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A Multi-Generational Workplace Perspective: The Phenomenon of the Millennial African Immigrant Woman in Corporate America

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Submitted to the Program of Organizational Dynamics, College of Liberal and Professional Studies in the School of Arts and Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the University of Pennsylvania

Advisor: Kimberly Torres, Ph.D.

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A Multi-Generational Workplace Perspective: The Phenomenon of the Millennial African Immigrant Woman in Corporate America

Abstract

This research and capstone explore how the experiences of Ghanaian and Nigerian first and second-generation immigrant women in the U.S. workplace differ from their Black American counterparts. This research specifically focuses on the experiences of millennials (born between 1981 – 1996), Black, women, who had at least three years of work experience. Through interviews including first and second-generation Ghanaian and Nigerian women and multi-generational Black American women, the capstone examines issues that include the stereotype threat, emotional tax, and the model minority myth. With the growth in the Black immigrant population over the last century, it is imperative that companies realize the nuanced differences present in these groups (Kposowa, 2002). Many of the women who participated in this study mentioned instances where stereotype threat and emotional tax negatively affected their workplace experiences. In all ten interviews, each woman had at least one instance where she felt that her race played in part in her workplace treatment. All the women felt as though they had to be acutely aware of how they presented themselves in the workplace. There were, however, slight differences in their workplace and educational social experiences, depending on whether they were Black American, or a first or second-generation Ghanaian or Nigerian millennial, immigrant, woman.

Keywords

Black, women, millennials, diversity and inclusion, immigrant, first-generation, second-generation, emotional tax, stereotype threat, model minority myth, workplace diversity

Comments

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A MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKPLACE PERSPECTIVE: THE PHENOMENON
OF THE MILLENNIAL AFRICAN IMMIGRANT WOMAN IN CORPORATE
AMERICA

by

Yaa A. Keene, MPH

Submitted to the Program of Organizational Dynamics,
College of Liberal and Professional Studies
in the School of Arts and Sciences
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the
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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2022

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: *Black, women, millennials, diversity and inclusion, immigrant, first-generation, second-generation, emotional tax, stereotype threat, model minority myth, workplace diversity*

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LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Participant Demographics	24
2	Have you encountered microaggressions, prejudice, or racism in your workplace?	28
3	Family Background, Ethnicity, and Generational Status	31
4	Community/Neighborhood Racial Composition and Social Class	34
5	Post-Secondary Education	35

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
CHAPTERS:	
1. Introduction	1
2. Review of Existing Literature	6
3. Methodology	21
4. Study Findings and Analysis	27
5. Summary & Conclusion	50
REFERENCES	55
APPENDIX	63

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“I just feel like there is a stereotype and a stigma when it comes to academia. When people in academic leadership know that they have to meet a quota for black faces, I do always sense that they probably would lean towards choosing an African name versus an African American name. I don't have any evidence of that, I guess, but I have a strong suspicion that that is the case.” - Susie (Study Participant)

The objective of this capstone study is to explore and compare the professional experiences of first- and second-generation Ghanaian and Nigerian millennial women – women born between 1981 and 1996, with native-born, multigenerational Black American women, and the diversity of the Black woman’s experiences in corporate America (Trevelyan, 2016). This topic area has yet to be explored fully and I believe there are both economic and professional advantages to studying the experiences of these young Black women in corporate America.

With the large number of African immigrants in the U.S., one might wonder why I limited my study to examining the experiences of Ghanaian and Nigerian first and second-generation immigrants compared to Black American women. *Human Capital and Performance of African Immigrants in the U.S. Labor Market*, A.J. Kposowa, (2002) shows that the number of family-based visas granted to African immigrants have been much higher than those from English-speaking countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda over the course of the 21st century. The Nigerian and Ghanaian immigrant population in the U.S. has grown exponentially over the last few decades. As

of 2019, more than 461,695 people in the U.S. identified as having Nigerian ancestry and 392,811 U.S. citizens reported Nigeria as their birthplace (Gramlich, 2020).

Another reason for focusing my sample on Ghanaian and Nigerian immigrants is the human capital that both groups possess. In his paper, *The African Immigrant in the American Workplace: Understanding the Implications of immigration and Education*, Teagan J. Mosugo (2020), highlights how human capital (English proficiency and educational attainments) has affected the experiences of Anglo-speaking African immigrants in the U.S. (2020). Mosugo goes on to explain how a factor such as English competency affects an individual's value to an employer and therefore, their long-term earnings. By having more in the way of human and economic capital, Ghanaian and Nigerian immigrants had fewer barriers to assimilation once in the U.S. (2020). Through my research, I examine how immigrant Black women experience the workplace as related to their susceptibility to:

- 1) Emotional tax, defined as “the heightened experience of being different from peers at work because of your gender and/or race/ethnicity and the associated detrimental effects on health, well-being, and the ability to thrive at work” (Travis, 2016) (Footman, 2020)].
- 2) Stereotype threat, defined as the resulting sense that one can then be judged or treated in terms of the stereotype or that one might do something that would inadvertently confirm it” (Steele et al., 2002)], and how they perceive the workplace as Black women.

- 3) How the “model minority” status affects performance and career trajectories relative to Black American women who aren’t typically subject to the model minority status.

Reasons for this study

Through my research, I believe learning more about the diversity within the millennial, Black, women population will help organizations improve race relations and better tailor diversity, equity, and inclusion programs within corporate spaces. In order to break down barriers and ensure full inclusion and involvement for all women of color, organizations and corporate leaders must place an emphasis on learning about the racial, ethnic, and social class diversity of the contemporary Black populace in the U.S. In order to learn more about these factors, I address the following questions:

- In what ways do millennial African immigrant women experience more (or less) stereotyping and emotional tax in the corporate workplace than their Black American counterparts do?
- Why do multi-generational Black American millennial women encounter more episodes of stereotype threat in corporate workspaces than first and second-generation Ghanaian and Nigerian immigrant women?
- How does the model minority myth impact the African immigrants impact the women in my sample?
- Are Black American women and African immigrant women aware of the differences in the corporate workplace experiences of the other? If so, how do they differentially internalize their respective experiences?

Through this study, I hope to see what differences are present between these areas. I incorporate my own research by interviewing ten Black women professionals that met the interview criteria. An interview guide was created and used for this study to help facilitate conversations with the women interviewed.

Why Ghanaian and Nigerian Millennial Women?

My research focused on age, generational status, and gender. I interviewed ten millennials; individuals born between 1981 through 1996. My sample focused on millennials, who are now in their late 30s and 20s, as they would most likely have enough work experience to provide insight for this study, while still being young enough to have worked with people from the Gen X and Boomer generations.

In his article, *Ages, Life Stages, and Generational Cohorts*, Ruben Rumbaut (2004) defines first-generation immigrants as “persons born and socialized in another country who migrate as adults,” while defining second-generation immigrants as “U.S.-born persons with one U.S.-born parent and one foreign-born parent” (Rumbaut, 2004). *Characteristics of the US Population by Generational Status, 2013*, Trevelyan et al. (2016) defines second-generation immigrants slightly differently from Rumbaut. Whereas Rumbaut defines second-generation immigrants as needing to have at least one U.S.-born parent, Trevelyan et al. use the current U.S. Census to classify second-generation immigrants as needing to have at least one foreign-born parent, this is the definition I follow in this study. Many of the second-generation immigrants interviewed, had both parents who were foreign-born (2016).

Why only Women?

My reasoning for limiting this to women, as opposed to casting a wide network of coed participants, is that as a woman myself, I am more interested in the experiences of other women in corporate America. The conversations on racial identity, workplace and academic treatment, and more with Ghanaian and Nigerian first and second-generation immigrant women in social sections, have made me wonder about how gender, ethnicity, nativity, and race collectively affect young, Black immigrant women's professional experiences compared to those of young, Black American women.

Looking Forward through the Capstone

Extant empirical works on Black women's experiences in corporate America have not yet captured the diversity of the experiences of Black immigrant women at work. Although similar in many ways to Black American women, first and second-generation Black women also have many differences. Not only do the ways in which they are present and perceived in the workplace differ, their perceptions of those around them and the way they are treated as immigrants is also very different. I believe this topic area is of great importance to the larger diversity, equity, and inclusion conversation, and believe there are both economic and professional advantages to learning about the nuances in experiences of different groups of Black women in the U.S. workplace.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

Differences: Socio-Economic Status and Workplace

In searching for existing literature to support my research study, I found articles that there is not much research about the experiences of African immigrant women in America. I felt a need to address this as Ghanaian and Nigerian immigrants are two of the largest Black immigrant groups in the U.S. They often come to the U.S. with large amounts of human capital and earn college and advanced degrees at comparably higher rates than other immigrant groups (Kposowa, 2002). Social science research has consistently found that Black immigrants, especially those born outside the U.S., do not internalize race in the same way that multigenerational Black Americans do as they haven't grown up among non-Blacks, and do not come from countries with such a defined racial hierarchy. In the U.S., first-generation Black immigrants often distance themselves from African Americans because of the negative stereotypes associated with them (Asante et al., 2016).

In *Ethnic and Racial Identities of Second-Generation Black Immigrants in New York City* by Marcy C. Waters (1994), Waters examines the phenomenon of the second-generation immigrants changing identity from their first-generation parents. In her study, she identified three kinds of identities present in the second-generation immigrant children that were not present in their first-generation immigrant parents. She noticed that often, the second-generation children identify as Black American, a hyphenated version of their original foreign identity, and an immigrant identity (Waters, 1994). She demonstrates how the ethnic identity of second-generation immigrants, is oftentimes

more complex than those of their first-generation immigrant parents. In my own experience as a second-generation immigrant, I have found myself identifying more with the Black American plight in America when I see stories of racial inequality and bias in institutions that exist to protect and serve.

