families shaped their thoughts about education. The young women were taught that an education provided the means to overcome challenges and achieve a better quality of life. Darlene and Roseline recounted how their parents and families continually stressed the importance of education and indicated that it served as a pathway to good opportunities, a good job, and a life free from poverty. All four women discussed these cultural attitudes, expressing a strong connection to their Haitian heritage and the significant influence of their cultural identity on their values and attitudes. Their accounts of parent and family teachings supports Memmi's (1957) statement that the history of colonized people is often lost if it is not passed down orally through generations.

Gender

From a historical context, Haitian women were subjected to systemic inequalities, exploitation, and subordination. The impact of slavery and colonization on family dynamics and the role of women in the Caribbean plantation system influenced gender roles and economic autonomy (Beckles, 1999; Green, 2006; Vickerman, 1999). The patriarchal system effect stemming from colonialism played a major role in defining gender roles and maintaining gender inequality and subordination, thereby affecting the opportunities afforded to women (Green, 2006; O'Connor, 2014).

Charles (1995) suggested that subordinated gender roles reinforced on Haitian women in Haiti led to the forming feminist groups by Haitian women who immigrated to the United States and gained a new consciousness. The participants in the study did not express a feminist ethos or specifically discuss women in the context of having subordinated gender roles. During the interviews, there were subtle indications, for example, when Nadia discussed that women received encouragement to become nurses, whereas men received encouragement to become doctors or lawyers. This gender expectation reflects traditional views of suitable professions for women. Throughout the interviews, the impact of the intersectionality of ethnicity, gender, and immigrant status was evident on the participants' lived experiences and perceptions of educational barriers.

Based on the discussions with the women, gender played a significant role in influencing the women's education. The participants acknowledged that, in Haiti, there is an expectation for women to attain an education and pursue a higher education, if possible. They indicated that this is a shift from previous generations, where many women could not read or write, reflecting a change in attitudes toward women's education. Nicolette indicated a difference by noting that her father had a third-grade education but her mother could not read or write. Nadia mentioned that despite women in Haiti attending school and some going to college, there was often limited opportunity to utilize their education due to the lack of jobs and opportunities in the country. These statements suggest that despite educational attainment, women may face challenges in benefitting from their education.

Gender significantly influenced the educational experiences of women, both in Haiti and as immigrants in the United States. Traditional expectations, historical inequalities, and the

intersectionality of being a woman of Haitian descent contributed to a complex landscape for these women in their pursuit of education and career advancement.

Nadia's personal experience as a Haitian immigrant and a Black woman in the medical field highlighted intersectionality, where she occupied a unique position as a "minority within a minority within a minority." Her statement reflected the challenges faced by women navigating multiple layers of disadvantage based on ethnicity, gender, and immigration status. She further illustrated her understanding of her position and the obstacles encountered when she provided advice to Haitian women immigrating to the United States by acknowledging the need for hard work and the existence of challenges, such as discrimination and the importance of exploring diverse career paths. It is important to add that Nadia recognized the opportunities available for upward mobility in one generation.

Intersectionality of Gender, Ethnicity and Immigrant Status

The intersections of ethnicity, gender, and immigrant status played a critical role in shaping the lived experiences and the perceptions of educational barriers for the participants in this study. People of Haitian ethnicity have been affected disproportionately by colonization and socioeconomic disparities. They have faced discrimination and ethnic prejudice with their island neighbors, the Dominican Republic, from the historical Parsley massacre (Dandicat, 1998; Loescher & Scanlan, 1984) to modern day refusal to acknowledge Haitians born and raised in the Dominican Republics as citizens (Conde, 2021; Rojas, 2013).

The Haitian people have endured violence from their leaders as documented during the Duvalier regime leading to a mass exodus of middle- and upper-class Haitians, which contributed to a trickling effect of labor, education, and training shortages (Girard, 2010; Snyder, 1992). The Immigration Act of 1965 and policy changes during different presidencies influenced

the influx of Haitian immigrants. The treatment of Haitian refugees in comparison to Cuban refugees reflects the disparities in immigration policies. Once in the United States, the participants recalled memories of being ostracized in school for being recent Haitian immigrants. The experiences of the participants in the study as Haitian immigrant women in the United States reveal the impact of immigrant status on their lived experiences and perceived barriers while pursuing their educational goals.

The intersection of gender, ethnicity, and immigrant status intertwined with historical and present-day narratives to shape the participants' lived experiences and perceptions of educational barriers. For the Haitian immigrant women in this study, ethnicity, gender, and immigration status intersected in complex ways and influenced the opportunities and challenges they faced as individuals while obtaining their education in the United States.

Transnationals

The study participants were living their lives across two nations, holding strong, multiple attachments to their nation state (Skerret & Omogun, 2020), Haiti, and adopting new customs and mannerisms in the United States as they learned to maneuver in their new home. Each spoke of learning to understand and incorporate U.S. customs while maintain their Haitian identity. Their experiences, including the recognition of unfairness and inequality, and discrimination, influenced this process. As they adapted to changes in their natural and social environment, the women relied heavily on their ethnic identity and experiences in Haiti as buffers to challenges and obstacles, and other barriers they may have encountered, such as being treated differently. The participants perceived these challenges as worth overcoming in order to obtain an education and an opportunity for a better life.

The women spoke about stereotypes assigned to African-Americans and how the Haitian community did not want to be associated with those stereotypes. Similarly, as described by Vickerman (1999), the women resisted being categorized monolithically as “Black” in the United States. They understood that Black people have diverse backgrounds, and many subgroups have strong ties to their culture and ethnicity. Their resistance to be considered one monolithic group was shaped by their awareness of racial tension and discrimination in the United States and a desire to not be connected to that history. In Haiti, Black people held prominent positions, and the major difference between living in poverty and a comfortable life was having an education and opportunities.

The study participants’ ability to form and maintain identities within multiple cultures was a major factor in their successful navigation of U.S. educational institutions. Their bicultural socialization, acquiring and utilizing skills from both their native culture and the United States, played a crucial role in overcoming barriers and adapting to a new society. Each participant discussed how they balanced their Haitian identity with their experience in the United States as they discussed language use, the importance of having family support in the United States, and supporting their families in Haiti as their perception of their heritage evolved. The Haitian Afro-Caribbean immigrant women detailed their experiences of cultural adaptation and their resistance to stereotypes as they developed transnational identities through a bicultural lens.

Table 7

Finding	Themes (Subthemes)
Finding 3: Bicultural identity, whether characterized by alternation or fusion, played a vital role in shaping the women’s resilience and ability to negotiate the educational barriers encountered in the U.S. schools and universities.	Bicultural Identity Bicultural Socialization (<i>poverty, culture, formal and informal education, gender, intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, and immigrant status, transnationals</i>)

Summary of Findings

The themes of *Cultural Influences*, *Perceptions of Education*, *Perceptions of Barriers*, and *Intersectionality of Educational Experiences* provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted journey of first-generation Haitian American women in navigating their educational pathways in both Haiti and the United States. The participants' cultural influences, grounded in their Haitian heritage, served as a guiding force, instilling values of hard work and resiliencies that shaped their academic pursuits. The finding that the women were firmly rooted in their heritage and identified that upbringing as the primary reason for their work ethic and the ability to overcome challenges while adjusting to American culture supported the theme of *Cultural Influences*. The inquiry into the young women's perceptions of education, including experiences in both countries, revealed the participants' early success in Haiti and subsequent adaptation to the challenges posed by a new language and educational system in the United States.

