African Immigrants' Perceptions of Employee Performance and Organizational Cultural Barriers in Fortune 500 Companies

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The underemployment of African immigrants and lower job earnings continue to be a problem in the United States. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore perceptions of African immigrants regarding their performance and cultural barriers within Fortune 500 companies in Houston, Texas. Research questions explored how African immigrants navigated and adapted to cultural expectations, and how these adaptations influenced their perceptions of job satisfaction and performance. The study was grounded using rational choice theory. Seidman's exploratory case study method was used to analyze the interviews from 12 African immigrants working in Houston. The themes are: 1) cultural misunderstanding, 2) promotion and advancement, 3) workplace inclusion, 4) communication barriers, 5) organizational support, and 6) networking/professional growth. Findings indicated that the organizational culture was significant for African immigrant employees to influence changes in global organizational policies, procedures, and practices. The implications for positive social change include the potential for leaders to improve leadership selection, development, and cultural training to enhance African immigrant employees' job satisfaction and performance in the US.

Keywords: African immigrants, performance and cultural barriers, job satisfaction, performance, rational choice theory

INTRODUCTION

African immigrants tend to immigrate to the United States to pursue educational advancements, familial connections, and/or economic opportunities (Commodore-Mensah et al., 2019). This population significantly contributes to the workforce, as 42% of African immigrants in the United States over the age of 25 have earned at least a bachelor's degree, compared to only 28% of all United States-born citizens (Commodore-Mensah et al., 2019). While extensive research exists regarding organizational culture, sustainability, and growth challenges at a macro-level, there is a significant gap in extant research concerning the sustainability of African immigrants and their performance in Fortune 500 companies. Researchers from multiple disciplines have emphasized the need to address the challenges that immigrants encounter (Marindi & Hauhart, 2022; Nyanamba et al., 2024).

In this qualitative exploratory case study, organizational culture systems in the United States were examined as a key requirement for employee sustainability. This study focused on the organizational culture systems of Fortune 500 companies, which were crucial for employee sustainability. The outcome of this study may enable organizations to more effectively understand and address the unique needs of a blended workforce. Additionally, the study could lead to knowledge that may assist African immigrants in Fortune 500 companies to understand the potential negative stereotypes in the workplace that they may face.

The research background, problem, and purpose of the study were thoroughly examined. Additionally, this chapter includes research questions (RQs) and the conceptual framework that guided the investigation. The nature of the study was also described, key terms defined, and assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study were discussed. Finally, the significance of the study in terms of practice and social change is addressed.

BACKGROUND

The journey of immigrants to the United States, particularly those of African origin, often involves resilience, determination, and an unwavering spirit (Delgardo, 2022). The decision to migrate is often times made due to personal needs and desires, and those migrating have little to know guarantees that they will be better off in their host environment, and African immigrants are no exception. Immigrants, not knowing what the future holds for them, will most likely equip themselves with some skills that could help them thrive. For most immigrants to thrive, they would need to be gainfully employed and afford their basic needs. In the workplace, many African immigrants usually face a huge cultural shock and a feeling of uncertainty. The cultural shock and feeling of uncertainty are mostly caused by the sudden change in the way of life of their host community and the need for them to adapt to the distinct normative behaviors and labor laws of the United States. For instance, it is common to find African immigrants attributing certain aspects of their job tasks to their spirituality. African immigrants in this category believe that the presence of a divine God helps them carry out their daily tasks, and when they lack the ability to do so, they also assume that God has not willed them to carry out the task; otherwise, He would have endowed them with the needed skills. This was why Edem-Enang (2021) asserts that African cultures places emphasis on spiritualism as a key to success and better outcomes. However, in the United States, employees adhere to a normative pattern that has proven to be efficient over time.

In the contemporary global landscape, migration dynamics significantly contribute to multicultural societies, reshaping workforce demographics and organizational cultures. Immigrants must be culturally literate to fit into new environments with minimal challenges. As immigrants come from diverse and unique cultures, it is essential to understand culturally similar immigrants regarding their ability to achieve their goals and objectives. There is a myriad of existing research detailing the prevalence of health-related challenges among African immigrants in the United States (Ibe-Lamberts et al., 2025; Motley et al., 2024) and the experiences of African migrant workers in Europe (Abdi et al., 2022; Achouche, 2025). However, little is known about the perceptions of African immigrants concerning their employee performance and cultural barriers related to communication in the United States. Despite the increasing role of immigrants in the U.S. workforce and other developed countries, research on organizational communication and the

experiences of immigrant employees in host cultures remains limited. Corra (2023) summarized historical patterns of African immigration to the United States and noted that the significant increase in African immigration began in the late 1990s, likely due to a shift in immigration regulations (i.e., the Immigration Act of 1990). Corra (2023) also emphasized that African immigrants should not be treated as a homogeneous group, given that the population varies culturally, economically, and linguistically.

It is essential to understand the challenges and cultures associated with acquiring jobs, as well as to develop cultural literacy. Migrants have objectives that can be achieved only through cultural literacy. However, prerequisite levels of literacy that enable them to thrive in complex cultural systems appear to be lacking. In the view of Maine et al. (2019) cultural literacy entails being competent and sensitive to one's own and others' identities, heritages and cultures. The lack of the prerequisite levels of cultural literacy often exposes African immigrants to a great risk of discrimination which often leads to underemployment, skill devaluation, and poor remuneration despite their human capital gains (Akinsulure-Smith, 2017; Showers, 2015). It has also been observed that a major barrier experienced by African immigrants is that the educational qualifications obtained in Africa by African immigrants before relocating to the United States are always either not recognized in the United States or that they are undervalued, and this results in limited employment opportunities and difficulty in obtaining jobs that align with their competencies. Zickafoose et al. (2024) argued that one of the reasons for undervaluing the competences of African immigrants is that African countries make minimal investments in education, thereby making African immigrants less competitive and globally relevant in the work environment.

There have been few studies on African immigrants, organizational culture, cultural barriers, and employee job satisfaction within Fortune 500 companies, particularly in the United States. This study aimed to bridge the gap by exploring African immigrants' perceptions of employee performance and organizational cultural barriers related to communication within Fortune 500 companies. African immigrants often encounter obstacles to their performance due to perceived organizational cultural barriers, leading to underemployment and lower earnings.

PROBLEM

African immigrants in the United States frequently experience underemployment and may earn low wages (Akinsulure-Smith, 2017; Saasa (2019); Showers, 2015). Despite these challenges, they are a vital part of the workforce with 75% of African immigrants in their prime working age (Dabic et al., 2020). This demographic is well-positioned to address the employment gap as the baby boomer generation retires. To understand how African immigrant professionals adapt to their new circumstances, this study includes a historical overview of African immigration to the United States. Following this, a secondary analysis of sources regarding potential barriers they face and opportunities that enable African immigrant professionals to succeed was provided.

The specific problem is that African immigrants in the United States struggle to effectively navigate the U.S. organizational culture system due to cultural barriers. Saasa (2019) asserted that African immigrants in the United States frequently face underemployment due to cultural barriers involving communication, despite available job opportunities. While technical challenges persist, limited studies have focused on the experiences of African immigrants with organizational culture and cultural barriers that impact job satisfaction, especially within Fortune 500 companies.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to investigate the perceptions of African immigrants regarding their employee performance and the cultural barriers they face in terms of communication within Fortune 500 companies in Houston, Texas. This study could help managers understand how African immigrants perceive employee performance within these companies, the cultural obstacles they encounter, and strategies that help mitigate factors influencing constraints faced by African immigrants in Fortune 500 companies. The target population for this study was African immigrants

employed by Fortune 500 companies in the Houston metropolitan area. Purposive sampling was employed to gather a sample of 10 to 15 employees.

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of African immigrants regarding their employee performance within Fortune 500 companies?

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of African immigrants regarding their cultural barriers in communication within Fortune 500 companies?