Model Minority

By studying the professional experiences of multi-generational Black American millennial women and first and second-generation immigrants from Ghana and Nigeria, I explore the plausibility of the “model minority myth”, as it applies to African immigrants. In *Black Immigrants, The Experience of Invisibility and Inequality* by Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte, he highlights the blatant inequalities between Black immigrants and other immigrants (1971). In this article, Laporte highlights how immigrant Blacks long held an elevated status over Black Americans because of the positive perceptions Whites have of English-speaking Black immigrants, skin color, and their better education and occupational outcomes relative to Black Americans (e.g., Bryce-Laporte, 1971; Gatewood, 2000; Sowell, 1978; Fordham and Ogbu 1996; Massey et al., 2003). Samuel Museus and Peter Kiang (2009) define the model minority myth and the negativity it perpetuates for Asian Americans in their article “*Deconstructing the Model Minority Myth and How It Contributes to the Invisible Minority Reality in Higher Education Research*” They explain:

the notion that Asian Americans achieve universal and unparalleled academic and occupational success. Although this myth has been cited as one reason for the invisibility of AAPIs [Asian American and Pacific Islanders] in higher education research, the absence of empirical knowledge prohibits learning about this group and helps perpetuate that stereotype, thereby forming a vicious cycle that can perpetuate ignorance and distorted perceptions of the realities that this population of college students faces. (Museus & Kiang, 2009).

Increasingly, the model minority myth is also used to describe the high professional and academic achievements of some African immigrants in the U.S. This myth differentiated African immigrants from multi-generational Black Americans by implying that they are smarter and more motivated than multi-generational Black Americans (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). Previously used to describe the experiences of Afro-Caribbean immigrants as well as Asian Americans, the notion that one group achieving high academic and professional outcomes make them the exception and not the norm, the phrase is now being used to describe African immigrants (Guo, 2017). In *Explaining Afro-Caribbean Social Mobility in the United States: Beyond the Sowell Thesis* (2002), Winston James documents how much better Afro-Caribbeans fared in the U.S. compared to their Black American counterparts in regards to discrimination and racial identity (Mosugo, 2020). The derogatory nature of the model minority myth has an inverse effect of stereotyping Black Americans as less accomplished than African/Afro-Caribbean immigrants and tries to drive a wedge between Black immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean, and multigenerational, Black, Americans (Mosugo, 2020; James, 2002; Sowell, 1988).

The New Model Minority

While examining what researchers in the field had done in relation to the model minority myth and African immigrant students, I searched for literature on the academic experiences of Ghanaian and Nigerian immigrants in the U.S. and found a research article on the factors that affect African immigrants in America. Nigerian teacher education and curriculum studies social scientist, Omiunota N. Ukpokodu's (2018) recent work, *African Immigrants, the 'New Model Minority: Examining the Reality in U.S. K-12 Schools.'*

In her article, Ukpokodu (2018) refers to African Immigrant Students (AIS) as the “new model minority,” in academic and social discussions. Ukpokodu conducted an analysis of academic records of AIS in K-12 U.S. schools to determine whether their academic outcomes exceeded those of Black students of other ethnicities. She focused her literature research on cities where the population of African immigrant students was largely represented, meaning 3,000 African immigrants or more. Ukpokodu examined data from schools in New York, Washington D.C., Boston, Philadelphia, Omaha, Houston, Charlotte, San Diego, Phoenix, and Portland. She identified 36 school districts within these cities, which had the most diverse settlements of African immigrants (2018).

Ukpokodu determined that there was not much data to “substantiate the claim” of superior academic achievements of AIS’s in U.S. schools (Ukpokodu, 2018). The results of this study were surprising to me. Although comprehensive, Ukpokodu’s literature research of existing databases could have limited the scope of her results. Her method of exclusively analyzing educational records from cities that have disaggregated African immigrant students from the overall Black student population may have influenced the results of her study. Ukpokodu’s study of African Immigrant student outcomes in the U.S. focuses on the model minority myth, whereas others tend to focus more on the career outcomes and academic outcomes without looking through the lens of the model minority myth (Njue & Retish, 2010; Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018; Stebleton, 2012). Despite the growing success and the new model minority classification, Black immigrants still share experiences of encountering microaggressions and other race-related prejudice in the workplace (Shenoy-Parker, 2015).

Microaggressions and Critical Sensemaking

Immigrant Professionals, Microaggressions, and Critical Sensemaking in the U.S. Workplace by Suchitra Shenoy-Packer (2015) is a study of the microaggressions and prejudices immigrant professionals encounter in workplaces. In a different study, Sue et al. define microaggressions as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et al., 2007). In this study, Shenoy-Packer focuses on immigrant professionals, she refers to them as IP’s, and does not specify different ethnic groups (2015). Although not specific to Black immigrants, this study effectively highlights the different microaggressions that foreign-born workers face in the U.S. workplace. This aligns with my own assumptions about the microaggressions that Black immigrant workers face.

Shenoy-Packer posits that professionals who migrate to the U.S. after working in their home countries often struggle to adapt to the U.S. corporate work environments due to their previous cultural and professional socialization. Social situations like relationships with leadership and colleagues, workplace friendships, and communication may exacerbate differences that immigrant workers may have with their American colleagues. These differences may be exacerbated by “accents and appearances, dietary restrictions, strong national culture stereotypes, general bias,” etc. (Shenoy-Packer, 2015).

This article helped provide insight into the direction I focused on how the toll of otherness and gender among African immigrants and Black women were examined in my study. Shenoy-Packer (2015) did a great job of incorporating Black immigrant voices by providing direct quotes and stories from her study participants in her study. Using this

method, she was able to provide insight using these immigrants' own words, into their experiences, and the effects of these negative experiences on their professional lives.

Emotional Tax: How Black Women and Men Pay More at Work

In their report, *Emotional Tax: How Black Women and Men Pay More at Work and How Leaders Can Take Action*, by Dnika J. Travis, PhD, Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, PhD, and Courtney McCluney, puts a name to the stressors that Black women and their male counterparts encounter in predominantly White spaces; Emotional Tax (Travis et al., 2016). In their 2016 Catalyst report, Travis et. al. defines Emotional Tax as “the heightened experience of being different from peers at work because of your gender and/or race/ethnicity and the associated detrimental effects on health, well-being, and the ability to thrive at work,” (Travis et al., 2016).

Travis et al. (2016) explain, “Data show that Emotional Tax can deplete Black employee’s sense of wellbeing by making them feel that they have to be constantly “on guard” from microaggressions, stereotype threat, and other racially based biases (Travis et al., 2016). The authors of this report intersperse their data with stories from Black men and women who speak about what has led to the stress they encounter in their workspaces and its effects on their mental health. The researchers accomplish this by including quotes from Black women and men on the impact that emotional tax has had on their workplace experiences, including anecdotes of emotional tax at work (2016).

Emotional Tax is insidious and can also be the outcome of “stereotype threat”, a term coined by psychologists Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson (1995), whose work initially focused on the experiences of Black college students at predominantly White colleges and universities and their vulnerability to confirming negative stereotypes about

their racial group (Steele et al., 2002). Stereotype threat also depresses academic achievement and work performance in contexts where the stakes are especially high; Blacks are few in number, and anxiety affects performance (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). Some empirical research on Black immigrants' vulnerability to stereotype threat has been found to be lower than that of Black Americans because it is believed that they do not internalize negative racial stereotypes about Black Americans as pertaining to them (Deaux, et. al. 2007).

In *Becoming American: Stereotype Threat Effects in Afro-Caribbean Immigrant Groups*, Kay Deaux, Nida Bikmen, Alwyn Gilkes, Ana Ventuneac, Yvanne Joseph, and Claude Steele (2007), examine the effects of stereotype threat in second-generation West Indian immigrants. In their study, Deaux et al. administered a questionnaire to 270 West Indian immigrants living in New York City. They chose New York because it has always been the go-to destination for immigrants from the Caribbean (2007). All 270 study participants were students enrolled in 4-year institutions within the City University of New York (CUNY) system. They chose students who identified in their university records as having West Indian heritage and asked the students to answer questions pertaining to the "favorability of African American and West Indian stereotypes". This is similar to what I hoped to examine in this study, but with more specificity towards African American and first and second-generation African immigrant millennial women from Ghana and Nigeria. In the next section, I examine the importance of the awareness of the social identity threat to Black women in corporate spaces.

Stereotype Threat—Social Identity Threat

Stereotype threat has been found to depress academic achievement and work performance in contexts where the stakes are especially high; Blacks are few, and anxiety affects performance (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). When stereotype threat is “in the air,” productivity declines, and individuals risk actualizing a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’; individual performance declines and they unfortunately are vulnerable to confirming the stereotype about their group. Stereotype threat in America has been studied extensively, and its effects on Black, Asian, and Hispanic Americans is influential when it comes to academic and professional performance (Massey et al., 2003).

In Chapter 7 of their book, *The Source of the River: The Social Origins of Freshmen at America's Selective Colleges and Universities* by Douglas S. Massey, Camille Z. Charles, Garvey Lundy, and Mary J. Fisher, *Racial Identity and Attitudes*, Massey et al. highlight the differences in racial self-identify and attitudes between Americans of color and White Americans. They explain, “The process of identity construction begins early in life and continues into adulthood. It requires young minority members to confront the negative stereotypes that still pervade society, to resist internalizing the negative self-perceptions that they imply, and to assert confidently a positive ethnic definition of oneself (Tatum, 1997)” (2003).

These negative stereotypes, although not always explicitly thought about on a daily basis, lead to a lack of confidence in schools and later in workplaces, when people of color work in environments where they are hyper aware of how they are perceived by others (Massey et al. 2003).

Some empirical research on Black immigrants' vulnerability to stereotype threat suggests that first-generation Black immigrants are less vulnerable to the stereotype threat than African Americans because they do not internalize negative racial stereotypes about Black Americans as pertaining to them (Deaux et al., 2007). On the other hand, second-generation Black immigrants, because of the process of assimilation into Black American culture over time, are more likely, than first-generation African immigrants, to internalize these negative racial stereotypes, and are therefore more likely to experience stereotype threats (2007).