Finding two emphasized the complexities of the intersectionality encountered by the participants as they shared their schooling and college experiences. The multiple barriers rooted in their ethnicity, language proficiency, gender, and immigrant status demonstrate how overlapping challenges create a compounded set of issues that the participants had to address to meet their educational goals. The theme of *Perceptions of Barriers* highlighted the participants' tenacity in overcoming hurdles, such as language barriers, cultural adjustments, and the intersectionality of their identities as Haitians, women, immigrants, and English language learners. The study underscores how their strong cultural identity and perseverance were instrumental in transforming barriers into opportunities for growth.

Finding three was also supported, for the participants' bicultural identity was a vital part as it shaped their ability to negotiate the educational barriers they encountered and build their resilience to overcome the obstacles while attending U.S. schools and universities. Additionally, the theme of *Intersectionality of Educational Experiences* shed light on the participants' awareness of the various identities assigned to them and their deliberate choice to confront challenges head-on, refusing to be defined solely by societal constructs.

As the researcher explored the historical context of the Caribbean and Haiti, the study disclosed the persistent challenges of poverty rooted in colonization, unfavorable trade agreements, and socio-political instability. The participants' narratives echoed a broader narrative of Haitian struggles, emphasizing the critical role of education as a means to escape from the cycle of poverty. Moreover, the study explored the cultural dimensions of the participants' lives and the customs that constituted their Haitian identity. While food emerged as a central connection to their culture, the participants did not discuss other cultural aspects, such as literature or art. The women's experiences, influenced by their parents and families, highlighted the importance of education, both formal and informal, in shaping their identities and futures. The impact of their education aligns with Kincaid's (1988) assertion that education is a tool of empowerment.

Regarding gender dynamics, the study acknowledged the historical inequalities and subordination faced by Haitian women within a patriarchal system. While the participants did not explicitly express feminist ethos, subtle indications and discussions around gender roles hinted at the impact of gender on their educational experiences. Intersectionality emerged as a critical theme, intertwining ethnicity, gender, and immigrant status. The women shared narratives that detailed the disadvantages and discrimination faced by Haitian women in the United States. The

study discussed from a historical context that Haitian women faced similar discrimination and hardships during the Duvalier regime to the present day and the role these historical contexts may play in defining the modern roles of Haitian women in areas like career expectations. As transnationals balancing dual identities, the women skillfully negotiated their Haitian heritage with the demands of their new U.S. environment. Their ability to maintain cultural pride while resisting stereotypes, balancing multiple cultural identities, and adapting to their host country illustrated the participants' transnational experiences.

Furthermore, the application of Black feminist theory, precisely the tenets of lived experiences as knowledge and intersectionality, enriched the study by offering a unique perspective on the participants' experiences. The research concluded that the women's ability to navigate a *Bicultural Identity* by integrating both Haitian and American cultures was critical in their educational success in the United States. Their ability to use concepts taught by their family and from their Haitian heritage, paired with the awareness that they needed to learn new skills from people within the American culture to excel in U.S. institutions, demonstrates the women's *Bicultural Socialization*.

Study Significance: A Curriculum of Place

In the context of this study, curriculum of place refers to an examination of the educational and experiential aspects associated with a specific geographical location, status and belonging. The study explored how the historical, cultural, racial, and gender dimensions of a place influenced the lives and experiences of Haitian Afro-Caribbean immigrant women. From the geographical viewpoint, the researcher examined curriculum of place from the country from which the Haitian women emigrated (Haiti) to the geographical location to which they immigrated (the South in the United States). Both locations have an extensive history where

gender, class, race, or ethnicity intersects. Haiti, the first Black republic to arise from freed enslaved people, and the South, a specific geographical location with a history intertwined with race, gender, and class intersections, impact Black women's place in society. The concept of place is considered significant in understanding the participants' lived experiences, acting as a setting for their stories. The study recognizes that individuals sharing a geographical place can provide insights into their lives, including social and historical ties linked to that place. In this context, both the home country of Haiti and the southern United States, where the participants immigrated, hold significance in shaping their experiences.

The challenges faced by the Haitian Afro-Caribbean women in navigating a new place, where they were in a minority due to ethnicity, gender, language, and immigrant status and surrounded by different cultures, become central to the study. The adjustment to a place with shared heritage and common culture to one where the color of one's skin can lead to a distinctly different culture was explored. The concept of place, in this study, is crucial for understanding how these women adapted to survive in a new environment.

Edgerton (1991) emphasized the crucial role of the concept of the "other" in understanding the concept of place. Place is intricately linked with the construction of differences, creating a dichotomy of them versus us. This perspective is significant in curriculum studies, as understanding the place of those who are excluded becomes essential for inclusive education in regards to what is taught and who is learning. Recognizing the place of others can contribute to eliminating the urge to exclude individuals based on their differences. The study delved into the examination of sameness, differences, identification, otherness, and alienation through the lens of place, emphasizing its connection to the construction of one's identity.

The understanding of *place* aligns with the process of making the familiar strange, as proposed by Greene (1973). This process suggests critically examining stereotypes and clichés to ascertain their purposes and origins and challenging them if necessary. The researcher discovered how Haitian American women interpreted their status in the United States, shedding light on the complex interconnection of identity, place, and social constructs.

The concept of place is also explored as a sense of belonging. Castenell (1991) described “place in the sense that lived experiences of people within a region give meaning to their political, economic, social, and religious orientations” (p. 155). Immigrants often undergo changes as they migrate, maintaining aspects of their homeland while acquiring new elements in their new environment. The study investigated the sense of *in-betweenness* experiences by many immigrants, emphasizing the transformation impact of the immigration process. Cultural adaptation and acculturation were explored as processes through which the Haitian Afro-Caribbean women participants underwent change in their experiences in the United States, leading, in their case, to the transformation to a bicultural identity. The curriculum of place concept provided a lens through which the geographical and cultural dimensions of both Haiti and the southern United States shaped the participants’ experiences. The study recognized the significance of understanding the *other* and the construction of differences within the context of place, emphasizing the importance of inclusive education that acknowledges diverse experiences. This study extends the field of curriculum studies through an exploration of the curriculum of place articulated by the Haitian Afro-Caribbean participants of this study.