Theoretical Foundation

A conceptual framework is a theoretical approach that researchers employ to investigate a research problem, which is tailored specifically to the study (Imenda, 2014). It provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the concepts essential to the research topic. In this study, the conceptual framework was used to deepen understanding of theories and concepts, thereby establishing connections between variables. Researchers use conceptual frameworks to facilitate data collection, interpretation, and comprehension. Hughes (2019) stated that conceptual frameworks establish the foundation for framing research questions and guiding investigative processes to gather pertinent information. For this study, the conceptual framework was the rational choice theory.

Rational choice theory is a framework for researchers studying the social and economic behaviors of individuals. Individuals have a range of options and make decisions guided by personal preferences and social norms (Burns & Roszkowska, 2016; Goode, 1997). The theory emphasizes individual decision-making, characterized in the literature as rational calculations that align with personal goals and objectives. Despite choices, individuals typically select options that offer benefits and align with their goals (Coleman & Fararo, 1992; Pepper & Gore, 2012). Decisions that are rooted in rational choices are associated with increased levels of personal satisfaction.

Individuals make decisions to enhance their returns and decrease risks and losses (Hechter & Kanazawa, 1997; Shenhav et al., 2017). Rationality drives individuals to opt for particular actions. Rational choice theory has been fundamental in shaping rational decision-making processes, where individuals strive to maximize benefits while minimizing losses. This theory was used to examine African immigrants' perceptions of employee performance within these companies and cultural challenges that impede their success in the U.S. workforce.

Understanding the concept of rational decision-making is crucial for individuals seeking career advancement (Quiroz González et al., 2020). According to Palarino (2021), African American immigrants often encounter challenges involving integrating into dominant organizational cultures due to language barriers or cultural disparities. Possessing adequate cultural understanding can help make more informed employment decisions. To make suitable employment decisions, employees must be able to make educated or informed decision (Deming, 2021).

Chang et al. (2023) conducted research indicating that there is still a significant lack of organizational communication studies focusing on the experiences of immigrant employees in the host culture, despite the increasing presence of immigrants in the workforces of the United States and other developed nations. Zeng (2017) examined the relationship between rational choice theory, organizational culture, and African immigrants, considering preference propositions, constraint propositions, and immigrant motivations.

The rational choice theory views African immigrants as goal-oriented individuals who rely on their decision-making skills to determine preferences that can help them to make choices and consider alternatives. However, most organizations may not benefit from this due to cultural barriers that cause limitations (Farashah et al., 2022). In addition, employers who have low levels of cultural literacy are ineffective decision-makers who struggle to make decisions.

Xu et al. (2023) noted that African immigrants in Texas and other regions of the United States struggled to determine specific preferences and consequently made poor decisions due to gaps in their knowledge of cultural literacy. Thelamour (2021) identified the lack of research on how organizational culture affects

African American immigrants as a critical challenge facing immigrants seeking opportunities in the United States and other developed countries.

Uyar (2019) indicated that the understanding of entrepreneurial opportunities among immigrants includes incentives in terms of prices, economic factors, and legal, and economic aspects. These factors can significantly impact the success and sustainability of African immigrants in Houston and other areas of Texas. Uyar indicated that governments that provide incentives by removing constraints and supporting cultural literacy facilitate the informed decision-making of immigrants. Zeyada (2018) analyzed the significance of cultural literacy in the decision-making of immigrants and discussed the effect of immigrants with an inadequate understanding of legal and economic regulations. The ability of immigrants to make a rational decision is influenced by the extent of their understanding of business regulations, requirements, and limitations (Zeyada, 2018).

Having cultural literacy is key to the employee's success in organizations in the United States. Corra (2023) studied the performance of African Immigrants in the United States who had little cultural literacy of the state's organizational operations. Their proficiency was assessed based on their grasp of the interpersonal dynamics that African immigrant professionals navigate within organizations, offering a deeper understanding of how these immigrants assimilate into the new organizational culture they encounter. Knowledge of cultural variations and the ability to make adjustments in alignment with an organization's work culture are vital to the success of employees within an organization (Arman et al., 2024). For instance, African immigrants who understand the components of sexual harassment in the workplace are in a better position to maintain healthy distances when relating with co-workers, especially in a team environment. Corra found that immigrants who had valuable cultural knowledge had higher passion and motivation; they were also more comfortable making strategic decisions that would help them become a better version of themselves. According to Wang (2018), there is a rising interest in studying the well-being of international immigrants in host countries, with job satisfaction being highlighted as a crucial factor in assessing immigrants' overall welfare.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Research on immigrants in the workplace has highlighted cultural differences as significant factors contributing to communication issues, conflicts, and lower job satisfaction. However, there was a notable gap in the existing body of research relative to how organizational culture specifically impacts African immigrants. Given their unique experiences, it is essential to examine how organizational culture may specifically impact African immigrants. This gap in research likely stems from the recency of the emergence of African immigrants as a significant demographic in the United States, has and there have been limited comprehensive studies regarding their workplace experiences. Additionally, many existing studies on African immigration tend to focus more on challenges within legal or educational systems rather than employment dynamics, thus overlooking strategies for navigating such challenges. The outcome of this study could fill a gap in the literature by providing organizations with culturally diverse workplaces with the context, perspective, and data to support employees from immigrant communities, especially those of African descent.

Significance to Practice

African immigrants who were employed in Fortune 500 companies in Houston, Texas, shared their experiences and strategies in this study, providing valuable insights and perspectives for other immigrants to enhance job sustainability. The findings of this research have the potential to benefit all African immigrants seeking employment opportunities in the United States by preparing them to understand the potential challenges that may arise. This study may also benefit organizations employing African immigrants in supporting their diverse needs. The aim of this study was to contribute new insights into the cultural barriers faced by African immigrant employees, with the potential to inform the development of organizational cultural education programs tailored specifically for this demographic. These initiatives

could potentially reduce the significant cultural barriers faced by African immigrants within Fortune 500 companies.

Significance to Theory

The study employed rational choice theory, which posits that when presented with different opportunities, individuals are more likely to select alternatives that offer them the greatest benefits, given the available information (Burns & Roszkowska, 2016). This study examined how the lack of information on cultural barriers and U.S. organizational cultures hindered African immigrants from fully leveraging employment opportunities in the United States. Additionally, this study explored organizational cultural education programs for African immigrants as a means to enhance their decision-making effectiveness and improve employee performance within Fortune 500 companies.

Significance to Social Change

African immigrants in Houston, Texas, who are interested in job opportunities may benefit from the results of this study, which could help them understand U.S. organizational culture systems and increase their cultural literacy. Results could also be used to initiate social change by improving the cultural literacy of African immigrants in other U.S. communities. Several factors can weaken links between organizational culture, cultural barriers, and outcomes. Individual factors, such as the level of acculturation, and environmental factors, like the size of organizations, are examples of these influences. This study could aid organizations and leaders in terms of implementing effective management programs. Positive social change implications include the potential for improved leadership selection, development, and cultural training, which can enhance employee job satisfaction, customer relations, and organizational performance, while also contributing to more culturally aware populations.

METHODS

Given the study's aim to explore perceptions of African immigrants regarding their employee performance and cultural barriers relative to communication within Fortune 500 companies in Houston, Texas, a qualitative case study design was selected. A qualitative exploratory case study design combines the strengths of primary and secondary data to ensure that comparisons and triangulation are possible, thereby generating quality and reliable findings. It was suitable to obtain a deeper understanding of cultural literacy of African immigrant employees. The qualitative, exploratory case study design requires the identification of the target population and subsequent sampling to ensure a representative selection of participants. The population refers to all individuals who meet the inclusion criteria. Jackson et al. (2007) noted that the target population could range from as few as 10-15 individuals to as large as the population of a country or region. In most cases, the size of the target population cannot be quantified; thus, researchers can use regions, periods, and other general features to determine the sample participants. The target population for this study consisted of African immigrants who have been actively employed within Fortune 500 companies in the Houston metropolitan area, Texas, over the past seven years.