Stereotype Threat in Gender

We can also see stereotypes present across gender lines. In *Stereotype Threat and Women's Math Performance*, Steven Spencer, Claude Steele, and Diane Quinn (1999) found that there is substantial work on women's vulnerability to stereotype threat when they are called upon to do tasks where men are supposed to do better, such as math (Spencer et al., 1999). These women are in a field where they are the "other," not unlike with Black immigrants in predominantly white corporate America, and therefore feel an emotional burden due to that fact. Newer research also finds that women experience stereotype threat in executive roles because of their underrepresentation as leaders in corporate America (Bergeron et al., 2006). This study focused on the effects of stereotype threat in gender, not race, However, their findings are still beneficial to the discussion on how stereotypes threaten Black women since there is an intersectionality of race and gender present in this discussion.

Although research has shown that Black women in corporate America encounter Emotional Tax and stereotype threats, recent research also finds that Black immigrant

women earn comparatively higher salaries than both Black American women and white American women, respectively (Nawyn & Park, 2019). Stephanie Nawyn and Julie Park in their article, *Gendered segmented assimilation: Earning trajectories of African immigrant women and men*, highlight statistics suggesting that Black immigrant women are now the highest-paid immigrant group in the U.S. In their longitudinal study of the earning trajectories of African immigrant men and women, Stephanie Nawyn and Julie Park (2017) found that between 1990 and 2010, Black African women's wages increased from \$17,727 to \$40,699 (Nawyn & Park, 2019). They use economic data to suggest that there are "simultaneous effects of gender and race on immigrant economic assimilation" (2019). This study shows how quickly the African Black women population is achieving economic success in the U.S. and is therefore achieving a sense of assimilation through economic upward mobility.

The racial stratification by earnings that they explored across racial and gender lines are vital to understanding the economic impact of African women in the U.S. (2019). By also gaining high economic mobility, the barrier to quality schooling for children of immigrants, and the benefits of economic mobility, such as social upward mobility, etc., will continue to trickle down and benefit subsequent generations, such as the second-generation and more (2019). My study explores whether this is present in the second-generation women interviewed.

Black and African in America

The Black immigrant population in the U.S. has risen from 130,00 in 1980 to roughly 2.1 million as of 2017 (Zog & Batalo, 2014; Mosugu, 2020; Reese, 2017). With such a growth in the Black immigrant population, and the economic and academic

success of this population in recent years (Nawyn & Park, 2019), one can't help but wonder at the relationship between the Black immigrant population and the multigenerational Black American population. There have been studies on the differences between Afro-Caribbean immigrants' social mobility in the U.S., to that of their Black Americans counterparts, James *Explaining Afro-Caribbean Social Mobility in the United States: Beyond the Sowell Thesis* (2002) being an example of this. There has also been works on the acculturation process first-generation African immigrants often have to go through in order to assimilate into the U.S. culture, all while still maintaining the identity of their home country (Kabuiku, 2017). In contrast, second-generation Black immigrants are often caught between two worlds, immigrants and Americans. Research reveals that they have mixed experiences with how they experience and personalize race as a central component of their identity as well as how they internalize racism and discrimination (Kebede, 2018). The study presented in this capstone will also confirm what others have realized, that the identity struggle of the second-generation immigrant is very much different from the first-generation (2018).

Earning Power

David Reese, in the article, "*African Immigrants Doing Well in the U.S.*", reveals that the earnings of Black immigrant men and women in the U.S. has eclipsed that of U.S.-born men and women (2017). Reese believes the reason for the outpacing of the Black immigrant population to the U.S.-born population to be Black African women immigrants having a college education, compared to 27% of White U.S. born women, and 17% of Black women born in the U.S. (Reese, 2017). This significant increase in income for Black immigrants indicates that some African immigrants have higher buying

power than African immigrants in the U.S. with the most notable increase in buying power of Black women (Reese, 2017; American Community Survey, 2015; New American Economy. 2018). In his study, Reese explains that “thirty-seven percent of black African female immigrants have a college education, compared to 27 percent of white women born in the United States and 17 percent of Black, U.S.-born women,” (Reese, 2017).

Power of the Purse

Reese’s study showcases the importance of this overlooked, often invisible minority group and how vital they are to the economic health of the country. LeanIn.org’s report, *Black Women Aren’t Paid Fairly, and That Hits Harder in an Economic Crisis* (2021), Black women earn 38% less than white men and 21% less than white women. Even when we consider Black women with higher education degrees as African immigrants from Ghana and Nigeria are applauded for having, Black women still make \$0.62 for every \$1 that White men make, whereas White women make \$0.79. According to the report, “Black women enroll in college at higher rates than men overall and—most notably—at higher rates than white men, but the gap is largest for Black women who have bachelor’s degrees and advanced degrees,” black women still make “35% less than white men on average (2021).

Much has been written about the earning’s gap since the 1980s, but the problem persists (Johnson & Neal, 1997; Blau & Beller, 1991; Kim, 2009). This difference in earnings, despite the high educational outcomes that Black women have achieved over the last decades, has led to many Black women facing, “gender and race–gender interaction penalties,” meaning that as double minorities, being both Black and women,

Black women face the penalties that all women face, such as discrimination based on gender and lower wages, while also facing racial discrimination. As opposed to simply racial penalties Black men face, and the gender penalties White women face (Kim, 2009).

As evidenced in the 2020 Presidential election, Black women are a key voting block that consistently votes in large numbers. As immigrants become naturalized U.S. citizens, this group of eligible Black women voters is increasing. Economic stability and prosperity correlate with political representation, civic involvement, social awareness, and power (New American Economy, 2018). According to a January 2018 report on “Power of the Purse: How Sub-Saharan African Contribute to the U.S. Economy” by the New American Economy Research Fund, “African immigrants earned \$55.1 billion in 2015. Their households paid \$10.1 billion in federal taxes and \$4.7 billion in state and local taxes – giving African immigrants an estimated spending power of more than \$40.3 billion that year” (New American Economy, 2018).

These statistics suggest that Black women from all origins play a major part in the American experience, even if we are only looking at economic factors (Reese, 2017). Many employers and employees have interacted at one point or another with immigrant workers and although many White Americans are unaware of the significant cultural differences amongst the different immigrant groups, such as the cultural differences present in interpersonal interactions. In order to make themselves more attractive to a diverse group of workers, companies must account for diversity in their willingness to help all workers feel comfortable in the workplace.

Black immigrant women are incredibly vital to the labor force. They participate in the U.S. labor force at higher rates than any other immigrant group. African immigrant

women over the age of 16 represented 69.2% of the labor force in 2015 compared to 58.6% of U.S.-born women of all other racial and ethnic groups (New American Economy, 2018). As the country steadily moves towards addressing racial injustice and corporate America develops new ways to address Black inequality, company diversity, equity, and inclusion policies beneficial to Black women's successes must focus more on the multidimensionality of Blackness in the U.S. They must also focus on how other various social identities including gender, nativity, and immigrant status affect career trajectories, coalition building, and perceptions of inclusion, more broadly. By creating spaces in corporate America where employees of all races and genders feel safe, corporate leaders are ensuring that they live up to the many promises they often make, about expanding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts in their companies.

Black Lives Matter and DEI Accountability

Since the most recent resurgence of the Black Lives Matter Movement and protests of the summer of 2020, spurred by the murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, there have been increases in DEI conversations in leadership spaces all over America. Stephanie Resnick and John C. Fuller highlight the increasing instances of U.S. states enacting statutes that would require more diversity on Boards. In their article, *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Meeting New Demands—and Requirements—for Accountability* (2021). Since protests all around the nation centered on racial equity and an end to systemic injustice, many companies publicly spoke about their commitment to bringing a DEI focus to their hiring practices. However, more than a year later, many companies failed to live up to the public promises they made in response to the deaths of Floyd and Taylor and are now having to take accountability for their inaction (2021). In

order to be more competitive with job seekers, companies need to realize the differences in attitudes and perceptions of people within different ethnic and generational groups.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In considering this subject area and through several failed library searches, I realized there was a dearth of organizational and social science research on Black immigrants in the corporate mainstream. As a second-generation, Ghanaian American, millennial woman, this capstone reveals the burgeoning diversity of the millennial workforce of which Black immigrants are a part. I was greatly interested in speaking with the women that I interviewed, and I believe this subject area is of importance to creating more understanding of workplace diversity. In order to break down barriers and ensure full inclusion and involvement for all women of color, organizations and corporate leaders must learn more about the racial, ethnic, and class diversity of the contemporary Black populace in the U.S.

Core Structure of this Study

This chapter focuses on the research methodology utilized, and how I built my sample in line with my research questions. In Chapter Four, I analyze the data and examine the research participants' workplace experiences and how they relate to Emotional Tax, Stereotype Threat, and the model minority stereotype in the corporate mainstream.

Stereotype threat is defined as “the resulting sense that one can then be judged or treated in terms of the stereotype or that one might do something that would inadvertently confirm it” (Steele et al., 2002). Emotional Tax is described “as the heightened experience of being different from peers at work because of your gender and/or race/ethnicity and the associated detrimental effects on health, well-being, and the ability

to thrive at work” (Travis, 2016; Footman, 2020). The model minority myth describes has more often been used to describe Asian Americans, however, it has recently been used to describe the success of integration into American society by African immigrants (Gupta et al., 2011).

Admission Criteria

By studying first and second-generation immigrants of Ghanaian and Nigerian descent, I am studying the two ethnic groups that I am most familiar with. Although fraught at times, the relationship and similarities in food, music, and culture between the West African countries of Ghana and Nigeria are well documented (Otoghile, & Obakhedo, 2011; Fayomi, 2013; Kraus, 2002). Because of this good-natured love-hate relationship between Ghana and Nigeria, my social networks include same-age, co-ethnic peers from both countries. Focusing on this group that I am most familiar with, the criteria for admission into the study were as follows:

- The study participants had to be Black, millennial women born between 1981–1996. They had to self-identify as being a member of one of these three groups,
 - 1) multi-generational, native-born Black-Americans,
 - 2) first-generation immigrants from Ghana or Nigeria (migrated to the US from Ghana or Nigeria, not born in the U.S.), or
 - second-generation immigrant from Ghana or Nigeria (born in the United States and has at least one parent who migrated to the US from Ghana or Nigeria).

The participants also had to confirm that they had at least three years of work experience in corporate America. Only those who met all these criteria were included in the study. I chose to compare the experiences of millennial Black-American, first and second-generation Ghanaian, and Nigerian women because Black women are a pivotal part of the American experience, professionally, economically, and politically, as discussed in Chapter Two.