Implications

The study revealed the following implications as they relate to first-generation Haitian women and other first-generation Caribbean women in regards to education, motivation, and identity experiences:

- To address the barriers encountered by immigrant women of color, specifically Caribbean immigrant women, colleges and universities should consider the individual cultural values of their students from the Caribbean countries in regards to their academic performance, the different barriers they encounter, and necessary resources.
- Administrators and educators should inquire about the cultural backgrounds of their students to assist in tailoring academic supports and provide needed resources to facilitate the college experiences from admission to graduation.
- Administrators should utilize additional research along with this study to facilitate their planning and implementation of strategic changes and best practices to serve diverse groups of students with consideration of ethnicity, gender, language, and cultural values. Consideration of studies that identify different subgroups of Black women and do not group all Black women together due to phenotype should be a priority.
- Colleges and universities should assist in implementing networking systems to ensure students are aware of the resources within the university. This would provide an opportunity for students from diverse backgrounds to adapt/transition to the college/university environment.
- More efforts to communicate and interact with the different subgroups of Caribbean women to address specific needs of each group are necessary. In the case of the first-

generation Haitian women in this study, most spoke of attempting to navigate the university system with little knowledge of resources that could have made their college journey easier. These include understanding the need to be involved in social and extracurricular activities in addition to focusing on their grades, as well as assistance with college resources such as study groups, learning labs, and financial opportunities such as work study and scholarships.

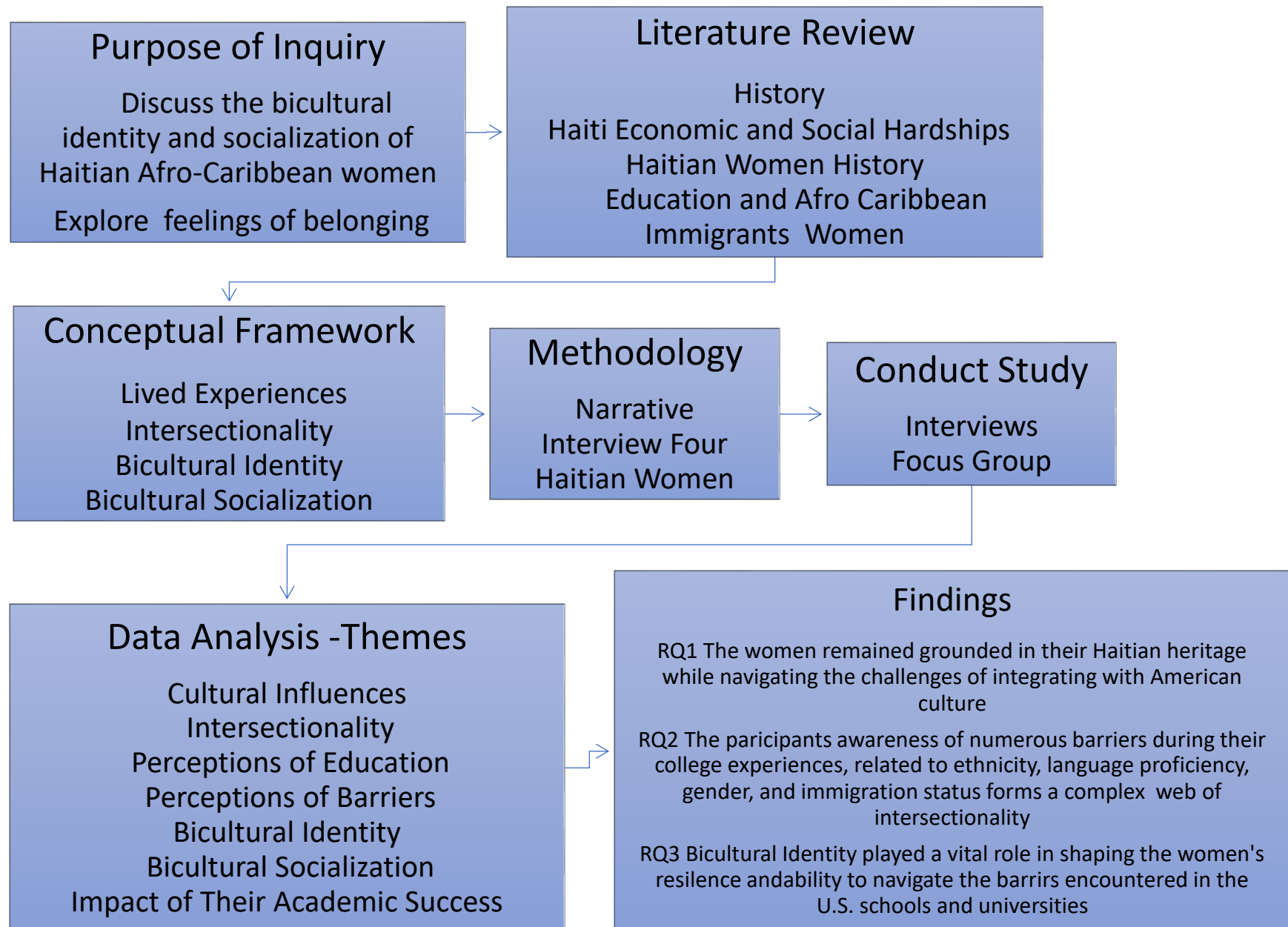
Recommendations for Further Research

The following are recommendations for further research as indicated by the study:

- Recommendation 1: Because of the sparse literature base, further research on first-generation Haitian women in U.S. colleges and universities is necessary. Results might indicate if it possible to use their motivation for academic success as a model to assist other minority groups in identifying their motivation to progress academically.
- Recommendation 2: Research that expands the participant sample to other subgroups, such as second-generation Haitian women and men or women and men from other Caribbean countries, would be beneficial to gain knowledge about the unique needs of each group in regards to their Caribbean country and heritage. Therefore, more research is necessary to study Black Caribbean immigrants (women and men) and document their lived experiences in U.S. universities and colleges.
- Recommendation 3: Currently, the limited literature on Afro-Caribbean subgroups and immigrant subgroups in general highlights the necessity for more research in the area of ethnic and cultural identities and the intersecting roles that factor in the academic progress toward college graduation.

- Recommendation 4: Additional research is necessary to determine whether the themes emerging from the findings in this study apply to other ethnic groups and students in subgroups to assist in creating a personalized college experience. This is not a consideration of alternate standards of admission or degree tracts.
Understanding the situations that ethnic groups of people encounter while seeking a higher education will facilitate the placement of supports to increase the graduation rates of ethnic students in U.S. universities.
- Recommendation 5: Future research is needed to focus on understanding the identities of first-generation students.
- Recommendation 6: Additional studies can utilize a deeper level of analysis of the data. Future research could explore ways that the participants' ideas speak to more than just what was asked in the questions.
- Recommendation 7: Future research could address issues of identity and social curriculum that the participants learned outside of school from significant people in their lives.
- Recommendation 8: The theme of transition of knowledge can also be explored in the future by examining knowledge that was passed on to the participants as well as the knowledge that they want to pass on to their children as the participants grow and learn. This theme could be examined as part of the social curriculum perspective.

Figure 10 Graphic Representation of Study



Positionality statement

I chose to focus my study on Haitian women due to personal connections and a growing interest sparked by my daughter-in-law's experiences. As a first-generation immigrant from Haiti, her insights into the challenges and successes of Afro-Caribbean women adapting to schooling and education in the United States intrigued me. Initially, I intended to examine Afro-Caribbean women broadly, but as I delved into my preliminary research, I recognized the significance of each country's unique history. Consequently, I narrowed my focus to Haiti, aligning with my daughter-in-law's background as the catalyst for my research interest. During this research, the researcher significantly increased her knowledge of Haiti and her understanding of my daughter-in-law's experiences. In the future, I will continue to encourage her to share her knowledge with my grandchildren so they know the history and ancestry of both sides of their family. Hopefully, one day, we will travel to Haiti to visit her parents and grandparents' home.