Sampling was used to determine the ideal number of participants who would satisfy the data needs of the study. Sampling refers to the process of selecting participants from the target population who accurately represent the entire population (Emmel, 2013). Researchers of most qualitative case studies rely on random and purposive sampling to recruit participants, depending on the defined number of participants and the extent of data required for the investigation.

Purposive sampling was employed in selecting 10-15 employees, ensuring sufficient representation of the target population. A sample size of 10-15 employees was considered adequate for achieving meaningful results for this study. Purposive sampling, a non-probability technique that relies on researcher judgment, facilitates the selection of optimal and resourceful participants. This approach mitigates the necessity for generalizing findings and study outcomes. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were used in a purposive sampling approach to ensure the selection of individuals who closely aligned with the research criteria.

This study focused specifically on African immigrants who were actively employed in Houston, Texas. Consequently, African immigrants who were not currently employed were excluded. Utilizing purposive sampling, the researcher identified and selected individuals who were not only interested in participating but also capable of providing relevant data and understanding the challenges encountered by African immigrants within the U.S. organizational system. Additionally, African immigrants experiencing difficulties in securing employment would be considered for inclusion in the study sample.

The participants, African immigrants employed and working in Houston, Texas, were recruited as participants using purposive sampling. Leveraging this method, the researcher possesses pertinent personal and professional details of potential participants. Invitations to participate in the research were sent via email, which included comprehensive study information. Confirmations from recipients were requested to ensure the integrity of the intended sample size of 20 participants before data collection commenced.

The study relied on primary data to meet its objectives, answer the research question, and achieve the expected outcomes. Therefore, conducting interviews was the primary data collection method. The review of secondary sources was used to support the data sources and close gaps in the primary data. The interview protocol involves audio-recording all the interviews and keeping field notes.

Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Questions included predetermined and open queries. The interview protocol dictated the interactions between the researcher and the participants. Predetermined questions were asked of all participants to ensure consistency in data collection and facilitate useful data analysis through comparisons. However, there was flexibility to ask insightful questions for clarification or further explanation. Data provided by participants that were not within the interview protocol were considered additional information that was used as supportive data.

Bracketing was practiced throughout the interview process to ensure that the understanding of the topic, the perceptions of the participants, and personal feelings did not influence or interfere with the data collection process. Self-reflection and pretest are ideal methods that ensure that the researcher sets aside assumptions and personal perspectives on the topic. Mock interviews were used to identify any vulnerable areas that could create an opening for interference in data collection, particularly by leaning toward certain aspects of the topic.

The initial interview sessions were allotted sixty minutes in total. The interview questions were structured to gather both general and specific data. The general inquiries, comprising five questions, primarily focused on demographic information, including age, income levels, years of residency in Texas and gender. Subsequently, the remaining ten questions delved into more specific aspects, targeting African immigrants' perspectives on their job performance and the cultural obstacles encountered within Fortune 500 companies in Houston, Texas. Additional queries within this section will seek participants' recommendations for enhancing organizational culture and their perceptions of the role the Texas government should play in mitigating factors limiting African immigrants' opportunities within Fortune 500 companies.

All necessary data within the initial sixty-minute timeframe were collected, and participants were kindly requested to allocate an extra thirty minutes during the subsequent month. This additional time facilitated any required clarifications or the provision of further details regarding the provided data. Additionally, it allows for addressing any follow-up queries that may arise after the initial interview sessions.

The final length of the interviews was influenced by factors such as language barriers, the interpretation of questions, and the participants' willingness to provide detailed responses. The initial face-to-face interviews enabled me to establish a vital connection with the participants, which proved indispensable in subsequent interactions. During the interviews, Observations were made on the participants' moods, emotions, and reactions to different questions. The genuineness of face-to-face interviews helped ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings. Telephone calls and video conferencing were considered for follow-up interviews. The times and locations of the interviews were based on the convenience of the participants. Coffee shops or business premises were the preferred locations for the interviews, which were conducted with the participants. During the interview sessions, the researcher and all responses were audio-recorded, and field notes were maintained for analysis.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The study relied on semi structured interviews to answer the research question. The data collected through the interviews was verified using secondary sources, such as reports and government information, on the cultural challenges facing immigrant entrepreneurs. The interview protocol was used to collect data. As previously discussed, the researcher utilized specialized audio-recording devices to ensure that all responses to the interview questions were accurately captured. However, other devices, such as phones and secondary recording devices, were not allowed in interview sessions in case the specialized devices malfunctioned. Audio recording of the interview sessions reduced the burden of taking extensive notes and enabled the researcher to focus on asking questions, seeking clarifications, and noting the nonverbal expressions of the participants.

Participants were recruited and then selected to join the study. Recruitment includes seeking consent from potential participants through physical meetings or electronic communication. Email was the primary method of communication, in addition to sharing research briefs on WhatsApp, face-to-face meetings, Facebook, and other potential social media networks. The additional modalities of publication were ideal before the selection of the 10-15 participants. Communication and contact with the 10-15 participants were primarily conducted through emails, with all records preserved as evidence of the recruitment process.

Informed consent and information sheets were used to recruit the participants. The selected participants were required to sign an informed consent form to indicate their voluntary participation in the study and to grant the researcher the right to use their responses to the interview questions. The information sheets contained details about the proposed study, including background, objectives, research questions, and the nature of the inquiry, to help participants make informed decisions. The participants were informed of the importance and significance of the study, including potential benefits that the entrepreneurs may obtain from the conclusions and recommendations. The sample size will be 10-15 participants or until data saturation occurs.

The scheduling for interviews occurred over one month to enable participants to select suitable dates while allowing the researcher to manage the schedule and avoid conflicts. Google calendars and e-mail notifications were used to confirm availability and schedule the interviews. As the researcher, the goal was to conduct more than one interview per day to shorten the data collection period. All interviews were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken to support the recordings. Following the completion of the interview sessions, participants had the opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification from the researcher. The participants also had the opportunity to share additional information related to the study. The results of the study were shared with the participants after receiving university approval.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan obtained from the interviews and supplementary secondary sources was analyzed and processed. This analysis involves examining 10-15 transcribed audio recordings and accompanying field notes to identify patterns between the primary and secondary data. Each transcription includes participant codes along with responses to the 20 interview questions. Field notes were used to address any gaps identified during the review of the recordings. Should any significant missing data be detected, participants were re-engaged to provide clarifications and additional information.

Coding was employed for both the participants and the collected interview data. Numeric coding (e.g., P1, P2, etc.) will be utilized for the participants, while color coding differentiates various types of information. Both inductive and deductive approaches were employed to assess the relevance of transcribed data obtained from the interviews. New data was marked with red labels, while information identified during the literature review was denoted with green labels. Analysis of new data aims to identify themes and subthemes that address the research question.

Organizing data involved identifying, collating, and sorting interview data based on their frequency. Tables will be used to group similar data, assisted by the inductive and deductive coding completed during interview transcription. Themes were developed from data that directly address the research question and study objectives. Themes will serve as a measure of how well the collected data aligns with the study's expectations.

Throughout the analysis, any information that failed to meet quality and credibility standards was scrutinized. Participants will be consulted initially to validate such data, while secondary sources will be used to verify any discrepancies in facts provided during interviews.

The data analysis were reported using charts, graphs, and tables. The QSR NVivo computer software program will facilitate data analysis, reporting, and presentation, enabling the creation of visualizations to aid in interpreting the findings. Tracy (2012) noted that the effectiveness of data analysis determines the achievement of the study expectations. The researcher may have to collect more data by conducting follow-up interviews if the initial data does not yield the expected results. Discrepancies in data collection will be managed by collecting additional data and cross-referencing with supporting documents.

Data Collection

The data for this research were collected in August/September 2024 using a semi-structured interview technique that provided a detailed understanding of African immigrants working in the IT sector of the selected Fortune 500 organizations. They noted that the approach provided the opportunity for optionality when considering the participants' accounts of their experience with employee performance and organizational cultural constraints (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). All participants were interviewed via self-administered face-to-face and/or digital interviews, with an average duration of 30 to 45 minutes.