After establishing the criteria for participant recruitment, the study participants were recruited, using a recruitment script and poster, through social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook, and were asked to complete an initial demographic survey that collected information about their eligibility to participate in the interview phase of the study. Using the snowball sampling method which Leo A. Goodman in *Snowball Sampling* (1961), defines as a random sample of individuals who are selected from a finite population, who are then asked to name a certain number of different individuals within the population, and so on. Participants who took part in the interview process were also asked to forward the study information to their friends or co-workers who met the study criteria. Participants, who met the study criteria on the demographic survey, were asked if they wanted to move forward with the interview.

Participants who elected to be contacted via email for 30 to 60 minute virtual interviews using the Zoom virtual meeting platform. Interviews were conducted from January 2020 through April 2020. Ten interviews were conducted in total, five interviews with multi-generational Black-American women, and five with first or second-generation Black women from Ghana and Nigeria. During the time of their interviews, all

participants were millennials born between 1981 through 1996 and all had three or more years of full-time work experience. (See Table 1)

Pseudonym	Year Born	Generational Status	Ethnicity	Industry
Emma	1991	1 st gen immigrant	Ghanaian	Public Health/Nursing
Zeze	1984	1 st gen immigrant	Nigerian	Manufacturing
Dami	1993	1 st gen immigrant	Nigerian	Analytics
Susie	1992	2 nd gen immigrant	Ghanaian American	Medicine
Chimamanda	1986	2 nd gen immigrant	Nigerian American	Legal
Mary	1991	No	Black/African American	Higher Education
Kayla	1987	No	Black/African American	Banking
Ashley	1995	No	Black/African American	Telecom Startup
Desi	1993	No	Black/African American	Public relations
Abbi	1982	No	Black/African American	Consulting

Capstone Interview Guide

Using an interview guide that was created for this study, I examined the differences with Black Americans and first-generation immigrants, as well identify other nuanced differences, and the second-generation group, that has already begun to socially

and behaviorally assimilate more with the Black American group. In the interview guide, I asked the interview participants for information on their family background, community and neighborhood, high school and university, social dynamics and race relations in the workplace, and perceptions of race and gender in the workplace. I anticipated there would be more of a stark difference between the Black American women and the first-generation women, but not as much between the Black American women and the second-generation women, who I believed would be more assimilated into Black American culture (Karthick Ramakrishnan, 2004).

Data Protection and Confidentiality

The data from the interview recordings were collected, de-identified, and securely stored to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. After analyzing the data, all the transcripts were deleted. I used the Otter.ai transcription software to transcribe the interview recordings and stored this data securely for possible future analysis. Because this is a qualitative study, I use inductive coding techniques consistent with the grounded theory approach in sociology to analyze the data in line with the themes of this research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Grounded Theory

Because this is a qualitative study, I use inductive coding techniques consistent with the grounded theory approach in sociology to analyze the data in line with the themes of this research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin 2008). The grounded theory method was developed by sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967 and is a method for developing theories that are grounded in data (Glaser & Strauss,

1967). I was able to catalog the data using open coding, axial coding, selective coding consistent with the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Research Limitations

In this study, the focus was on emotional tax, stereotype threat, and the model minority stereotype in first and second-generation millennial Ghanaian and Nigerian Black immigrant women, and Black American women. Future researchers could interview a sample larger than I did and could try to study areas such as the perceptions that these three groups of women have of each other, competitiveness among Black women in predominantly White spaces, and more. Much richer data could be obtained with a larger number of study participants.

CHAPTER 4

STUDY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Data Analysis

The data from this study was collected and analyzed using qualitative interview methods and the grounded theory approach. The interview guide, script, transcripts, are attached in the Appendix section. I created a database of the participant's demographic information and for some of the more quantifiable data, using open and axial coding techniques from the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The following section will showcase the study findings and analysis, in addition to research limitations.

In their own words

During the initial recruitment phase of my study, I shared the demographic recruitment survey on social media. I was surprised to see the survey participants, not just filling out their demographic information, but also effusively sharing their own personal stories of microaggressions, prejudice and other racially motivated moments in their current and/or previous places of employment. While the purpose of the survey was to devise a representative sample size for the in-depth interviews, I include some of the survey data here. Included in the Table 2 below is a complete list of racially themed negative experiences from the survey participants.

Table 2

Have you encountered microaggressions, prejudice, or racism in your workplace?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Lower salary than my white counterparts with similar experience.” ● “We gathered for a quick huddle with five participants including myself, three whites, a Latino and myself. Everyone gave their ideas and opinions but when I was about to speak, one of the Caucasians interrupted stating we were out of time.” ● “Some patients and staff members disregard my level of experience and education and would always ask questions to my white coworkers who would, in turn, come to me for answers.” ● “A patient made a racist comment to me, and my white colleague did not defend me.” ● “Tend to have more questions about my work and people tend to want to tell me how to do my job even though I have exceeded performance continuously each year.” ● “My work has a client-facing component. I was once presenting data to a client, who was a white older (50 yr. old) male. He commented that he just could not follow my description of how the data was compiled and presented. Once a white said exactly what I said in his white voice, it was an audio-only call, the client cheered that he now understood. People that were in the room with me for that call all looked at me with faces of pity that had to experience this situation.” ● “In the wording and certain phrases being used!” ● “I experience microaggressions surrounding my name.” ● “I was told by a General Manager of a hotel that my natural hair was only professional when in a bun. Most racially motivated interactions are in regards to the appearance of myself or staff, making subtly racist comments about those who apply for positions and “not a good fit” or “communication style not professional.” ● “Speaking in a Black accent. Obsession with my hair.” ● “A co-worker expressed when she walks down a street and sees a Black man walking down that same street, she crosses the street in fear...this same coworker asked me how I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “A white male coworker commenting on my hair in a negative way.” ● “People are surprised at how knowledgeable I am at my job and also comment on how well I speak.” ● “Faced pushback trying to get MLK day recognized as a holiday.” ● “One of my colleagues told me he wasn’t attracted to black women, but he had a wet dream about me.” ● “Marketing dept has quietly advised leadership that saying the phrase “Black Lives Matter” is controversial--even when addressing the protests; HR talking about my afro: “how did you get your hair that way? It looks so fun! Oh, I didn’t know it was just like that! It reminds me of the 80s?” Colleagues have put their hands in my hair; in the middle of a Black city, and out of 80-90 employees, about 12 are black; a director insisted having to make room for non-whites in a white-dominated field was asking him to do more than a job should ask of someone--he still manages a team and external partnerships; leader thanked law enforcement in a public statement after BLM protests; leadership planned a pep talk for Black employees so we could know we could be anything we wanted to be. I’ll stop.” ● “Several coworkers describing work items as “ghetto”; one coworker mentioning she was so tan she was Black; a statistician asking if my hair was real and then grabbing it.” ● “I was working for a different institution at the time, but I was told by one of my White counterparts that I wasn’t allowed to use Ebonics when speaking to my students; though she had never heard me use Ebonics prior to that moment.” ● “In my office I am the only black person with 4 Hispanic people. There are a lot of comments made about the way me and my students dress or talk. I was told not to use terms like HBCU because they are “negative”, our participant and student employee handbooks are written to exclude a large amount of culturally acceptable clothing or hairstyles.” ● “People of color at my workplace were given additional training and support regardless of their academic achievements. A supervisor
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<p>felt about the 'n word' and proceeded to use the word after I expressed, I don't use it, nor do I like when others use the word.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “When being assertive it’s viewed as aggressive. I remember being pulled into a meeting that had other experts in it to challenge a decision I was making as the decision-maker for that situation. I stood my ground because I strongly felt I was right. But any time I challenged their way of thinking even though I was not angry I would be asked to calm down.” ● “Looks and actions.” ● “When bosses favor white workers over Black workers doing the same mistakes.” ● “A manager screamed at me: ‘Did I know how to read?’ when I put the wrong date in front of the whole office.” 	<p>explained to me that this support existed because people of color needed more “reform” in order to make it in a corporate setting.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “No one ever thinks I’m a lawyer. Most assume I am a secretary, paralegal, or lost.” ● “On occasion, the ideas, solutions, or directives were dismissed until someone else provided the exact same answer, solution, or directive or referred back to me for the same original idea, solution, or directive.” ● “Sharing cultural commonalities with the people we serve is called favoritism by white coworkers.” ● “A white woman assuming I am a delivery woman from Panera.”
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Table 2 shows that almost 52 women who completed the demographic survey had a negative racially motivated experience that led to increases in anxiety and stress in their respective workplaces. The Emotional Tax (Travis, 2016; Footman, 2020) that many Black women pay, when working in corporate settings is far too prevalent and can lead to increased stress and depression. Many Black women in corporate America face Imposter Syndrome as some point in their careers (Wright, 2021).

Imposter Syndrome

LaShawnda Fields and Renee Cunningham-Williams define imposter syndrome in, *Experiences With Imposter Syndrome and Authenticity at Research-Intensive Schools of Social Work: A Case Study on Black Female Faculty* (2021), as “one’s hesitation in believing they are as intelligent, skilled, and deserving of their success as their colleagues and often believe this unfounded truth will be discovered by others at any moment.” (Fields, & Cunningham-Williams, 2021; Abdelaal, 2020; Clance & Imes, 1978). Feeling

out of place and as if you are not meant to be in a space, adds to the emotional tax that Black women face, and makes them start to doubt their own abilities and start feeling like an imposter. All 10 women interviewed, in addition to the 42 others who were either unavailable to be interviewed or requested not to be interviewed, had at least one experience of feeling extra pressure being Black in predominantly White workplaces.

Family background

After the ten participants were selected from the group of 52, I met with them on Zoom to ask questions following my interview guides (See Appendix B). During the first part of the interview, I collected information on the participant's family origins and early childhood experiences to acquire a thorough understanding of their early life experiences, and how these experiences may have affected their educational and professional trajectories. Table 2 below shows an interesting correlation between the three groups and their socio-economic status, in relation to their educational and professional outcomes. Table 2 also highlights the participant's generational statuses, family type, years in the U.S., and the origin of their parents. Most of the immigrants were raised in two-parent households, whereas most of the African Americans were raised in single-family households (Massey et al. 2003; Charles et al. 2009). Table 2 below shows that all five of the first and second-generation immigrants were raised in a two-parent household, in comparison to the multigenerational Black Americans, where only one of the five was raised in a two-parent household.