My Relationship with the African Diaspora

The knowledge obtained from this research has impacted me in several ways regarding my journey with the African American diaspora. Prior to conducting this research, I felt that I appreciated cultural diversity. After completing the research on this topic, I am more appreciative of the diversity within the African Diaspora. By learning about the culture and history of the different countries of the Caribbean in general and Haiti specifically, I have a broader perspective of the diversity within the different countries in the Caribbean and a deeper respect for the various cultural traditions, expressions, languages, and dialects. I understand why

the people of the different countries take pride in their country and why they want to share knowledge about their country and heritage.

Highlighting the intersectionality of ethnicity, nationality, and race, I have become more attuned to the unique challenges faced by Afro-Caribbean immigrants and their descendants regarding issues related to immigration status, language barriers, and acculturation. My research has taught me about the rich history, traditions, and cultural contributions of the women of Haiti and the Afro-Caribbean communities in general.

Prior to narrowing my research, I researched several different Caribbean countries to determine the scope of research necessary to examine different countries. The information that I learned from the preliminary research helped me to realize that I needed to select women from one Caribbean country, for there were numerous subgroups of Caribbean women. I selected Haitian women because I have several friends who are Haitian, and I was intrigued by their life experiences and proud of their accomplishments in the face of so much adversity and obstacles.

Studying the Afro-Caribbean Diaspora of Haitian women has given me a deeper understanding and pride of my own cultural heritage. I have a greater understanding that many people of African heritage are willing to persevere through many barriers and obstacles to have a better life and ensure a better life for their family. Although there are many different stories and journeys, many of the people of African heritage who make progress have traits such as perseverance and grit in common. The histories of Afro-Caribbean and African American communities should promote unity and solidarity, not division. Together, along with others of diverse heritage and nationalities, we can collaborate and support each other while addressing social and political issues that impact all of us.

Working with the participants of this study has allowed me to expand my connections within the Haitian culture. Although my interest started due to friendship and relationships that I have with women of Haitian heritage, I have more connections now. I have friends who are from various African nations and other Caribbean nations like Jamaica, Trinidad, and St. Lucia, to name a few. I attribute this to living in south Florida for so many years, where I met many of my friends, and we have remained friends throughout the years. These friendships have enriched my social network and provided me with a broader perspective on the world. As I reflect on my own experiences as an African American woman, both triumphs and adversities, I can identify my resilience and take pride in who I am in my entirety, the whole me. I do not have the same experiences as the people in the majority or the same as others within the minority, but I have unique experiences that have made me who I am and that will be passed through in my family's legacy. Symbolically, I lock arms with my sisters of other Caribbean and African nations, embracing our heritage and taking pride in the long journey that we have traveled while forging ahead as we continue the peregrination.

Concluding Thoughts

The study makes a valid contribution to the knowledge base of Haitian immigrant women and their academic journeys in U.S. universities. It provides unique perspectives of a group of Haitian women regarding their educational experiences as first-generation college students in the United States. The study gained an understanding of how their identities and the influence of their early education, cultural experiences, socialization, and identity development guided their college experiences. The information can help university administrators gain an understanding of this particular group and lead to further inquiry and research to identify necessary and appropriate resources and supports.

The curriculum is influenced by human educational experiences, which include cultural and societal contexts (Garcia-Huidobro, 2018). Curriculum studies advocate for curricula that consider the impact and contextualize ethnicity, language, race, gender, and class while reflecting a society's cultural heritage. Understanding societal factors affecting curriculum can help educational institutions and educators understand the background and needs of their students.

The study delves into the unique educational journey of first-generation Haitian women, who skillfully integrated knowledge and skills from their home culture with those from a new environment. Their adaptation to dual cultural identities and strategic use of their heritage to overcome educational barriers underscore the concept of bicultural socialization. The study also shows how factors like poverty shaped their attitudes about education and how the knowledge they acquired, formally and informally, transformed their lives. The women's narratives about their parents and family emphasize the importance of educational opportunities as a means for socioeconomic advancement, which underscores the need for educational institutions to be aware of the diverse backgrounds of their students and find ways to support them.

The Haitian women in this study demonstrated remarkable resilience as they navigated gender inequalities deeply rooted in historical and patriarchal systems, both in Haiti and as immigrants in the United States, along with other barriers to obtaining educational opportunities. The intersection of multiple barriers, such as gender, ethnicity, and immigration status, shaped their perception of educational barriers and opportunities. As the women balanced their Haitian heritage with cultural integration in the United States, they maintained cultural pride, resisted stereotypes, and adapted to a new environment to reach their educational goals.

The curriculum of place is also addressed as geographical and cultural context shaped their educational experiences. Understanding the intersection of place, identity, and social constructs is essential to recognizing diverse experiences and providing inclusive education. Overall, the study enriches curriculum studies by highlighting the complex interactions between cultural, societal, and individual factors that influence the shaping of educational opportunities and experiences for the Haitian Afro-Caribbean immigrant women participating in this research.

As an educator, I believe these findings offer valuable insights into understanding the multifaceted experiences and challenges faced by first-generation Haitian American women in educational settings. Recognizing the significance of cultural influences, gender dynamics, and intersectionality in shaping educational experiences can help educators create more inclusive and supportive learning environments. Understanding the impact of poverty, colonization, and historical inequalities on educational opportunities can help inform strategies to address systemic barriers and promote equitable access to education for all students.

On a personal level, the researcher can identify with the participants' experiences as they experienced the intersectionality of multiple barriers, although the researcher did not encounter the same barriers. The study highlights the importance of cultural identity, resilience, and community support in overcoming educational challenges. Understanding how immigrant students navigate dual identities provides insights into the personal growth and identity development of students the researcher interacts with within the educational environment.

By exploring Haitian American women's educational journeys and experiences in Haiti and the United States, the study vividly illustrates how the participants' ability to blend their cultural backgrounds empowers them to overcome barriers and thrive in the U.S. educational institution. The study also underscores the transformative role of education in breaking the cycle

of poverty in Haiti and the challenges faced by women, particularly regarding intersecting barriers of gender, immigration, language, and ethnicity.

The significance of the study lies in its exploration of the intersectionality of ethnicity, gender, and immigrant status in shaping the educational experiences of Haitian American women. It underscores the importance of cultural influences, perceptions of education, and the overcoming of barriers in their educational journeys. Additionally, the study delves into the concept of "place," examining how geographical and cultural contexts impact the participants' sense of belonging and identity. The study contributes to curriculum studies by providing insights into the lived experiences of Haitian American women and emphasizing the importance of inclusive education that acknowledges diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences.