All interviews were tape-recorded with the participant's permission and recorded using Rev.com, and the two analysts transcribed them in full. Challenges, as highlighted by Chomutare et al. (2021), included data loss; therefore, all files, transcriptions, and consent forms were saved on two different platforms, including personal computers and external hard drives. Furthermore, a review of the existing literature, specifically focusing on organizational culture and employee performance, was also conducted to support and enhance the results generated from the interviews.

Data Analysis

The participant table provided illustrates the various ID assigned and subsequent interview location and interview length and duration. All transcripts obtained underwent the initial step of organizing data as recommended by Seidman (2013). The inductive approach to coding was employed to ensure that the identified quotes from the various participants' interview transcripts were categorized into different themes for the reports. These included highlighting some of the common patterns from the transcripts. The themes developed by directly addressing the RQs and quotes identified among participants aligned with study expectations. Subsequently, data validation was implemented where every quote generated from the transcripts was verified by matching the audio files' content and transcripts. Lastly, the presentation of findings was done through tables and charts generated using the QSR NVivo computer software programs, which accurately represented the findings. These visualizations revealed the achievement of the study's expectations and allowed for the management of any potential discrepancies in data collection.

The semi structured interviews comprised 16 questions. Whereas the first six questions captured the participant's age, gender, and years of experience, the remaining questions addressed the participant's views on cultural issues and employees' performance in Fortune 500 companies. The data from the asynchronous interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to uncover significant patterns and themes across the data set. Regarding data analysis, the data was hand-coded and analyzed for major themes, which were further checked with the help of NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The themes of the study emerged following an analysis of the various quotes, which revealed distinct patterns.

In various interview questions, quotes were highlighted that revealed a pattern relating to the keywords and codes generated to help align them to various themes relevant for the current study. Table 4 highlights the frequency of the codes and the subsequent application of quotes to identify various themes used in the results section. Various participants who mentioned the quotes are also identified to help illustrate the codes and the subsequent themes generated. The thematic analysis highlighted several key themes of the research, focusing on the experiences and attitudes towards African immigrants in the IT industry.

These themes are presented in Table 4 and Figure 1, along with the frequency and percentage of their appearances in the interviews solicited for the research.

Subsequent evaluation of the various quotes from the different participants revealed various codes. These were extracted from the transcripts after being placed inside QSR NVivo software and the subsequent generation of codes, including language barrier, cultural differences, discrimination, prejudice, career mobility, diversity management, mentorship, and biased perceptions.

RESULTS

Six key themes emerged from the interview analysis of the 12 participants and the 16 questions from the interview questionnaire. These themes capture participants' experiences of organizational culture and how they perceive that culture affects or enhances their performance in Fortune 500 organizations.

Theme 1: Cultural Misunderstanding

The two codes that were used to generate the theme of cultural misunderstanding included language and cultural differences. The report went ahead to illustrate quotes from the transcripts of different participants to illustrate the theme. The theme of cultural misunderstanding highlights the experiences of African immigrants working in Fortune 500 firms. It cuts across organizational culture, leading to misunderstandings that impact their performance and readoption in the firms.

For instance, P1 revealed that cultural differences present a severe challenge to organizational culture, particularly in work relations; the differences raise questions and suspicions regarding the ability of a particular person to lead. The following comment from a participant in the real estate sector supports this: "They will probably have this notion that they are not sure if you can lead a team." Once again, this point highlights the importance of being relevant within the company. It still took me quite a while to rise to the level where I had the opportunity to do what I am doing now; even if one has the academic background and vocational experience one needs, one has to prove oneself no matter where one is from." These are not unique features, and this is part of a larger problem where culturally associated dissimilarities will influence perceptions of competency and leadership. As a result, a study conducted by Alfoqahaa and Jones (2020) supported this view, arguing that in organizations, culture influences how leadership qualities are perceived and, consequently, evaluated, which raises questions about the efforts of minority candidates in diverse contexts to portray their ability to lead.

P3 touched on how language barriers present challenges in finding new opportunities when he said this: "Once I had a problem with language when I was job hunting," "Some of the organizations were more friendly with those employees that speak two languages as opposed to an employee that only speaks the English language." Ultimately, it depicts a situation where some employers may turn you down just because you cannot speak the language. This viewpoint supports the assertion that language plays a critical role not only in daily interactions but also in terms of job prospects. According to Reigstad (2021), due to cross-cultural differences, which create language barriers, colleagues from different cultures will, in most cases, translate or interpret communication in different ways, making it difficult to conduct a constructive review of performance and development in the workplace. These barriers lead to more negative attitudes towards the competencies of non-native speakers and a lower likelihood of career mobility. It is a trend that is replicated by the fact that the means through which people communicated resulted in uneven ground and an inability for African immigrants to be fully absorbed and progress in multinational companies.

P6 spoke about the issues of communication and cultural expectations by saying, "One of the major challenges encountered was in the aspect of communication; from Nigeria, we do have an accent, and this makes people have a hard time understanding you and likewise you are being able to pass your message across." This statement suggests that language barriers and accents can hinder communication, ultimately leading to poor working relationships and reduced productivity. Failure to understand the other person due to accents may lead to misconceptions about their intentions and messages, which can ultimately create conflicts within the team. Weinzierl (2021) noted that such barriers to communication in cross-cultural teams create negativity and destroy the overall effectiveness of a team by causing conflicts due to different communication styles and accents. This issue is particularly relevant in today's multicultural organizations, where effective communication is crucial to success.

P8 stated, "I find it difficult to impose my perception of how matters should work to my juniors who think that working 40 hours a week is sufficient, to my belief of working and delivering any assignment by the time it is required and in case of an added job, it warrants more hours." This statement reflects a significant cultural clash in several ways, including the expectations employees have of their workplace. In this case, one can see how the different perceptions of work ethic and expectations that the participant has about their subordinates versus what they expect from the participant and the rest of their workers can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts resulting from the clash of the two cultures. Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions are beneficial for understanding these differences, as they reveal how various attitudes, including time management and work completion, as well as overtime, influence interactions and managerial approaches (Le et al., 2020). For example, cultures with a less rigid view of time and deadlines may not place the same emphasis on schedules as cultures with a more rigid view. These cultural differences influence team performance and cohesiveness, which justifies the necessity for cultural sensitivity in multicultural workplaces.

P10 observed, "The higher you go, the more you're supposed to be involved in maybe more social engagement and building relationships, and that's where that could be a challenge because sometimes the people you're trying to network with, they don't have the same cultural background as you have." This comment highlights a significant challenge in leadership roles: the practical risk resulting from cultural differences in aspects of networking and social interaction. In the course of climbing the career ladder, a person must develop and apply various types of workplace relationships to advance their career and power. However, where there is a lack of cultural reference regarding such individuals from colleagues or prospective partners, there are impediments to meaningful encounters. Elchawich (2024) stated that such a cultural misfit leads to exclusion, isolation, and low job satisfaction because leaders are out of the networks that do not accept those cultures.

Theme 2: Promotion and Advancement
The researcher focused on prejudice, discrimination, and biased perceptions in formulating the theme. It points to the issue of career mobility of such employees in rigid bureaucratic organizations due to racism and sexism. P2 was deeply concerned about the issue, as he stated, "given the stereotype and conflicting values, it becomes difficult for the employees to cling to their jobs and practice mutual respect; they are likely to be trapped." This idea addresses the challenge that African immigrants encounter in terms of promotion and career advancement within Fortune 500 companies. Discrimination and prejudice mean concentration camp conditions in which the minority workers can lack the opportunities to get a promotion, and all the ingredients are intrinsic to a system and pose barriers to success for the employees. This is further supported by Williams et al. (2020), who suggest that preconceptions and prejudices in the business world, as well as organizational culture and practices, impact the lifecycle and upward mobility of minorities within organizations. One is likely to experience distrust of competency, prejudice toward performance, and discrimination against promotion opportunities. Hence, these challenges are not only about job security but also relate to advancement and progression and can evidence discrimination and unfairness in employment relations.