Pseudonym	Family Type	Generational Status	Years in the U.S.	Parents Origin
Emma	Blended (Stepmother & Father)	1 st gen immigrant	10 > years	Both parents born abroad
Zeze	2 Parent (Mother & Father)	1 st gen immigrant	10 > years	Both parents born abroad
Dami	2 Parent (Mother & Father)	1 st gen immigrant	< 5 years	Both parents born abroad
Susie	2 Parent (Mother & Father)	2 nd gen immigrant	N/A, Born and raised in US	Both parents born abroad
Chimamanda	2 Parent (Mother & Father)	2 nd gen immigrant	N/A, Born and raised in US	Both parents born abroad
Mary	Single Mother	No	N/A	Both parents born in the United States
Kayla	Single Mother	No	N/A	Both parents born in the United States
Ashley	2 Parent (Mother & Father)	No	N/A	Both parents born in the United States
Desi	Single Mother	No	N/A	Both parents born in the United States
Abbi	Single Father	No	N/A	Both parents born in the United States

Community/Neighborhood & Social Class

To acquire a deeper understanding on how the participant's perceptions of race and prejudice are formed before they leave for college and start to work, I asked participants about the racial compositions of their neighborhoods and schools while they were growing up. In all the interviews, participants discussed how the racial and ethnic compositions of their childhoods factored into their college decisions when trying to determine which institution to attend and where. In Table 3, we can see the racial compositions of the neighborhood the participants grew up in, and how it differs from the current neighborhoods; they chose to live in (See Table 3). For participants who attended high school in predominantly White neighborhoods, in making the decision to go to a university, diversity in the student body and professors was a major factor.

Although finances played a part in what colleges they attended, culture and the promise of socializing with like-minded individuals also played a part (Griffin et al., 2012). Two out of the three participants who grew up in predominantly White neighborhoods chose to live in racially integrated neighborhoods in adulthood. Meaning the neighborhood had a diverse representation of Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian populations. This contrasts with the five participants who grew up in predominantly Black neighborhoods. Three of them now live in racially integrated neighborhoods and two now live in predominantly White neighborhoods. These results show that for six out of the eight participants who grew up in a community or neighborhood that leaned heavily in one direction, White or Black, living in a community that was more racially integrated was important.

As far as the changes in social class in childhood and adulthood, those were more varied. One interesting factor with the participant's social class was that all five of the

first and second-generation immigrants reported having grown up in either upper class, upper middle, or middle-class households; none reported having grown up in lower-class households. Whereas with the Black American participants, one reported growing up in an upper-middle-class household, one reported growing up middle class, two reported growing up in lower-middle-class households, and one reported growing up in a lower-class household. The Black American participants, however, did show more of an increase in their social classes from childhood to adulthood. Three out of the five reported going from lower or lower-middle class to middle class, however, one reported staying in the middle class, and one other reported going from upper middle class, when living with her family, to middle-class once she no longer received financial support from her parents. Conversely, two of the Black immigrant participants who identified as going up upper middle class, both of Nigerian descent, described going from upper middle to middle class, one described going from upper to upper middle class, and the remaining two described maintaining the same middle class as in childhood.

Pseudonym	Racial composition of Neighborhood Growing up	Racial Composition of Current Neighborhood	Childhood Social Status	Current Social Status
Emma	Predominantly Black	Racially integrated *	Middle	Middle
Zeze	Predominantly Black	Racially integrated	Upper Middle	Middle
Dami	Predominantly Black	Racially integrated	Upper	Upper-Middle
Susie	Predominantly White	Racially integrated	Middle	Middle
Chimamanda	Predominantly White	Racially integrated	Upper Middle	Middle
Mary	Predominantly White	Predominantly White	Lower Middle	Middle
Kayla	Predominantly Black	Predominantly White	Lower	Middle
Ashley	Predominantly Black	Predominantly White	Upper Middle	Middle
Desi	Predominantly Hispanic and Black	Racially integrated	Lower Middle	Middle
Abbi	Mixed (White, Black, Hispanic and Asian)	Predominantly White	Middle	Middle

* Racially integrated in this study means that an individual's neighborhood is between 31-50% Black and Latino, 40% black, 40% white, and 20% other. (As outlined in Massey et al. 2003 and Massey et al. 2007)

High school and University

In this section of the interview, I obtained information about participants' high school and college/university experiences. For those who identified as first or second-generation immigrants, I asked specific questions about whether they went to schools abroad or in the U.S., the racial composition of their schools, friend groups, etc. Further

questions about their experiences in universities abroad or in the U.S. and their perceptions of their Blackness while in these environments were asked as relevant, as shown in Table #5. All five of the first and second-generation Ghanaian and Nigerian immigrants had a bachelor's degree or more. With four out of the five achieving masters, doctorate, or professional degrees (e.g., JD or MD). In contrast, four out of the five Black American participants had a bachelor's degree or more. One had some college experience but had not been able to graduate, three had bachelor's degrees, and one had a master's degree.

Pseudonym	Country of High School	Country of University/ College	Racial Composition of High School	Racial Composition of University/College	Racial Composition of Friends	Highest Degree Achieved
Emma	Abroad	US	Predominantly Black & Hispanic	Predominantly White	Mixed, mostly Asian and African	Bachelors
Zeze	Abroad	US	Predominantly Black (Private School)	Predominantly Black (HBCU)	Mostly African Immigrants and Asian	Masters/Professional degree
Dami	Abroad	Abroad	Predominantly Black (Private School)	Predominantly White and Asian	Nigerian and Asian	Masters/Professional degree
Susie	US	US	Predominantly White	Predominantly White	Mostly Black (West Indian & African)	Doctorate
Chimamanda	US	US	Predominantly White (Private School)	Predominantly White	Mixed	Masters/Professional degree
Mary	US	US	Predominantly White	Mixed	Black (African American and some African)	Bachelors

Kayla	US	US	Predominantly Black & Hispanic	Mixed	Black (African American and some African)	Some College
Ashley	US	US	Predominantly White (Private School)	Predominantly White (Ivy)	Mostly Nigerian and White	Bachelors
Desi	US	US	Mostly Hispanic, Asian, and Black	Predominantly White	Mixed (White, Black, Asian, Hispanic)	Bachelors
Abbi	US	US	Predominantly White (Private School)	Predominantly White	Mixed (Black, Hispanic, Asian)	Masters/Professional degree

A reason one of the Black American participants, Mary, identified why she had not been as interested in college growing up, was that she did not have much support from the adults in her life, because they had not had much college support either growing up.

When I look at my parents, my parents didn't graduate from high school. My dad got his GED eventually. My grandma got her GED obviously because she ended up working at social services, but she didn't get her associate degree. I don't know if she never got her associate degree, and my dad only got his associate's degree. And it honestly took me this long to even say "I'm technically a first-gen student."

In describing the lack of support she received with applying to colleges, Mary, a higher education professional of Black-American descent, who identified as being raised in a lower middle-class household by her grandmother mentions:

So, when it came to applying to colleges, I pretty much just did that on a whim. Honestly, I did. I took my SATs once, and I did horrible and I said "I will never ever sit in that classroom and take them again" and I didn't. I should have but nobody encouraged me to do anything different. They just...when I said Grandma, I need to take SATs, she said okay, and I might have driven myself at

that point. And that was it. I took it. Nobody asked me what the scores were. My grandma never asked me twice about the SAT, I just took it and nobody at school, no guidance counselor, no teacher, nothing, no one said to me, “hey, maybe you should take it again.” No, I just took it once and that was it. And I applied to the colleges, and when I picked my college, I honestly just said, “I just want to get away from home,” I didn't look at the program that they offered. I didn't even know what I really wanted to do when I went to college. I just picked the major and went out with it. And that's why my blacktail came home, okay. I only did one year my first time at college. The first time I went to college I stopped out after the first year. And then I didn't go back for years. I stopped out and then I didn't go back to college until I was 22.

Although it took her a bit longer than most, Mary graduated from college with a bachelor's degree, while raising a child as a single mother, and is now set to graduate with her master's degree.

Social dynamics and race relations in the workplace

Over the course of the study, I worked to build a comfortable rapport with each participant. They were quite direct when detailing how they were impacted by the social and racial dynamics at their workplace. In trying to get the participants to feel comfortable with me to share their workplace experiences, both positive and negative, I tried to avoid adding my own input into the conversations and avoided steering the conversation in a way that would affect the data. Checking my own researcher bias was pivotal to collecting accurate data from the ten women (Baldwin et al., 2022).

“You should just keep your head down and keep working.”

Most time of each interview was spent on the section discussing the participant's perceptions of race and gender in their workplaces, and how they believed identifying as a Black woman affected their workplace experiences. Although the questions in this section were no longer than those in the other sections of the interview guide, participants had more to share about their professional experiences, which resulted in longer

conversations. As the researcher, I allowed the participants to share as much as they wanted, without adding any of my own input or experiences, in order to minimize any bias in the data.

In describing one instance of workplace bias she faced as a young Black woman in her first corporate environment, Ashley, a Black American participant mentioned:

My first teammate there, we worked most closely together, just wasn't a very good person. And I didn't even realize that until a year in when he got switched to working with someone else. And they were immediately like, "this isn't okay, this behavior is not okay." He was just extremely sexist and would take credit for things that he didn't do. He would call our vendors that were women derogatory language and didn't want to train new women hires and all these things. He eventually got fired. And afterwards, this was all coming out and everyone was like, "Ashley, you worked with him for over a year." And I literally just thought that this is how men acted in corporate settings and I was not surprised by any of this behavior and just continued day-to-day like everything was fine. But it wasn't fine. And that was a good learning lesson...