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2017

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL



Institutional Review Board (IRB)
 PO Box 8005 • STATESBORO, GA 30460
 Phone: 912-478-5465
 Fax: 912-478-0719
 IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

To: Griffin, Sonya

From: Georgia Southern Institutional Review Board

Approval Date: March 10, 2023

Expiration Date: February 28, 2024

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research
 Expedited

After a review of the following proposed research project, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Protocol #: H23247

Title: The Schooling Experiences of First-Generation Haitian Women Educated (Schooled) in the Southeastern United States

Maximum Number of Subjects: 4

Purpose of Study: The purpose of the study is to explore the educational experiences of Haitian women in US colleges/universities as a subgroup of Black women and how their culture and socialization influence their learning in a foreign country with different norms and expectations.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research **with the understanding that you will abide by the following conditions:**

No COVID Safety Plan No in person procedures were included in this protocol.

Incentives No monetary incentives are approved for this protocol.

Special Conditions: *None*

If at the end of this approval period there have been no changes to the research protocol, you may request an extension of the approval period. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, whether or not it is believed to be related to the study, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator prior to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a Research Study Termination form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

APPENDIX B

WE ARE THE WORLD 25 FOR HAITI (LYRICS)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=S0NfzmGNvSA&t=4m46s>

We Are the World 25 for Haiti
Song by Artists for Haiti
Released 2010

Songwriters: Lionel Richie / Michael Jackson
We Are the World 25 for Haiti lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC

There comes a time
When we hear the certain call
When the world must come together as one
There are people dying
And it's time to lend a hand to life
The greatest gift of all

We can't go on
Pretending day by day
That someone somehow will soon make a change
We are all a part of God's great big family
And the truth you know, love is all we need

We are the world
We are the children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
So let's start giving
There's a choice we're making
We're saving our own lives
It's true we'll make a better day
Just you and me

Well, send them your heart
So they know that someone cares
So their cries for help
Will not be in vain

We can't let them suffer
No, we cannot turn away
Right now they need a helping hand

Nou sé mond la
We are the children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
So let's start giving

There's a choice we're making
We're saving our own lives
It's true we'll make a better day
Just you and me

When you're down and out
And there seems no hope at all
But if you just believe
There's no way we can fall
Well, well, well, let us realize
That a change can only come when we
Stand together as one

We are the world
(We are the children)
We are the children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
So let's start giving
Better start giving

There's a choice we're making
We're saving our own lives
It's true we'll make a better day
Just you and me

We are the world
(We are the children)
We are the children
It's for the children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
(So let's start giving)
So let's start giving

There's a choice we're making
We're saving our own lives
It's true we'll make a better day
Just you and me

We are the world
(We are the world)
(We are the children)
We are the children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
So let's start giving
Let's start giving

There's a choice we're making
 We're saving our own lives
 It's true we make a better day
 Just you and me

Come on now let me hear you

We are the world
 (We are the children)
 We are the children
 We are the ones who make a brighter day
 So let's start giving
 Let's start giving

There's a choice we're making
 We're saving our own lives
 It's true we'll make a better day
 Just you and me

We all need somebody that we can lean on
 When you wake up look around and see that your dream's gone
 When the earth quakes we'll help you make it through the storm
 When the floor breaks a magic carpet to stand on
 We are the world united by love so strong
 When the radio isn't on you can hear the songs
 A guided light on the dark road you're walking on
 A sign post to find the dreams you thought was gone
 Someone to help you move the obstacles you stumbled on
 Someone to help you rebuild after the rubble's gone
 We are the world connected by a common bond
 Love the whole planet's singing along

We are the world
 (We are the world)
 We are the children
 (We are the children)
 We are the ones who make a brighter day
 So let's start giving
 Let's start giving

There's a choice we're making
 We're saving our own lives
 It's true we make a better day
 Just you and me

Everyday citizens
Everybody pitching in

Nou sé mond la
Nou sé mond
Nou sé timoun yo
Nou sé timoun yo

You and I
You and I

Uh, 12 days no water
What's your will to live?
We amplified the love we watching multiply
Feeling like the world's end
We can make the world win
Like Katrina, Africa, Indonesia

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age: 25-30 31-35 36-40 41-45
2. Did you attend school in Haiti? Yes No
3. Did you attend school in the United States? Yes No
4. Did you attend college or university in the United States? Yes No
5. In which state did you attend college?
6. Did you graduate from college?
7. How old were you when you emigrated to the United States? _____
8. Are one or both of your parents Haitian? Yes No

APPENDIX D
RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Good morning,

I hope this email finds you in good health and spirits. I am contacting you to request two things.

First, I am conducting a study to complete my requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education and I would like you to participate. Please read the attached letter for full details and contact me via email, text, or phone if you are willing to participate in the study. Secondly, please forward this email to other women that you know that may meet the requirements to be participants in my study. Please ask their permission to provide me with their contact information so I can contact them directly to ask them to participate. Your participation and time will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sonya Griffin

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM



College of Education

Department of Curriculum Studies

INFORMED CONSENT for

The Schooling Experiences of First-Generation Haitian Women Educated (Schooled) in the Southeastern United States

My name is Sonya Griffin. I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. I am completing this study to fulfill partial requirements for the degree of *Doctor of Education*. I am conducting a research study about the educational experiences of Haitian women that have immigrated to the United States and attended U.S. universities. I would appreciate your participation in this study. Results from this study will be used as part of my doctoral dissertation.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research is to explore the educational experiences of first-generation Haitian women as a subgroup of Black women in U.S. universities and how their culture and socialization influence their learning in a foreign country with different norms and expectations.

Procedures:

Participation in this research will include completion of an in-depth, semi-structured interview that will last approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes per session at a time that is convenient for the participants and a focus group. Both sessions will be virtual. The researcher will be careful to ensure that the information you voluntarily provide is as secure as possible; however, you must be aware that transmissions over the Internet cannot be guaranteed to be completely secure. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology being used. You will be subject to the privacy policy of the third-party service used to collect this data [i.e., Zoom, Google Hangouts, etc.].

Discomforts and Risks:

Aside for discomforts of recalling unpleasant experiences, there are minimal discomforts and risks associated with this study and every effort will be made to make each participant as comfortable as possible. To reduce potential risk associated with the study, participants will be able to stop the interview at any time.

Benefits:

The benefits to participants are as follows: The study provides you an opportunity to share your experiences of attending school in the United States and share how your culture influenced your experiences. The proposed study can also benefit you by affording you the opportunity to reflect on your personal life experiences.

The overall benefits to society include educational institution using the information to further understand the cultural differences within subgroups of Black women and how these cultural differences may influence the groups' post-secondary experiences. This knowledge could play a role in addressing the various needs of different subgroups as a one size fits all approach does not always meet the needs of the different subgroups.

Duration/Time required from the participant:

The duration of this study is approximately six months. Data collection will begin in April 2023 and will be completed by September 2023.

Statement of Confidentiality:

All interviews will be tape recorded, transcribed, and stored in a locked file cabinet. The digital recordings of the interviews will be kept in a secure location. Tape recordings will be destroyed/erased immediately following transcription. To ensure accuracy of the stories/experiences shared, participants will receive a transcribed copy of both their interview and of the focus group. You will select a pseudonym and will be identified by that pseudonym in the transcripts and in the research. Only the investigator, participants, and faculty advisor will have access to the data.

Future use of data:

The data will be destroyed after 3 years.