P4 also said, "Sometimes cultural issues can suppress job satisfaction, communication, and collaboration, and thus promote misunderstanding and miscommunication." This statement also demonstrates that culture plays a significant role in determining promotion and advancement, as it influences other aspects of work performance. Nearly and globalization, which sometimes lead to intercultural conflicts and miscommunications, interfere with satisfaction with work and career advancement, key components of training. This aligns with the study by Kuoribo et al. (2024), which demonstrates that culture has an impact on the ability of team members to convey ideas effectively, thereby hindering teamwork and efficiency. This means that if employees don't have the opportunity to succeed in attaining the objectives set for them by eliminating confusion in the workplace and acquiring cooperation opportunities, they cannot demonstrate their capabilities in their workplaces and earn promotions. Therefore, it is evident that the mentioned cultural issues are not situational but structural, affecting not

only day-to-day procedures but also career advancement programs and opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds and minorities. This suggests that solutions must be found to enhance representation.

For instance, P7 said, "in the field that you find yourself in right now, you will find a good percentage of African individuals, and on the other hand, you find a very large number of non-Africans, especially the white color, the blacks, particularly the Africans are more knowledgeable than the whites, but whites are occupying a higher percentage of the job." The above statement highlights limited job representation and career advancement opportunities, despite having adequate education and knowledge, which underscores organizational systemic and cultural barriers. In support of this fact, the study that was conducted by Qureshi et al. (2020) showed that employees of color are locked out of promotions because of prejudice and culture. Such a display of gender and ethnicity at work underlines the need for organizational redressal to erase prejudice and to enable better prospects for mobility at the workplace.

During the interview, P9 said, "I have experienced the feeling of being of low status and being receptions and never appreciated. A person told me that I have a smell that pains her head." This shows discrimination and cultural prejudice on African immigration workers and how these shaped their perceptions and experiences in the labor market. Stories of this nature provide examples of how prejudice not only removes people's perceptions of belonging but also harms career progress. Verbal abuse and the perception of no acknowledgment experienced by this participant in their job characterize the systematic level affecting satisfaction and promotions.

A study by Lee et al. (2020) found that such negative experiences negatively affect job satisfaction and restrict career advancement for minority employees. These outcomes are signs of another negative phenomenon that has been observed in organizational contexts, in which prejudice and cultural discrimination exclude minorities and restrict their promotions or opportunities, showing the importance of fair employment practices.

P12 also from the IT sector said, "I observed that there is a racial inclination; some races are keen on enhancing opportunities for their fellow races within Americans, the American system… some cultures are loyal to their people, and they do this tactfully." This comment also reveals promotion and career advancement discrimination based on race or cultural preference. This supports the argument for racial clustering, the notion that individuals who excel in organizations can leverage connections and social capital to advance and leave behind those of a different racial background. Lee (2023) and Machen et al. (2021) supported this notion, claiming that minority workers are discriminated against because of organizational cultures, and therefore, their chances for promotion are limited. The systematic discrimination of such a policy fosters employment opportunity disparities and hinders upward mobility for African immigrants and other minorities in the organization.

Theme 3: Workplace Inclusion
The theme of Workplace Inclusion centers on the ways that perceived exclusion affects job satisfaction and performance. Some participants explained how they were excluded from decision-making processes and how this impacted their professional development. P1 (Real Estate Sector – Professional) also agreed with this feeling on how they are sidelined in the contributions made by the team by saying, "As a minority, and also a Black female, I would say they tend to probably have this notion that they're not sure if you can lead a team. And again, it's all about proving yourself and proving that you are vital to the company." This shows that African immigrants are perceived. Another potential negative outcome of this perceived need to constantly assert one's worth is that employees may feel invisible or overlooked in the workplace, resulting in decreased workplace satisfaction and hindered career advancement.

Shore and Chung (2022) also advanced this idea, stating that workers suffer decreased efficiency and satisfaction at work if they are regarded as part of some structure that offers little value. Hence, experiences such as these may pose a real threat to the idea of inclusion for workers with NP disabilities and the overall organization's ability to integrate inclusively hired individuals effectively into the work environment.

Diversity is an important factor that defines today's workplace, and following the cultural perspectives, here are some issues that could be in the opinion of P4 (Finance Sector – Management) stated that knowledge workers in the present context work on such issues as "the freedom of relationship with

individuals of different cultures especially concerning interpersonal communication." Based on this assertion, the following questions concern the challenges associated with the issue of diversity and its impact. It may be necessary to attend to them in order to foster a positive attitude towards cultural diversity in organizations. According to Homan et al. (2020), cultural diversity is a context that can shape interaction processes and, thus, team performance. There is a need to implement policies on cultural differences in an efficient manner to reduce discrimination against team members. The problem of working in heterogeneous teams, including conflict between direct and indirect communication, and difficulty in establishing rapport across cultures, is reminiscent of a broader problem in implementing inclusion policies and practices that must take into account differences in norms and values to foster effective cooperative working.

P7 (Healthcare Sector – Support/Administrative) concluded his views as follows: "It all depends, in some parts, Africans are really respected for their high level of knowledge of education and also their being hardworking, and on the other side, they think Africans are fraudsters, loud, they don't have manners, and they are not supposed to be here." Constraining the given statement, it is possible to describe the crucial. Such mixed and often biased perceptions, as O'Connell and McKinnon (2021) pointed out, can not only hinder an individual's career advancement but also negatively affect their identity as employees within the organization. It impedes both integration and non-discrimination into working organizations and the capacity to operate effectively when people are subjected to mixed actual and perceived cultural heritage. These prejudices need to be sacked, and more importantly, the work environment must be shaped in such a way that it is more socially sensitive to everybody so as to be capable of raising the morale of these employees, as well as other employees, and at the same time, be capable of promoting the cause of each employee based on their performances.

P8 (Retail Sector-Management) concurred with the observation by opining thus: As this scholar pointed out, "When I came here to study in the United States, I soon discovered that a subordinate can very easily challenge the manager or leadership by giving his/her opinion or his/her opinion on what they do daily." This statement reflects both the organizational structure and communication modes of the African and American workplace. The African people have a social organization through which one cannot argue with the figures of authority, as they are severely denied. On the other hand, most workplaces in America respond to the culture of free speech and debate, even among the lowest staff members. Tear et al. (2020) affirmed this by pointing out that cultural theories determine the assessment of employee behavior toward managers. International competence, therefore, requires understanding these differences to improve communication efficiency within an organization in a multicultural environment. Such an understanding may help African professionals manage these differences to enhance their social relationships and organizational adjustment within the United States.

P10 (Manufacturing Sector - Technical/Engineering) noted, "When people walk in on Monday morning talking about baseball, and you've never played baseball or don't understand the game, you always feel like, 'Okay, what am I going to say here?' It highlights one of the challenges of participating in an organization where employees share popular cultural references that may make newcomers uncomfortable. Such cultural gaps may hinder social inclusion and have an impact on workplace unity, which is supported by Nesterova and Dobronravova (2022). These are work-related areas of difference that may create difficulties in everyday interactions and social interactions between people with different cultural backgrounds, affecting their sense of belonging and perceived social inclusion. Ideally, solutions to the challenges depicted above should be incorporated into strategies for workplace inclusion, which aim to enhance workplace understanding and promote affirmative interaction among employees from diverse backgrounds.

Theme 4: Communication Barriers

Communication Barriers examines how tones and potential biases may impact interactions between African immigrants in the workplace and their counterparts in Fortune 500 firms. This theme focuses on individuals' inability to communicate effectively within their workplace and the various implications this has for working relationships. P2 (Technology Sector - Technical/Engineering) noted, 'Leaving aside the stereotype and conflicting values, it is difficult for employees to keep their jobs and work without feeling

like they are being harassed.' The statement by this participant reveals that conflicting values and stereotypes are major obstacles in organizational communication. Such barriers result in miscommunication and misinterpretation, thereby developing negative impressions that affect job retention and overall performance. Jelenko (2020) pointed out that such stereotypes and value differences not only affect one's ability to communicate on the job but also erode an employee's job satisfaction. Focusing on the stereotype and not performance may create a toxic environment and lower morale among employees. It is indeed important to unmask these barriers to communication because the workplace should be a safe and positive environment for any individual to work in, without being discriminated against by their superiors or coworkers based on their cultural background.