Ashley went on to state:

My manager at the time, she managed both of us and she ended up leaving the company. And on her last day, I told her that my teammate wasn't a great teammate, and she was like, "you shouldn't say anything you should just keep your head down and keep working. See if there is anything you can learn from him because of how good his relationship is with the director of the team." A horrible thing to say to a woman who is at her first job and a corporate office, but that was that.

In looking for her next position after this employer, Ashley stated that she looked for a place in a company that valued diversity. She mentioned wanting to work in an environment where Black women were valued, and she states she found that in her current employer.

“I think they would behave differently if I was a white woman.”

Gender biases and how they affect their workplace experiences for American women have been studied extensively (Parmer, 2021). The effects of gender bias on Black women have also been studied, (Crown et al., 2021). In speaking with Chimamanda, a lawyer who is also a second-generation Nigerian American, I was not surprised to hear that she had encountered similar inappropriate behavior from her male colleagues. I was also interesting to hear her speak about the intersection of race and gender:

I think they would behave differently if I was a white woman than if I was..., so even though there are certain things that are based on my sex, I think that the way I would approach them is different because I'm a Black woman. Whereas I noticed certain other white women tried to be more assertive and more aggressive, I think if I were to do this same, it would come off as very displeasing to my colleagues because of the assumption that my emotions are somehow stronger than they should be or something. I try to push myself in the direction of being jovial rather than being upset, because once I take that tone with people when I am upset, or where I am trying to advocate for myself, for some, that can be perceived that way. So that's something I always have to kind of make sure I'm not doing too much of. If I were a white woman, I wouldn't have to do that at all, maybe I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong. I don't know that experience but that's kind of how see things.

Zeze, a first-generation immigrant from Nigeria, who attended a university in the U.S., and now works in the engineering field, detailed her own experience with gender bias in a male-dominated field when she was passed over for a promotion in favor of a less experienced, White, male, colleague:

You know, they promoted me last year. So that's a good sign that they want me to be here. But I did have a situation for that. Oh, my goodness. Yeah, so, um, my previous manager left. And the person that got promoted above me. Was someone with maybe five years of work experience and I'd been working for 12 years, White male, only had like two years of experience in the industry, doesn't know anything about the work and doesn't have an engineering background. So I was really pissed off. And I did have a couple of HR conversations. So I think part of it is like, okay, I'm happy they promoted me [afterwards]. But they didn't promote me right away. What ended up happening is they thought he was ready. Okay, I

think I'm ready too. But [later,] another high performer in the company left. And then they're like, "Oh, this person left and so we're trying to reshuffle everything and so here's a promotion." So they promoted me. But they didn't give me the title. So, I was also pissed off about that. They had some explanation for it saying this is a new company culture; I accepted it.

While the issue of gender bias was present in all ten of the interviews, stereotype threat was more present in eight out of the ten interviews. The two who did not identify as having dealt with stereotype threat were a first-generation Ghanaian immigrant woman and a first-generation Nigerian immigrant woman.

"I think when he hired me, he thought I was going to be a certain type of black woman."

Going into this study, I did not think that African immigrant women would experience stereotype threat to the same degree as the multigenerational Black Americans in predominantly White workplaces; they don't necessarily experience race as their paramount identity, and literature suggests that first-generation Black immigrants especially, distance themselves from Black Americans (Kebede, 2018; Waters, 1990). In my own experience as a second-generation Ghanaian American immigrant, I have felt as though my White supervisors and co-workers open up more quickly to me because of my "ethnic-sounding" name. They often ask me about the origins of my unique name, which then sparks conversation about my family, and life back in Ghana. Therefore, I wasn't surprised when I asked interview participants the question "Do you feel like you have to present yourself differently from your White co-workers?" all five Ghanaian and Nigerian immigrants said no, whereas all but one of the five Black Americans said yes. Dami, a first-generation immigrant from Nigeria who works in Analytics stated "Um, not

so much. I feel comfortable presenting myself exactly as I am.” In contrast, Desi, a multi-generational Black American in the field of Public Relations responded:

I do feel like I have to prove myself. I don't know if it's because of race or because I haven't been there that long; probably for the two. But, yeah I do feel like I have to prove myself like--what I said sometimes I work until eight o'clock at night.

All ten women felt as though while at work, they had to put their best foot forward, in order to be more palatable to their White managers and co-workers. Kayla, a Black American woman who works in banking remarked:

--the way I'm talking to you now, I would never talk to anybody at work like this, like, never, never. So, to them, I'm more shy and quiet, stay to myself. That's what I want y'all to know me as. Y'all won't get this. You won't.

This sentiment was also expressed by Chimamanda, the second-generation Nigerian American attorney. Chimamanda lamented about the many experiences she has faced when trying to walk into the courtroom to argue a case. I asked her what she would say to other Black women trying to get into law:

Be very self-aware because something as simple as if my hair is different, people I work with, that I've worked with for two years, might not recognize me. If I walk into a courtroom, the first question I'm asked is: Ma'am...Are you in the wrong place? People are immediately asking me whether I belong there because I'm not an older white male, which is what 90% of litigators are...I'm in litigation. I used to prosecute cases, now I defend, you know, litigation in trial. So, people are very surprised to see me. Mostly Black people are very surprised to see me. When I walk into a deposition, I'm asked if I'm the stenographer. Nobody ever believes I'm an attorney.

Second-generation immigrants, who are raised by at least one foreign-born parent, as Chimamanda was, often struggle with their identity as not fully immigrant, and not fully integrated (Kebede, 2018; Waters, 1990). Coupled with this struggle, is the pressure from their first-generation immigrant parents to achieve at a higher level than they did. In the cases of Nigerian and Ghanaian immigrants, this is often reflected in their parents'

desire for their children to take on high prestige careers in fields such as medicine, engineering, and law (Anekwe, 2008; Mosugu, 2020).

Similarly, in speaking with Abbi, a Black-American Consulting Entrepreneur with years of experience in predominantly White workplaces, she discussed both the positive and negative experiences she had over the years. During our conversation, Abbi expressed that her first two employers were inclusive, open, and nurturing but that she had been fired from her third employer because her coworkers found her “enthusiasm to be threatening.” She also revealed that she had been made to resign from her fourth position because of conflicts with her older, White, male, supervisor. Abbi, a Black American woman, considers herself to be an outspoken, confident Black woman; she acknowledged that she has never “muted” herself for the sake of other people. Because of this, she stated that she believed her White co-workers often saw her as the stereotypical angry Black woman. Abbi shared that they told leadership that after years of working with her, they were now, “afraid to be in the same room” as her.

I think when he hired me, he thought I was going to be a certain type of Black woman, or he had even painted a picture of who he thought I was going to be in his brain. And, then when I showed up as myself, I didn't fit his perception of me, and that made him very, very upset.

At the end of her interview, Abbi summed up her professional experiences:

I had to have the experience of having two, amazing, supportive, bosses. I needed to know what that environment was like, in order to get to terrible environments and know that that's not normal. That's not right. And, then I also had to go through the terrible experiences to be who I am today.

As a result of these negative experiences, Abbi decided to open her own consulting firm to avoid working for others.

“Oh, is she having a mental breakdown?” – Emotional Tax

During my interview with Mary, she mentioned that because of her light skin and Eurocentric features she was often looked upon more favorably by her co-workers than other Black employees; she was the only Black employee, in the organization she worked for which happened to be set in rural, White town. Mary stated:

The reason I lasted as long as I did, is because they liked me. I was the office pet. I had the same experience I had in high school, about having those desired features and, you know, everything that they wanted a Black person to be, especially a Black woman that was me until I started speaking out, until I started speaking my mind.

Mary went on to describe how her experience in the office changed when she became more outspoken. Mary explained:

When I started speaking my mind, that's when they started chatting about me saying that I was crazy. “Oh, is she having a mental breakdown?” no I'm not having a mental breakdown. I'm telling you what you're doing is not right.

Mary's experience with her white colleagues was disappointing and she felt further marginalized as a result. She ended up leaving this job for one that had more of a focus on diversity in hiring and workplace culture.

Ashley, a Black American woman, who works in a Telecom Startup, had a different experience. In her commentary, Ashley stated:

I feel supported. And I am a woman of color. I don't feel like they're doing anything special to be supportive. But it is just so much better than the environment that I came from that it feels supportive. But it's not like...I think they're just being regular people. I'm also one of a few women on my team so it's very male-dominated and I've always been surprised at how truly kind and compassionate -- I expected everyone to not understand or not be nice to me because I'm a young, Black woman who is in charge of people, and that doesn't happen all the time.

During our interview, Ashley revealed that she worked at a large retail corporation that was run by Black and Brown executives. Moreover, the company had a

Chief Diversity Officer that spoke to inclusion and equity; their actions did not reflect this. I asked Ashley if she was being intentional when searching for a new position: trying to find a new company that would be the exact opposite of her previous employer.

She replied:

I did...I wasn't looking like explicitly for it. I added it to my list of questions to ask, what their commitment to diversity was, whether they had a chief diversity officer, and kind of discussions around it because it's important to me.

After the interviews concluded, I was intrigued to learn that all five of the first and second-generation African immigrant women interviewed cited having had significantly less negative racially motivated occurrences and racially motivated stress when compared to their Black American peers (Hamilton, 2019). The first-generation Nigerian and Ghanaian women seemed to have significantly less overall. The second-generation immigrant women's experiences were more in line with the Black American women's racial experiences. Zeze, a second-generation immigrant from Nigeria in the manufacturing field shared her experience with code-switching:

Yeah, it's something like, even my husband has said, you have a different tone of voice when you're talking about work than when you're having conversations with us. Definitely, I know in the beginning, the accent was a big deal... [P]eople say they can't understand me or something like that...it's kind of subtle. I would say something, and then someone will say the exact same thing, they would say they don't really quite get it. Then they're asking me to explain and then a white male says it and they would. I still experienced it till today...Maybe there's a little bit more respect now, with me being, you know, in the industry for a while. But in the beginning, it was, yeah, it was a bit harder.