Right to Ask Questions:

If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher named above or the researcher's faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board at 912-478-5465 or irb@georgiasouthern.edu.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this research is strictly voluntary. You may end your participation at any time by informing the principal investigator, Sonya Griffin, not returning the instrument or other options; you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Penalty:

There is no penalty for deciding not to participate in the study; you may decide at any time that you do not want to participate further and may withdraw without penalty or retribution. If you withdraw, the researcher may use and share only the information that has been gathered prior to the date of withdrawal and only with your permission.

Focus Group:

The second virtual meeting will be a focus group. The focus group duration is no longer than 1 hour and 30 minutes. Please be advised that although the researcher will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of focus groups prevents the researcher from guaranteeing confidentiality. The researcher would like to remind participants to respect the privacy of your fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

Mandated Reporter:

“All information will be treated confidentially. There is one exception to confidentiality that I need to make you aware of. In certain research studies, it is my ethical responsibility to report situations of child or elder abuse, child or elder neglect, or any life-threatening situation to appropriate authorities. However, I am not seeking this type of information in my study, nor will you be asked questions about these issues.”

Consent:

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board under tracking number H23247.

Title of Project: *The Schooling Experiences of First-Generation Haitian Women Educated (Schooled) in the Southeastern United States*

Principal Investigator: Sonya Griffin,
sg04851@georgiasouthern.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Sabrina N. Ross, P.O Box 8144, Statesboro, GA 30460, 912.478.0008,
sross@georgiasouthern.edu

This consent is being provided electronically. The researcher will ask you to verbally consent before completing the interview. Participating in the interview indicates your willingness to participate in this research.

APPENDIX F

CODING TABLE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

TABLE F1

Coding Table for Individual Interviews

Question	Nicolette	Roseline	Nadia	Darlene	Common Codes
Q2	education in Haiti vs. U.S. different; memorization vs. comprehension; applying knowledge in various ways and comprehension; age influences educational experience	similar - age group – yes; cousins similar experiences; older women – may not have much education or schooling	ranked vs. letter grades, competitive, memorization, oral, ESOL, multiple choice questions. Language barrier, women-similar experiences	older women – not similar experiences; younger women – similar experiences, - women go to school	4 – women have similar experiences 3 – experiences based on age – older women have different experiences not as much school Haiti – memorization vs. U.S. comprehension Language barrier
Q3, Q4	celebrated and knew of Haitian holidays, not studied in books; they expected you to know it	memorization, strong heritage, stick together; interact with each other; Haitian independence – not talked about but celebrated; traditions and celebrate every year.	learned Haiti's history in school in Haiti; shunned as a Haitian immigrant; U.S. – Black countries talked about slavery; large Haitian immigrant population in Miami,	learned about Haiti's history in Haiti school; not in the United States; celebrates Haitian holidays in U.S.	2- not studied in school / not talked about 3-celebrated 2 – learned Haiti's history in school in Haiti 4 -Not in US schools 3 -Celebrated Haitian holidays
Q5	Nicolette encouraged to go to school; encouraged to finish high school; college education in Haiti, expensive; no resources such as financial aid or loans; many women could not afford college; progress from previous generations – women could not read or write.	Roseline parents, aunts, uncles instill expectation that children should attend school and go to college; women pursue careers in healthcare; good paying, respectable jobs; women come along way – educated, good careers	Nadia women go to school; women in Haiti may have limited opportunities, jobs, and resources; very poor – may be illiterate; family push education and you went to school; educated people may lack opportunities; women encouraged to become nurses; men encouraged to become doctors and lawyers	Darlene women go to school; too poor may not attend school; education pushed by family; limited opportunities and jobs; women may end up in jobs that do not require a lot of training; those with better jobs are educated	Common Codes 4 – parents and family pushes education 3- Poor may not go to school Women go to school 3- Haiti – limited resources, jobs, opportunities 2 – women encouraged to become nurses, healthcare Education = better jobs 2 – women education has progressed

TABLE F1 (Continued)

Question	Nicolette	Roseline	Nadia	Darlene	Common Codes
Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9	Haiti– rote memorization vs. U.S. – understanding and applying knowledge;	challenges, limited English; application vs. rote/ memorization, immigrant, isolated from other students, parents & family emphasized importance of education; support from family, good student	Haiti’s education system – memorization, competitive, ranked vs. U.S. – letter grades, multiple choice, test, test taking strategies; Top 3 in Haiti, failing in the U.S. when she first arrived	Haiti – rote learning and memorization; U.S.- understand concepts; non-English speaking; difficulty with academics due to language barriers; diverse peers in the U.S.; Haiti – peers were from Haiti; relatives help her learn; like school, good student in Haiti: she had friends in school; parents made sure children went to school	4-Haiti – rote, memorization Vs. 3-U.S. – understand, apply concepts 4-Non-English speaking, ESOL/ ESL/ limited English/ language barriers –(challenge) 4- Academic challenges in the U.S. (challenge) 4-Parents and family emphasized importance of education 4- were good students in Haiti 3-Treated differently/ isolated/ bullied 2-Haiti – peers from Haiti
Q6 -Q9 Contd.	Good in school until she came to the U.S. ESOL, academic challenges – failing grades in U.S.; non-English speaking; treated differently; struggled to fit in socially; father emphasized education; prioritized her studies over making friends; friends in college		challenging; non-English speaking; difficulty with academics; failing grades; Haiti – students are of Haitian descent		1-Diverse peers in US 1-Had friends in school (Haiti) 1-Struggled to fit in socially 1-Family helped with school work /learn English
Q10	Nicolette	Roseline	Nadia	Darlene	Common Codes
Q11	Father instilled	and family	Mother and	Parents and family	4 – parents & family – emphasized importance
Q12	importance of	support; parents	cousin	emphasized the importance	of education, motivate
Q13	education;	instilled	influenced her	of education; take advantage	4- provides opportunities,
	parent and	importance of	education;	of opportunities; education	key to a better life
	family	education;	studying and	offered opportunity for	3 – teachers / professors
	support;	education key to	hard work;	better life; teachers’	2 – supports - financial
	education key	success; improve	perseverance;	encouragement; other	aid
	to better life;	quality of life,	cousin helped	supports – friends in college	2 – encouraged by
	financial	financial stability,	with homework;	helped; financial aid enabled	women w/ education &
	support	expectations –	education	her to pay for college;	good jobs/ women
	enabled her to	work hard, excel	provided	college helped	mentors
	attend college	academically,	opportunities	(organizations, student	2 – work hard, excel
	in U.S.; life	teacher motivated	and chance at a	centers)	academically,
	harder without	her; supports;	better life;		perseverance,
	education;	cousins; first-	others resources		
	encouraged by	generation college	– mentors that		1-Family helped with
	women with	students;	helped her in		homework
	an education	friendships;	college		1-Friends helped
	and good jobs	resources; cultural			1-College organizations
		support; support			helped (std. centers)
		outside cultural			1-First -generation
		community –			college
		diverse support			
		system			

TABLE F1 (Continued)