P5 (Healthcare Sector - Support/Administrative) stated, "I found it challenging to manage the employee relations and office politics as some things are not said directly, and the cultural differences of being direct or self-promoting, especially in business meetings." This feedback highlights the struggle with adapting to different communication patterns and other unspoken workplace policies. These differences can lead to complications that make it difficult for an individual to assimilate into a new workplace easily. In line with this view, Aririguzoh (2022) demonstrated that cultural differences in communication norms pose significant barriers to intercultural communication. In many cases, failing to perceive these micro-messages and unspoken rules can prove disadvantageous to employees, as they are unable to relate well to their colleagues and superiors. Overcoming these communication barriers is crucial for improving the working climate for all individuals and ensuring that employees can participate to the best of their ability within their organizations.

P6 (Oil and Gas Sector - Managerial Level) recalled the following bias: "One of the major challenges I encountered is in the aspect of communication; from Nigeria, we do have an accent, and this makes it difficult for people to understand you and for you to get your message across." This comment is another illustration of how anchors, such as accents and communication styles influenced by cultural backgrounds, may present rational barriers in organizations. It shows that such biases can result in divergent interpretations of the same information or the outright omission of other valuable inputs due to the manner of their presentation. Levon et al. (2021) supported this observation, arguing that accent and manner of speech greatly affect the perception and value of communication. This matter highlights the importance of understanding and respecting diverse customer needs in organizations to facilitate effective communication that is crucial in the workplace.

P9 (Retail Sector – Management) argued his response as, "If it is an organization that accepts other cultures, the diversity of such a culture makes me comfortable and offers my most productive effort. If it is an organization that does not accept other cultures, and I do not like toxic environments in any way, the best way to handle this is to ensure that their level of ignorance does not deprive me of my joy." On the other hand, in organizations that have not adopted diversity, employees may experience feelings of discomfort and a lack of enthusiasm, which can affect their job satisfaction levels. Monteiro and Joseph (2023) believed that a positive environment enhances organizational commitment, the positive behavioral tendencies of workers, and other organizational virtues, while a negative environment yields undesirable behavioral patterns, such as low morale and poor performance from organizational workers. This underscores the fact that organizational culture acts as a crucial mediator in the overall employee experience and its impact.

Manufacturing Sector and Technical/Engineering P11 noted, "Since cultural differences can hinder effective communication, they should be avoided." Such a statement gives a clear indication of how cultural differences affect communication effectiveness in organizations. As stated by Guo and Stapa (2023), different cultural groups can hold varying perceptions based on their respective cultural communication and practices, which are vital when relaying information in technical disciplines. Such barriers can lead to misunderstanding of instructions, project details, or feedback and hence lead to mistakes and poor performance. These imperfect communication barriers can be disadvantageous to the individual and the team in specific applicational technical areas where precision and accuracy of information are important. Observation points to a much larger issue: cultural diversity and its impact on professional interactions and

productivity, particularly when considering approaches to enhance order and teamwork in heterogeneous organizational settings.

Theme 5: Organizational Support

The codes generated to support the theme of organization support are diversity management and mentorship. Organizational support refers to the extent to which Fortune 500 companies support eradicating the cultural barriers of African immigrants. In this theme, support in the organizational environment is identified as a factor that influences the experience and performance of organizational members.

In the case of the Real Estate Sector – Professional, P1 mentioned the following: For instance, my company has a department for cultural holidays because it is very diverse; however, the diverse individuals should come forward and demand more diversity. Thus, the statement suggests that while some entities contribute to diversity, such as having cultural holidays, there could still be a general lack of diversity visible on the ground. Another fact mentioned in Babundo's study (2023), was that diversity management must work when there is no symbolism, and every effort is attempted to integrate diversity programs into the organizational fabric continuously and cooperatively.

The absence of such commitment may, therefore, imply that efforts towards diversity often do not bring into the workplace the kind of diversity the programs intend to convey, and they lack consideration of diversity issues. It underscores the need for focused and sustained advocacy to encourage organizations to adopt and implement diversity and inclusion strategies and procedures.

As highlighted by P4 (Management, Finance Sector), there is a problem that we never imagined in the course of the study, which is that "there is a lack of support to the various groups of employees." The realities of today's organizations and people practices provide evidence that many organizations fail to adequately address the issues of diverse employees. According to Simon (2024), organizational diversity-related activities can only be effective when they are non-superficial, sustained, and integrated, along with the implementation of organizational policies. It suggested that diversity is not merely something that needs to be instituted as a concept, policy, vision, or mission statement, but it also has to be present in the organization's working at all levels of leadership and management, as well as in its support structures. When diversity is not well-integrated at various levels, it may end up being applied as a superficial activity that fails to meet the true needs/ concerns of diverse employees, making diversity groups feel neglected/ excluded.

P7 (Technology Sector - Technical/Engineering) elaborated, "Having companies sponsor this culture. Having sponsored or provided funding to promote cultural awareness. The funding could be for awareness for group gatherings for making reservations or making people want to be more part of it." It implies that we should not only have broad diversity initiatives but also targeted funding and resources for the finance and support of culture and cultural practices. For instance, Meyers et al. (2020) noted that best practice support should encompass cultural resources that align with the cultural demands faced by workers. It also includes financial support, planning, and holding events that promote culture and diversity. Measures like these can lead to increased interaction between different groups, improved organization and management in the workplace, and an overall enhanced organizational culture that will ensure all employees feel valued and motivated to work.

P10, Retail Sector Management, mentioned, "Being misunderstood, especially when one is a calm person, a person of few words, you find people judging you as being timid or lacking maybe leadership qualities." This statement clearly illustrates how individuals from diverse cultures encounter different working environments and the various forms of discrimination that may be faced by those with, for instance, limited verbal communication abilities. A lack of appreciation for varied communication methods can cause one to underestimate their abilities and hinder career advancement. Based on the studies conducted by Syakur et al. (2020), organizations' training and awareness programs must support and respect people's diversity, including their communication preferences and cultural backgrounds. This approach can help eliminate some misunderstandings and foster a positive atmosphere among the company's employees, where all of them will feel valued and appreciated. Consequently, organizations are encouraged to be aware

of diverse communication styles and empower everyone with equal opportunities to perform and be perceived as capable leaders within the organization.

Regarding the manufacturing sector, Support/Administrative P12 claimed, "So, certain races work to support their people within Americans, the American system, and even despite how much it is overemphasized that discrimination is not acceptable, some cultures look after their people." It identifies an ineffable trend of supportive responses from the organizations concerning the identified cultural realities that prevail in the working environment. They can lead to inequity and the perpetuation of social justice issues within an organization, even as it claims to value diversity. Garrick et al. (2024) also noted that if the organizations provide clear signals of preference for certain groups, diversity initiatives fail to change structural discrimination. For diversity programs to be effective, there must be a genuine commitment to ensuring that diversity is practiced within the company without exclusion. It can also temper the effects of cultural segregation and help foster a healthier and more tolerant environment within the workplace.

Theme 6: Networking and Professional Growth

Mentorship, language barriers, and career mobility were the themes assigned to generate the theme of Networking and Professional Development. It is one of the key themes of the proposed study, which examines the impact of accessibility to professional contacts and opportunities on the career progression of African immigrants working for Fortune 500 companies. Some of them stated their managerial objectives for acquiring all of them and mentioned that they need access to these contacts to develop as individuals.