“I think there's still a little bit of...it's a little bit more interest-“– The New Model Minority

During Zeze’s interview, I asked her if she felt like she had been treated differently by her White coworkers than her Black-American coworkers, this was her response:

When I talk to African Americans that have worked for the company, I don't think it's necessarily different. I mean they do know I'm Nigerian, and at the company, for example, I'm just speaking from my own experience. They do know I'm Nigerian. They do know I'm from a different country. The accent is there. So, I think that they still, like just the fact that you're not, African American, you're not Black-American. I think...it's a little bit more interest sort of, or a little bit of “Oh, she’s different, she’s not that.” ...[N]ot everyone has come out like that to say to me but, I mean you do kind of sense it...I had one lady that really confided in me, and she had such a horrible experience with this manager. She was an African American lady...I could not believe what she was telling me; because I knew the manager...I would have vouched for that manager. And, that manager was an awesome person, just because of how he and I interacted. But he treated her like crap.

Susie, a second-generation Ghanaian immigrant, in the medical field shared:

I think when people see an African name, they probably actually are more excited than seeing an African American name...I think that's because like, you know, in the same way that people will be like, “Oh, a lot of Indians are doctors or something like that.” I think people would also see [a] Nigerian name or Ghanaian name, and be like, I know this person studies harder or something like that. I don't know, I just feel like there is a stereotype and a stigma and I feel like when it comes to academia. When people in academic leadership know that they have to...meet quota for Black faces, I do always sense that they probably would lean towards choosing [] an African name, or, you know I'm saying? Versus an African American name, and I, I mean I don't have any evidence of that, I guess, but like I have a strong suspicion that that is the case.

Outside of this study, when I have told people who have shown interest in this study, I received unsolicited information from Black Americans who have noticed the better treatment African immigrants in their workplaces and classes receive compared to them (Guo et al., 2017).

“I did feel more connected to the Asians, more so for my drive.”

One outcome of this study was that African immigrant participants identified more with their Asian American peers than their Black American peers. Chimamanda mentioned that one of her close friends while in college was Asian, saying:

[...] although she was born in China, she moved before she could speak or whatever, we had a similar a very similar upbringing. So, we were very, still are very close...I was kind of had a diverse friend group, [] I would say I have a lot of Asian-American friends...I feel like we have a similar immigrant experience with our parents and with our families.”

Zeze, shared similar sentiments:

I did feel more connected to the Asians, more so for my drive. So, most of my Asian friends were Chinese. So just from I think culture, there’s a lot of cultural alignment. There's a lot of drive they were just as ambitious as I was, so we connected on that. They were interested in the kind of things that I was interested in... [] we traveled together for example, did road trips together so it wasn't really a question of, I think it was just more like cultural alignment and kind of belief and that alignment and ambitious ambition.

In interviews with the first and second-generation immigrants, four out of five identified more with their first and second-generation Asian American counterparts, than with their Black American counterparts. One reason Zeze highlighted this was:

I will say that I never really branched into embedding myself in African American culture. It wasn't intentional. I just at the time, I just did not connect. Yeah, I just did not connect. Obviously, there are stereotypes that you know growing up, you know, watching movies and things like that. And going to a HBCU. For some reason it's just, they were, it felt it felt like we're not on the same page. I just did not. And maybe that's on me but I did not really connect much with really any African Americans until I got to [company name].

I discovered that this area of the relationship between African immigrants and Asian immigrants had been explored in Harvey Nicholson Jr.’s (2021) research article, *Feelings of closeness toward Asian Americans: an analysis of African Americans and Black Caribbeans* (sic). In this research study, Nicholson examined the feelings of closeness that African and Afro-Caribbean immigrants feel towards Asians in the U.S., by sampling

Black adults 18 and over, all over the U.S. (Nicholson, 2021). He writes about the fraught history between Black Americans and Asian Americans in the U.S. and how the relationship between African and Afro-Caribbean immigrants differs. Nicholson discovered that respondents who reported having lived in the U.S. for 20 or more years reported feeling closer to Asians, than U.S.-born respondents. This could explain why all three of the first-generation immigrants reported having close relationships with Asians, whereas only one out of the two second-generation immigrants reported having a close relationship with Asians.

Research Limitations

Since this is an area that hasn't been fully studied by other researchers, there are many areas that one could approach in future studies. Future researchers could interview a sample larger than I did and study other areas related such as the perceptions that these three groups of women have towards each other, competitiveness among Black women in predominantly White spaces, and more. Because my sample size wasn't very large, there is an opportunity for researchers to put together another study, using a large sample, over a longer period. Other studies that have examined the first and second-generation African immigrant men and women's experiences are studies by Sakamoto, Amaral, Wang, & Nelson (2021), Berthelemy (2019), Sall (2019), just to name a few. Future researchers could also do more quantitative analysis, as opposed to the qualitative analysis present in this study, to see what other variables of outcomes could be examined.

Self as Instrument in my Qualitative Study

In addition to my formal interview guide, I also served as an instrument in this study. Because of my own lived experience as a Black, Millennial, second-generation

immigrant, I had much in common with all the participants I interviewed. As a result, I built a strong rapport with the participants I interviewed, and I was able to fully immerse myself in the interviews. While my familiarity with the subject was an asset, I set clear boundaries with myself as the researcher and not as a woman speaking with another like-minded woman. I did not lend my own experiences or perceptions to the participants. Because of my focus on developing trust with the participants, using the concept of “bracketing” which is used in qualitative research as a tool to “mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process,” (Tufford & Newman, 2012) I tried to take myself out of the equation in reference to relating to what the participants had to say. Because I have a lot of lived experience as a Second-generation Ghanaian immigrant woman working in corporate America, I needed to ensure that I protected this study from my own biases.

This interview experience was novel to me in many ways. I had never taken on the role of the researcher in a qualitative study, and I had to check my impulses to volunteer information or to respond positively or negatively to certain comments or insights from the participants. I used gentle encouragements, and careful coaxing in line with the general interview guide approach to conducting qualitative interviews (Turner III, 2010). Using the formal interview guide allowed me to stay connected to the purpose of the study, while also giving me the ability to follow other lines of questions that the participants brought up during the process, without straying too far off-topic. This experience allowed me to extrapolate from these women, their very traumatic experiences with emotional tax. I had more than one instance while talking about the toll of emotional tax; a participant broke down in tears.

Summary

All the women interviewed in this study provide incredibly valuable insight into what they had experienced in corporate America. There were clear instances of the toll of emotional tax and stereotype threat on their mental health. The women interviewed originated from many different industries, yet had the commonality of being Black, millennial women, working in corporate America. In the following chapter, I will provide some suggestions that companies can put in place to help ensure that their Black, female, employees feel included. Factors like age, ethnicity, and country of origin, play a major part in how effective employees can function within the corporate space. The information these women freely provided can be used to help better shape the policies and procedures that corporations and managers create.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Black women are the most educated demographic group in America (Katz, 2020). Over the last few years, corporate America has shown improvements in increasing the representation of women and people of color in the C-Suites and leadership circles in corporate spaces (Erskine et al., 2021). Despite the promises to increase diversity in leadership spaces, there is still a deficit of Black women in leadership positions in corporate America (2021).

In planning for this study, my overall objective has been to study the racialized experiences of millennial Black American and Black immigrant women in the corporate mainstream as they work towards attaining success in corporate America. I focused on how varied these women's experiences are and how they are perceived at their places of work. I studied the following concepts from the literature on how these women internalize the Emotional Tax and the Stereotype Threat; importantly, I also examined how the Model Minority stereotype affects the immigrant women's experiences. It was not surprising that almost all the women interviewed, immigrant or not had experienced microaggressions and general exclusion at work over the course of their careers.

Companies must prioritize the workplace experiences of their employees of color by also doing the work in learning more about the different groups of people present in their companies. In her article titled *A Rising Share of the U.S. Black Population Is Foreign Born* (2015) Monica Anderson showcases how the Black immigrant population is quickly growing at a rapid rate. Anderson states:

Rapid growth in the black immigrant population is expected to continue. The Census Bureau projects that by 2060, 16.5% of U.S. blacks will be immigrants. In certain metropolitan areas, foreign-born blacks make up a significant share of the overall black population.

With such a large number of Black people in the U.S. being of African immigrant descent, I believe studies like this capstone are important to expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in U.S. companies.

Many of the women that I have interviewed reported an emotional toll from the racial experiences they have had in their workplace. Some also strongly asserted that their race and gender played a major part in how they are viewed and treated in their workplace. Over the course of this study, I examined the data obtained in the interviews and analyzed the emergent theme that millennial Black women in corporate spaces are not a monolith, they are diverse and need to be treated as such. Companies, need to put in place measures that will ensure that Black women from all cultures, and age groups, feel supported and uplifted while in predominantly White corporate spaces. I believe that companies must stop using generic diversity tactics that might be too broad and not as effective in targeting the issues that plague their minority populations.

The plights of Black women, first and second-generation Black immigrant women, and other women of color, are very different, and companies need to expand their diversity tactics to support this., Companies also need to implement diversity policies and trainings that acknowledge the diversity of experiences present in their workspaces (Reichenberg, 2001). Oftentimes, diversity trainings and policies are one and the same for the entire minority population. Companies must study their employee base to determine what individual needs they require in order to be effective and highly efficient. Last, I believe companies must incorporate measures that hold everyone in their

organizations accountable for making their workplaces a safe space for all Black women (Kreitz, 2008)

Throughout this whole experience, I was given the privilege of meeting ten truly amazing women. I am humbled and honored that these women felt comfortable enough to be open and honest with me about their experiences of being millennial, Black, women in predominantly White corporate workspaces. I began this journey wondering if I would be able to obtain an adequate sample size to interview and was surprised to have received more than 50 interested demographic survey participants; the five first and second-generation African immigrant women and five Black multigenerational, Black, American women were chosen from this pool of survey takers. The unexpectedly large interest in the study proved to me that this is an area of importance that needs further studying. I also believe that the growing immigrant population to the U.S. is reason enough for studies such as this to be conducted.