Question	Nicolette	Roseline	Nadia	Darlene	Common Codes
Q14	Haitian culture	cultural identity,	Haitian culture	Act one way in school	4 – Haitian culture
Q15	shaped cultural	heritage, cultural	shaped cultural	(more American) and acted	shaped identity
Q16	identity;	attitudes, deeply	identity; Haitian	differently around her	4- Haitian heritage –
Q17	Haitian	influence	heritage; strong	family elders; Haitian and	strong family
Q18	heritage;	education and	family	cultural heritage influenced	connections/ bonds
	strong family	various aspects of	connection;	education and identity; uses	4- family support
	connection;	her life, education	family support	information from both	4- resilience, overcome
	family support	not optional, raise	each other;	cultures; education provides	challenges
	each other;	her children with	resilience,	opportunity; Haitian are	4- cultural attitudes
	resilience,	same values	overcome	closer with their family;	influence education
	overcome	emphasizing	challenges	America is fast paced;	4 – parents instilled
	challenges	education; strong	instilled by	Family influenced education	emphasize on education
	instilled by	sense of Haitian	parents; comfort		4- family influenced
	parents;	cultural identity;	with her family		education
	comfort with	proud of Haitian	and her		4- strong sense of Haitian
	her family and	identity; pass on to	husband's		identity, Haitian pride
	her husband's	her children –	family (African-		
	family	language, Haitian	American)		1-uses information from
	(African-	culture and			both cultures
	American)	traditions and			1– education provides
		knowledge of			opportunity
		Haiti; Haitian-			1– U.S. fast paced
		American; balance			2-acted differently in
		– different norms			public vs. home/ different
		and behaviors			norms depending on
		depending on the			context
		context			1-Comfort w/ Haitian
		Haitian v.			family & American
		American: limited			family (husband's)
		opportunities /			1-Haitian culture,
		resources v.			language, traditions &
		diverse			knowledge of Haiti
		opportunities /			passed to children
		various resources;			Haiti v. U.S.
		homogenous v.			U.S. fast paced
		heterogeneity of			Haiti – simpler
		American culture;			Haiti – limited
		simpler life in			opportunities / resources
		Haiti			Haiti – homogenous v
		Haitian v. African			U.S. - heterogenous
		American: would			
		not elaborate,			
		emphasized			
		similarities and			
		differences			
		between both			
		groups; felt			
		individual			
		circumstances play			
		a significant role			

TABLE F1 (Continued)

Question	Nicolette	Roseline	Nadia	Darlene	Common Codes
Q19	Long term friendship; friend met in college; learning English; learning other aspects of living in the U.S.	friendship, personal connections, diverse ethnic groups, close connection with Haitian friends	friendships – most are of Haitian heritage	friends in college, long term relationships, Haitian friends, diverse group of friends.	4 – friendships in college 3- diverse group of friends 2- mostly Haitian friends 3 – Haitian friends 2- mentioned long term friendships 1-Learned other aspects of living in U.S. from American experience – (learning from both cultures) Common Codes
Q20	Nicolette support system; listen to people that want you to do well; different if ok.	Roseline self-awareness, open to learning new things; knowing where to seek help; using available resources; help others; perseverance, mutual support, self-improvement as keys to navigating life challenges	Nadia minority within a minority within a minority; first-generation, immigrant, Haitian woman; resilience, overcome barriers; maintain (her) identity; Black woman; opportunity; other fields besides healthcare; barriers – lack of representation in her field; being the first in her family in medicine (no family to help her gain access)	Darlene take opportunities; use resources; allow people to help; get an education	2- use resources 3-allow people to help 2-take opportunities 2-support system 2- listen to people/ open to learning new things 1-help others 1-perseverance 2- self-improvement /get an education 1-minority within a minority within a minority 1-first generation immigrant, Haitian woman 1-resilience, overcome barriers 2-maintain identity /self-awareness 1-other fields besides healthcare

TABLE F2

Common Codes and Emerging Themes

Question	Common Codes	Emerging Themes
2	experiences based on age – older women have different experiences not as much school / younger women have similar experiences – more education Haiti – memorization vs. U.S. comprehension language barrier	Older/Younger Women–Varied Educational Backgrounds Differences in Educational Systems Adjusting to New Learning Style Language Barrier
3,4	not studied in school / not talked about learned Haiti’s history in school in Haiti celebrated Haitian holidays Haitian history not taught in US schools	Limited formal education on Haitian History Haitian Holidays celebrated as tradition with family U.S. did not teach Haitian history & focused on Black history – particularly slavery Progress in women’s education in Haiti Challenges and limited opportunities/ resources in Haiti Significant Parental Influence and Career Expectations
5	parents and family pushes education poor may not go to school women go to school Haiti – limited resources, jobs, opportunities women encouraged to become nurses, healthcare education = better jobs women education has progressed	
6.7.8.9	4-Parents and family emphasized importance of education 4- were good students in Haiti 3-Treated differently/ isolated/ bullied 2-Haiti – peers from Haiti 1-Diverse peers in US 1-Had friends in school (Haiti) 1-Struggled to fit in socially 1-Family helped with school work /learn English 4 – parents & family – emphasized importance of education, motivate	Schooling in Haiti Language Barrier Differences in Education Systems Cultural and Language Diversity Educational Support Transition to U.S. Education
10,11,12, 13	4- provides opportunities, key to a better life 3 – teachers / professors 2 – supports - financial aid 2 – encouraged by women w/ education & good jobs/ women mentors 2 – work hard, excel academically, perseverance, 1-Family helped with homework 1-Friends helped 1-College organizations helped (std. centers) 1-First -generation college	Influences on Education – Parents, Family How – encouragement, emphasized education, hard work Resources/ Supports in College – Friends, financial support, mentors, family support, mentors

TABLE F2 (Continued)

Question	Common Codes	Emerging Themes
14, 15,16, 17, 18	4 – Haitian culture shaped identity 4- Haitian heritage – strong family connections/ bonds 4- family support 4- resilience, overcome challenges 4- cultural attitudes influence education 4 – parents instilled emphasize on education 4- family influenced education 4- strong sense of Haitian identity, Haitian pride 1-uses information from both cultures 1– education provides opportunity 1– U.S. fast paced 2-acted differently in public vs. home/ different norms depending on context 1-Comfort w/ Haitian family & American family (husband's) 1-Haitian culture, language, traditions & knowledge of Haiti passed to children Haiti v. U.S. U.S. fast paced Haiti – simpler Haiti – limited opportunities / resources Haiti – homogenous v U.S. - heterogeneous	Cultural Identity Family and Community Education and Opportunity Balancing Culture Resilience and Work Ethic Perceptions of African American Culture Complexity of American Culture
19	4 – friendships in college 3- diverse group of friends 2- mostly Haitian friends 3 – Haitian friends 2– mentioned long term friendships 1-Learned other aspects of living in U.S. from American experience – (learning from both cultures)	Cultural Bonds Diversity of Friends Long-lasting relationships Supportive connections
20	support system; listen to people that want you to do well; different if ok. self-awareness, open to learning new things; knowing where to seek help; using available resources; aid others; perseverance, mutual support, self-improvement as keys to navigating life challenges minority within a minority within a minority; first- generation, immigrant, Haitian woman; resilience, overcome barriers; maintain (her) identity; Black woman; opportunity; other fields besides healthcare; barriers – lack of representation in her field; being the first in her family in medicine (no family to help her gain access) take opportunities; use resources; allow people to help; get an education	Advice for Success Overcoming Challenges Importance of Hard Work Opportunities in the U.S. Use resources Diverse Career Options Lack of Awareness of Career Paths