Another interesting factor that was a concern for P2 (Technology Sector – Technical/Engineering) was organizational culture, and he noted, ''Values and expectations are set in stone without considering the cultural differences and individual values." This comment suggests that organizational culture has a significant influence on networking and career mobility, as it overlooks the cultures of individual employees. If an organization does not uphold cultural values, then the employees are restricted and cannot progress in networking and career advancement. Rabl et al. (2020) argued that for diversity management to gain a foothold, diverse values and views have to be integrated into practice. This integration facilitates the development of social spaces for workforce members from diverse origins to interact, exchange knowledge, and advance in their careers. First, cultural differences in terms of values and expectations should be taken into consideration to create equal opportunities for networking and enhancing professional performance in any organization. While doing so, it not only increases the career opportunities of each employee but also improves the corporate culture of the organization.

P6 (Healthcare Sector – Support/Administrative) affirmed what the participants in the study had said by responding, "The third thing I will say is that there is social networking amongst Nigerian communities that will provide people with opportunities to address these issues." In this regard, therefore, there is a need for mentorship that will ensure people receive support and are offered direction when they encounter the challenging aspects that come with working in organizations. In their perspective, Davis et al. (2022) noted that having a mentor is important in one's career trajectory, particularly for people of color who bear different career challenges. Mentoring networks facilitate the best career mobility, as well-connected support systems offer information and links to specific subsections. This is because it suggests that advertising the existence of mentorship programs and networking among organizations will likely minimize gaps and enhance professional development and diversification within organizations.

P9 (Finance Sector – Management) revealed, "In organizations that do not embrace other cultures... I try to manage the situation by not allowing their level of lack of knowledge to rub off my joy." Hence, such a statement suggests that there is a need to seek organizational support in addressing cultural matters and fostering professionalism. The non-acceptance of cultural differences in organizations can impact networking and increase the likelihood of non-White employees being underrepresented in promotions. According to Kiradoo (2022), for employees to be more effective, the organization should support and encourage diversity in the workplace. Equal treatment of the workers and increased opportunities based on aspects of cultural background; organizations can focus on networking and professional development. From a cultural perspective, this approach helps to overcome such barriers and, at the same time, enhances employee job satisfaction and career advancement opportunities of the culturally diverse staff.

P11 from the manufacturing sector and Technical/Engineering identified that "one of the major challenges is a movement within the corporate ladder in the organization." The problem described above may or may not be ethnically related, but it tends to focus on the area of mobility in careers within corporate America. Kittel et al. (2021) also emphasized the need to consider both structural bonding and organizational culture in relation to career progression. In networks and cultures where there isn't support for diverse workers, it becomes difficult for them to advance in their careers.

Communication is crucial for gaining opportunities and maintaining careers, although the concept is relatively new and especially relevant for individuals from diverse groups who may not have as many of these contact points. Consequently, to promote initiatives associated with the professional education and training of all employees, organizations must address these barriers.

P12 (Retail sector; Management) affirmed, "I think if we can try to get into spaces where they can and advocate and stand up... if our organizations knew that "You know what if you are discriminatory, are going to be on the news," then a lot more action would be put in tackling issues like that." The above statement confirms the lack of networking to support people. According to the results presented in the research study by Triana et al. (2021), it has been established that networking has a positive effect on career progression for people of color, particularly through the promotion of situations where workers can raise their concerns and the assurance that organizations are capable of addressing discrimination. By promoting inclusiveness in discussions and addressing these issues to work on them, organizations can improve their support structures to better embrace diversity and equality. It also works to eradicate discrimination and other issues related to promotion, networking, and connections among all employees in organizations.

The objective of this research is to conduct a qualitative, exploratory case study to investigate how African immigrants in the IT industry of Fortune 500 companies perceive and experience organizational cultural challenges and their impact on employee performance. The study was conducted with twelve immigrants from Africa, and a content analysis was performed to reveal the patterns and themes. From this thematic analysis, six broad categories emerged among the people interviewed.

DISCUSSION

This study supported the premise that African immigrants in the United States face significant challenges assimilating into the corporate world, particularly within Fortune 500 companies. Cultural barriers were identified as key obstacles to career advancement, work performance, and overall organizational experiences (Hofstede, 2001). Participants described systemic barriers that hinder professional growth, particularly in achieving fair career progression and navigating organizational culture constraints.

These findings align with prior research highlighting cultural challenges in corporate settings (Smith, 2020), career advancement disparities among immigrant professionals (Johnson & Lee, 2021), and the impact of organizational culture on workforce integration (Ahmed, 2022). This chapter integrates findings with existing literature to explore how cultural factors influence the careers of African immigrants in Fortune 500 organizations. The study's limitations concerning methodological and practical considerations are discussed. The chapter concludes with recommendations for organizations and policymakers, based on the study's findings, outlining implications for both individual career development and corporate diversity strategies. Finally, key findings are revisited, and potential directions for future research are proposed.

Limitations of the Study

This study also has some limitations to it. For instance, the study was conducted among African immigrants in selected Fortune 500 companies in Houston, Texas, and the USA, with a primary focus on the information technology departments. It only focused on one category of African immigrants, meaning that it did not explore other phenomena of the challenges that other African immigrants face; the region of origin also had to be taken into consideration. There was still a huge potential for understanding how these immigrant professionals struggle. However, the exclusive nature of the study to African immigrants in civil society or those working in small to medium-sized firms or as businesspeople limits the coverage needed

to appreciate the difficulties faced by immigrants in the country. The diverse range of industries and organizational sizes to which African immigrants belong may yield different outcomes in terms of cultural policies and emotional demands.

Implications

The implications of the findings of this current study will be significant to the following stakeholder groups: leaders of Fortune 500 companies and African immigrants in organizations, human resource professionals and practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.

Fortune 500 Companies

As presented in the case of the Fortune 500 corporations, the study showcases the need for Diversity and Inclusion programs to be available at Empresa. However, African immigrants' experiences indicate that critical challenges require specific Diversity and Inclusion programs to be developed. These professionals often encounter cultural issues, communication challenges, and the unavailability of essential networks, which hinder the promotion of their careers (Burke, 2022).

African Immigrants

As for the work situation of the African immigrants in these Fortune 500 companies, the outcome of this study provides an in-depth reference for these immigrants. These insights will help these professionals identify some of the possible hurdles they are likely to encounter before implementing the strategies they will use. Among the suggestions is for the African immigrant to go out in search of a protege in their organizations (Roberson, 2024). They will be able to establish relationships with others who have experiences and insights into corporate culture, which will help them in their career paths.

HR Professionals

Since HR is considered the management of people, HR professionals are directly involved in creating cultures and policies within an organization (Joyce et al., 2024). Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that HR departments review their policies and procedures regarding the performance evaluation tool to enhance its fairness and equality. This may involve reformulating the assessment criteria, where objective work experience replaces trait-based assessment, which can negatively portray African immigrants due to cultural biases. A 360-degree feedback system could also be useful in enhancing the frequency at which potential biases are taken into account. Since people from various levels within an organization offer feedback on a subordinate's performance, an organization is likely to obtain a more balanced perspective of a subordinate's strengths and weaknesses.

Policymakers

The study's implications of the study narrowed down to the policymakers, especially those in charge of diversity and inclusion policies. First and foremost, it is clear that policymakers must establish sustainable frameworks for promoting talent acquisition and retention, as outlined by Popo-Olaniyan et al. (2022).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section provides recommendations grounded on this study, which seeks to explore the cultural challenges of African immigrants in Fortune 500 firms, more so in IT organizations.

Enhancing Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training

At present, Fortune 500 companies require enhancing corporate cultural awareness and sensitivity training programs applicable to employees of all levels. As a result, this study focuses on how African immigrants encounter many social hurdles due to misconceptions about their communication practices, working principles, and cultural values. When implemented as part of diversity and inclusion practices, cultural competency education will help create an environment where everybody in an organization is

cherished and appreciated (Mayfield, 2020). The kind of training provided must focus on distinguishing the collectivist and the individualist-orientated cultures, increase the understanding of the implicit bias, and guarantee the free discussion of the diversity in cultures. However, it should not be a single occasion that has reached its end once an employee has been trained on a specific skill; this training should form part of a continuous process.