APPENDIX G

FOCUS GROUP DATA ANALYSIS MATRIX

TABLE G

Focus Group Data Analysis Matrix

Q1A	Based on your experiences, did your university environment promote bicultural competence for international students? If so, what factors promote or facilitate bicultural competence?
Nicolette	SE- Hmm, I would say yes but I am not sure if it was the college or just certain teachers and advisors. The college did have a multicultural student organization. I think they may have had a Caribbean student organization specifically but I was not a part of either organization. I went through my first year not understanding the academic criteria, for instance, what grades that I had to have in order to remain in good academic standing. I ending up on academic probation because I was struggling with classes but also because I did not know the different policies and was unsure of where to go for help. I worked part time at the college and the supervisor that was over the program that I worked for helped me by explaining so many of the things that I did not understand. My best friend, the one that I mentioned that we are god parents to each other's children, helped me as well and taught me about appeals and the student center where I could receive tutoring help. I think the university that I attended did surface level things to assist their immigrant students but it was more like a one size fit all but I also don't know if they could provide different help to different student groups, that would be difficult as well. I think that they tried to help immigrant students.
Roseline	SE – I agree with the others. Colleges try to have supports in place for international students. We [immigrant students] have to seek out help and find the resources that are out there to assist us. I think that sometimes that is hard because you do not want to look like you are asking for help because you are not capable or special treatment but you do need the help because you are navigating a new environment, one that you do not know. You don't know this process because that is not the way it was in Haiti.
Nadia	I would say yes. The college had student organizations for international students, different ones. There was one specifically for Caribbean students. I met most of my friends because we were in the same classes and had the same major, pre-med then medical school. I only went to a few of the events that the Caribbean student association held because I was always studying. My friends and I would spend most of our time studying together. When we did hang out and do things socially, it was not through the Caribbean association but just the friend groups we had created by being in class together or someone one of us knew. I think that the supports were there, you had to use them and go for help.
Darlene	SE – I think within any college, there are people that are willing to help and they take in to consideration that immigrant students have certain needs that students from this country may not have. When I was in college, my friends helped me, we helped each other. I was fortunate enough to have a college professor that helped me as well. I agree with Nicolette, that they try to assist international students but I also think that the friends you make, others that are going through similar things that you are going through are one of the most important resources you can have in school. Regardless of rather or not it is a friend or staff member, having someone that can help you navigate through the process is so important. They can teach you things that your family may not be able to assist you with and you will need to know those things so that you can make it through.
Q1B	If not, what factors hinder the development of bicultural competence?
	N/A – all participants indicated that their university environment promoted bicultural competence to some degree.

Matrix for assessing level of consensus in focus group:

A = Indicated agreement (verbal or non-verbal)

D = Indicated dissent (verbal or non-verbal)

SE = Provided significant statement or example suggesting agreement

SD = Provided significant statement or example suggesting dissent

NR = Did not indicate agreement or dissent (i.e. nonresponse)

Themes: Parents and family support. Friends made in college – also a source of support. Heritage and Haitian upbringing important part of success in school – resilience and persevere, parents emphasizing importance of education Resources in college – mentors, teachers and friends played an important role in helping them navigate through college and finding supports.

TABLE G (Continued)

Q2	During your college experience, who did you feel most comfortable socializing and interacting with?
Nicolette	SD – I did not have a lot of friends. I would say the friends that I had were from different places. One of my best friends was..., is African American. We are still friends to this day. I do not think we would have become friends if it was not for her always coming over and talking to me, sitting next to me in class and offering her help. She was very friendly and I think she realized that I was ... I will use the word shy but I think it was more of the fact that I was still learning English and I was trying to focus in class to understand what was being taught. She continued to help me and we became good friends over time.
Roseline	SD – I had some Haitian friends but I also had friends from other Caribbean countries like Jamaica and Trinidad. I would say that I felt more comfortable with people that were from the Caribbean because we had something in common. When I met other students from Haiti, it was an almost instant connection because we could relate to each other; our heritage, food, upbringing, and language. Through the years, I made friends with students from different backgrounds so I have a variety of friends but I feel most comfortable with people from Haiti and other Caribbean countries.
Nadia	I socialized more with other Haitian students that were in my major. Most of my friends were Haitian. I have always connected with other Haitians.
Darlene	SE w/ Nadia SE w/ Roseline – I agree with Nadia that I had more Haitian friends but I also agree with Roseline because I had friends from different Caribbean countries, African-Americans, Hispanic and Caucasian friends.
Q3	Considering your college experience and your ability to persevere through that time, which supports do you feel helped you the most?
Nicolette 2 nd	Definitely, my father and family. My father told me that I had to graduate from college. He and other family members constantly reminded me of the expectation that I complete college. Those conversations gave me the encouragement that I needed when things were difficult. I felt that I had no other option but to finish [college]. Also, I feel that the financial support was a game changer as well. I worked while I went to school but it would have taken me longer to get through school without financial aid. My father helped where he could but he could not afford to pay for my classes.
Roseline	SE – My parents and family was my greatest source of support to help me persevere. They always emphasized that education was important and that we had to finish our education. This was taught in the U.S. and Haiti. In Haiti, even with limited opportunities, if you are educated or have training you have a chance [to live a better life], although you may have to leave Haiti to do so.
Nadia	SE – I agree with the others, my parents and family. Seeing the poverty and what the lack of an education does to people, including people in my family, that was a great motivator. My cousin, being educated, was also a motivator. Once in college, the supports were friends helping each other get through, siblings encouraging you to keep going and helping in any way that they could and the mentors that I mentioned in my interview.
Darlene 2 nd	SE- My parents, family and my friends that I met in college. I think all of them helped me persevere in college in different ways. My parents instilled that you keep working, keep going no matter what, quitting is not an option. You will go to college and graduate. My family they were encouraging...you can do this, we are so proud of you, things like that. My friends were the ones that I talked to and told them things that I could not tell my parents. I did not do well on this test; I didn't understand that chapter. I could cry on their shoulders; they encouraged me and I encouraged them, we supported each other and we understood what each of us were going through because we were experiencing the same things. A w/ Nicolette - Nodding her head while saying, Yes, that is true.
Q4	Do you have anything else that you would like to add or discuss before we close?
Nicolette	A - No, I have nothing else to add and I have no questions.
Roseline	No, I have no comments or questions.
Nadia	A – No I think that I have said everything that I wanted to say.
Darlene	A – No, nothing. Thank you

Matrix for assessing level of consensus in focus group:

A = Indicated agreement (verbal or non-verbal)

D = Indicated dissent (verbal or non-verbal)

SE = Provided significant statement or example suggesting agreement

SD = Provided significant statement or example suggesting dissent

NR = Did not indicate agreement or dissent (i.e. nonresponse)

Themes: Parents and family support. Friends made in college – also a source of support. Heritage and Haitian upbringing important part of success in school – resilience and persevere, parents emphasizing importance of education Resources in college – mentors, teachers and friends played an important role in helping them navigate through college and finding supports.