Promoting Effective Mentorship Programs

Companies should embrace having mentorship programs for minority and African immigrants to help them in their workplaces (Mosuga, 2020). The study said that most African immigrants failed to find meaningful mentorship, a significant way of promoting their career path. Getting a proper mentor may be a key to success because they can explain and advise on how things work in a given company. It suggests that organizations must ensure that African immigrants are matched with knowledgeable people who have overcome similar difficulties, as such people will provide helpful information and motivation. Besides, the engagement of the top management in these mentorship programs will help to reaffirm the organization's commitment to equality and other related aspects of talent management within the organization (Bohonos & Sisco, 2021).

Encouraging Proactive Networking Opportunities

Still, it also helps enhance the organization's organizational structure and contributes to the diversity and inclusion initiative. Fortune 500 companies should develop a well-defined networking process to target African immigrants and other minority employees (Gorman & Kay, 2020). This paper sought to investigate the networks of African immigrants in their career progression and how they feel about being locked out of other subtle networking events. To this effect, companies can organize structured inter-group events like lunch-and-learn, group exercises, and other events that bring together different groups. Further, companies must form ERG for African immigrant employees to ensure they are supported and can network for their resources. Such ERGs can help the employees, influence organizational dialogues and activities, and enhance the degree of inclusion in the workplace (Byrd, 2022). Those opportunities must help reduce the existing cultural divides or gaps in the workplace, create social networks, and accrue social identity for those from different cultures.

Implementing Inclusive Performance Evaluation Processes

Employee performance assessment methodologies are to be redesigned to embrace all employees without discriminating against anyone. The work showed that traditional performance appraisals tend to reward such attributes as communication practices and cultural attitudes that are characteristic of U.S.-origin workers to the detriment of workers of color, such as African immigrants (Nutakor, 2019). Companies can make it easier and less prejudiced by putting criteria for evaluating candidates in an objective rather than a subjective framework, apropos skills and achievements rather than karma-based norms of culture. This may involve using 360-degree feedback mechanisms and guaranteeing that performance appraisals are done by cross-sectional boards. In addition, more training for evaluators on cultural sensitivity is needed because culture plays a role in how the results of an evaluation are viewed (Majda et al., 2021). In these ways, organizations will ensure that no subordinates will be mistreated, and all employees will be treated and reviewed relatively and equally. This will also enhance employee morale and their ability to stay with the company.

Fostering Open Communication Channels

Employees and employers should always have open doors so that they can communicate or provide feedback regardless of their race (Malhotra, 2024). Some study participants noted they were lonely and frustrated due to their lack of communication. In this regard, organizations must schedule frequent meetings and group discussions. They should also have suggestions and complaints boxes where people can describe the challenges they go through and the recommendations, they would like to give without being punished. Opinions must be opened and shared, believing that such actions enhance trust, thus ensuring that every

staff member is valuable despite diversity (Leroy et al., 2022). However, it is also necessary that leadership respond to feedback to help express the appreciation of employee grievances. It also helps establish corporate culture, besides enhancing employees' productivity, and it enhances companies' results by creating a favorable working environment.

Investing in Language and Communication Skills Development

Popular companies on the Fortune 500 list should deem it compulsory to provide resources for language improvement and speaking for African immigrants (Mosuga, 2020). As a result, despite many African immigrants successfully overcoming the language barrier, there can be some misunderstandings in inter-African business communication because mastering business English differences, which can be crucial in collaboration with counterparts from other African countries, could be better. When it offers an extension to the business communication courses, passion when introducing and workout sessions on interpersonal communication interactions, organizations will help the African immigrants to express their capability in the business marketplace. Also, language learning will go hand in hand with the cultural information about the background of the learners, which will enhance their ability to integrate into the organizational environment.

Encouraging Collaboration with External Organizations

Corporations must also develop partnerships with other external agencies, community-based agencies, and institutes involved in helping African immigrants in the workplace (Martinez-Damia et al., 2024). It is necessary and would significantly enhance diversity as it is essential to engage and work with non-profit, community, and educational organizations; it also provides a good insight into the challenges African immigrants face in the country. When implemented, such collaborations may lead to the development of unique training, workshops, and other outreach activities that aim at creating a pipeline from underrepresented groups. Moreover, in their existing social interactions with these organizations, the corporations can also get clues on the social issues affecting African immigrants (Giazitzoglu & Korede, 2023). This would give corporations a positive corporate social responsibility.

CONCLUSIONS

This research employed an exploratory, qualitative approach to better understand the cultural aspects that affect the career mobility of African immigrants working in Fortune 500 firms. Therefore, the present study can deepen the understanding of how this particular group of employees might experience corporate reality and what can be done to promote it by those who are keen on diversifying and including people with such backgrounds.

Social identity theory was used to underpin the study with an understanding that people derive their identity from a group they belong to. In this context, African immigrants often find themselves navigating dual identities: their culture and the corporate culture in the United States of America, which they are required to dissolve. This situation can make for quite a nerve-wracking conflict because people attempt to integrate ethnic education with the chiefly egoistic, selfish organizational culture that defines large corporations like those that make up the Fortune 500 list. The study explained the following important elements of the experiences of African immigrants: Intended predictors included communication difficulties, perceived prejudice, and sponsorship.

The study revealed that cultural differences occasion most communication barriers and lead to social isolation and frustration among African immigrant employees. Some of the participants described how they or someone they knew experienced secondary oppression that contributed to their destruction of worth in multicultural organizations. With regard to this, it agrees with other studies that have shown that minority staff are subjected to other forms of stress that may be a reason for their dissatisfaction in the course of performing their duty as well as their overall well-being. Secondly, the minority tax was evident; the minorities tried hard to prove themselves deserving of a chance, only to turn up burnt out, and this created turnover and low morale.

The study pointed to these as sectors that would call for the intervention of Fortune 500 firms. The study also highlighted the need for Fortune 500 companies to develop and operationalize diversity and inclusion frameworks that would include the frame for African immigrants. In this respect, the proposal that all workers ought to undertake training on cultural competence is a good model through which organizations can endorse diversity and cultural diversity. This training should also entail cultural issues and ways of dealing with prejudices into the decision-making process. Mentorship issues emerged as another factor that was vital in the promotion of the careers of African immigrants. A program was established to connect an employee with a mentor in an organization depending on the problems they are experiencing as an African immigrant when employees are being hired. As a result, it should be understood that these programs help build professionalism in management and enhance corporate culture through the diversity of leaders.

The study also drew attention to the need for more waived networking chances in organizations. Many African respondents recognized themselves as socially excluded from informal events that are important for adapting to a new workplace and career progression. Hence, organizations' formal systematic methods of networking, such as the employee resource group for the people of associated immigrant origins from Africa, create authentic business relations that help workers map their careers better. From the applied aspect of the study implications for policy recommendations, the argument emerging from the bearing case is that more effort in public policy should be directed to the search for the right mechanisms that would enhance employment and, particularly, the non-absenteeism of gifted workers with an immigrant background from Africa. This may be done by engaging such organizations to build trust and embrace the oddities of the multiple types of clients. Also, links to educational establishments may create talent pools from underrepresented minorities and boost the economy.

For human resource professionals, some of the study implications include the need to rethink ways in which performance management evaluation within organizations is fair. Drawing on prior research, leaders in business management actively embrace diversity in the organizational structure which fosters an environment of diverse viewpoints and inspiration (Dostanic, 2024; Semujju et al., 2025). This means that an array of career ladders needs to be developed to map the skills and experiences needed to progress, which assists African immigrants in comprehending their career patterns. This shows that more frequent conversations about career planning can also help to improve satisfaction and retention rates. The consequences of the literature review of the study reveal that there needs to be a greater understanding of the experiences of African immigrants in an organizational context. Some of the directions for further studies may include comparative analyses of immigrant populations from different ethnic, national, and cultural origins to reveal similarities in the observed phenomena and differences and peculiarities of immigrant experience. This could also involve following the African immigrants to understand their career trajectories as they progress in their careers.

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