The first two themes that sparked my interest in conducting this study, stereotype threat and emotional tax, were present in all ten interviews. All ten women, both Black Americans and Ghanaian and Nigerian immigrants had stories of discrimination or instances of racial or gender-based bias. These interviews demonstrated that although their immigrant statuses and ethnicities differed, Black women in American corporate spaces face many similar hardships (Asante et al., 2016; Bell, 1990; Emerson & Murphy 2014; Everett & Hamilton-Mason, 2012). The model minority myth is another theme that was present in all five of the Ghanaian and Nigerian immigrant interviews. It was also in one of the Black American interviews. It illustrates that there is some truth to the myth that African immigrants are sometimes perceived more positively than their Black

American counterparts based on their educational and professional outcomes (Gupta et al., 2011; Guo et al., 2017; Ukpokodu, 2018).

I am immensely thankful to the women who participated in this study for being open and honest in talking about their struggles, what their organizations could do better, and what they do well. To ensure that Black women of all ethnicities and immigrant statuses feel accepted and comfortable enough in their workplaces and to function effectively, companies must first acknowledge the areas in which they are failing when it comes to DEI. They must then prioritize DEI efforts in all spaces of their organizations, and lastly, they must ensure that women like those who participated in this study, are shown the same priority as their White male counterparts.

Leaders in corporate spaces need to not just increase their awareness of what it is truly like for women of color to effectively function in their organizations, they need to also increase their action measures. Over the last few years, there has been an increased push for companies to include more women and people of color in leadership positions (Brieger et al., 2019). These steps, while admirable in theory, will not help the experiences of women in entry to mid-level positions who are currently working in toxic environments. The factors that impact work performance such as stereotype threat and emotional tax are not new concepts. It's time organizations start doing the work to limit their adverse effects.

I started this study, wanting to learn more about whether my experience as a second-generation immigrant working in corporate America was similar or different to that of multigenerational Black Americans. I wanted to know whether the issues of racial and gender biases that I myself have encountered in predominantly White spaces were

one that others like me had also encountered. Through this capstone, I was able to step outside of my own experience, by being invited into the experiences of ten women who were completely different from me and each other. The women I spoke to have added more credence to the notion that the work that is needed to ensure that Black women no longer have to encounter stressful situations based on their race and gender. Although we have come a long way recently, we are still very much lagging behind. Companies must make sure they create safe spaces for all their employees to function without worrying about how their race or gender affects how they are perceived by others.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Oral Consent Form

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**Oral Consent Form:
A Multi-Generational Workplace Perspective**

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to study how the professional experiences of first and second-generation millennial (1981-1996) Ghanaian and Nigerian women differ from their native-born, multigenerational Black American counterparts within corporate America. I am focusing my study on millennial women because this generation is now a big part of the American workplace, due to the increase in retirement from the Baby Boomer generation. As a second-generation millennial, Ghanaian women immigrant myself, I am particularly interested in how young, Black immigrant women navigate corporate America. I am specifically interested in learning more about 1) your family background; 2) your community and neighborhood growing up; 3) your educational experience; 4) your perceptions of race and gender and their impact in your workplace. This research is required to fulfill my requirements for the Master of Science degree in Organizational Dynamics at the University of Pennsylvania. I am undertaking this research under the guidance of Dr. Kimberly Torres who is my faculty advisor and a faculty member in the Organizational Dynamics program.

Procedures: By consenting to be part of this research, you agree to participate in a formal, audio-recorded interview, lasting no longer than 60 minutes. This interview will take place remotely at a mutually agreed upon time, using the videoconferencing platform, Zoom. In light of security concerns related to Zoom, all meeting links will include a password and meeting ID; to prevent possible encroachment, meeting links will only be sent to individuals in private emails. Zoom meeting links will not be posted on any social media

sites or listservs. Participants will not be able to join the meeting until I sign them in. With participants consent, interviews will be audio-recorded. If you prefer that our conversation not be recorded, I can take notes instead. I have a list of questions that will serve as a guide for our conversation.

Benefits/Risks: This is a research study; therefore, there will be no direct benefits to you from participation in the study. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide some understanding of the diversity of Black women's experiences in corporate America. There are minimal risks to you from taking part in this interview. The risk is accidental disclosure of private information. However, every effort will be made, within the limits of the law, to safeguard the confidentiality of the information you provide. Only your pseudonym, racial identity, ethnicity, and generational status will appear on the interview transcript and no one other than myself, Yaa Keene, will know your true identity. No identifying information related to participants or the organizations they work for will be referenced at any point in time throughout the course of this research. Should I plan to continue this study at a later date, the data from this research will be de-identified, and could be stored and distributed for future research.

Withdrawal: You may choose not to answer any question that you do not want to answer and are free to terminate the interview at any time. Should you decide to terminate your interview and/or involvement in this study, I will destroy all related information, including written notes, audio transcripts, and consent forms. You will not be linked to my research in any way thereafter.

Confidentiality: No one, except the Student Researcher, Yaa Keene, will know respondent's true identities. You understand that all information collected in this study will be kept strictly confidential, except as may be required by law. If any publication results from this research, you will only be identified by the pseudonym that you choose prior to the interview, racial identity, ethnicity, and generational status. All transcriptions, audio recordings and notes from our conversation will be securely located on my password-protected computer. Your pseudonym, racial identity and ethnicity, as well as generational status are the only identifying information to be included on the transcript and notes. Consent forms will be kept in a secure location; I am the only person who will have access to this information. Because of the confidential nature of the research, there will be no witness to consent procedures; I will administer oral consent.

Subject Rights: If you wish to have further information regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Director of Regulatory Affairs at the University of Pennsylvania by telephoning 215-898-2614. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to your satisfaction. You have read and

understand the consent form. You agree to participate in this research study. Answer affirmatively if you agree to participate in this research study.

Appendix B: Capstone Interview Guide

Capstone Interview Guide A Multi-Generational Workplace Perspective

This study will use a formal, open-ended interview guide and will be clearly explained to subjects before the interview begins. The questions on the interview guide are divided into three thematic sections. The first section includes demographic questions about the participant's background and social origins. The second section focuses on participant's corporate workplace composition and academic and professional experiences in order to explore concept of the model minority myth. The third section explores in-depth participant's experiences with stereotype threat, emotional tax, and microaggressions at work.

Lead in:

My name is Yaa Keene and I am a Master's candidate in the Organizational Dynamics program at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Kimberly Torres is my faculty advisor for this project. She is a professor in Organizational Dynamics. To fulfill my capstone requirements, I am studying the corporate workplace experiences of 1st and 2nd generation Black immigrants from Ghana and Nigeria in contrast to those of multigenerational, native-born Black American millennial women. As formally defined by the Census, first-generation refers to immigrants born outside the U.S. whereas second-generation refers to individuals born in the U.S to one or both parents who were born outside the U.S. I am focusing my study on Nigerian and Ghanaian immigrants because they are among the largest, most selective immigrant groups from Africa in the U.S. Through my research, I will explore how immigrant Black millennial women experience corporate America--- their career trajectories, and how their racial and ethnic identities may differentially affect these professional experiences relative to Black American millennial women.

Everything you tell me will be kept confidential. In order to do that, I request that each participant pick a pseudonym. And, if I would like to use any of the information from our conversation, I will always ask your permission before doing so. I understand that your time is valuable. I would like to meet with you for approximately 60 minutes. I really appreciate your time and participation.

So that I can better concentrate on what you are saying, I'd like to tape record our conversation. However, if you would prefer that I take notes instead, that is fine too. Also, if you would like me to turn off the tape recording at any time during our conversation, please say so. All identifying information will be taken off the tape when it

is transcribed; nobody but myself will know your true identity. You will only be identified only by the pseudonym you select prior to the interview, racial identity and ethnicity, as well as generational status.

Do you have any questions?

Okay let's start...

Section I: Introduction

Hello, thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. To begin, would you mind telling me a little bit about yourself?

- Age
- Ethnic/racial self-identification
- Family and national origins (i.e. were both your parents born in the U.S.? What are their racial/national origins?)
- Job Title
- Job industry
- Length of time at current position

Section II: Family Background

Now, if you could tell me a little bit about your family. (I.e. family structure, parents' professions and education, # of siblings and siblings' ages, religious background)

- Where you born in the US?
- Just to confirm, are either or both of your parents' immigrants? If so, where did they migrate from?
- How would you classify your family's social class background when you were growing up? (participant's opinion of her family's social class status)

Section III: Community and Neighborhood

Now, could you tell me a little bit about the community and neighborhood that you grew up in? (i.e. state, country you grew up in, length of time living there, racial/ethnic background, social class of neighborhood/surrounding community)

- Where did you spend the majority of your childhood? Is that different from where you're living now?
- How would you classify the social class background of the people who live in your neighborhood and surrounding community? What makes you say that? (Probe: What are your opinions about the social class status of neighborhood and community?)
- What was the racial composition of your neighborhood growing up?

- How does your current neighborhood differ from the one you lived in growing up? How does it differ racially? Probe: Social class

Section IV: High School & University

Now, could you tell me a little bit about your experience in educational institutions in the U.S. and/or abroad?

- Did you go to high school abroad or in the US?
- What were the racial composition of your schools growing up?
- Roughly, what percentage of the students at your high school were white/Black/Latin/Asian/Other? Do you think your high school was racially diverse?
- Was the racial composition of your high school similar to the racial composition of the middle and elementary schools you attended? If not, how were they different?
- How you think your college experiences differs as a 1st of 2nd generation immigrant at a US university from that of multigenerational Black Americans? (Vice versa for Black American.)
- Did you attend college in the U.S or abroad?
- What college(s) and/or university (ties) did you attend? Probe: for major, academic interests
- What was the racial/ethnic composition of your close circle of friends at college?
- If you a 1st generation immigrant, were you an international student attending college in the U.S? What it was like for you?
- In retrospect, how would you describe your academic and social experiences as a Black woman at your college/university?
- How would you describe your comfort level as a student there?
- Did you experience an increased awareness of your Blackness while at college? If so, why do you think that is?

Section V: Social Dynamics and Race Relations in Workplace

Now, could you tell me a little bit about the social dynamics and the race relations within your workplace?

- What are your career interests? What trajectory would you like your career to take?
- How well do you think you were/are prepared for your current position? (What brought you to this position?)
- How do you feel about your current position?
- What are your relationships with their direct reports if you have any?
- Do you feel that you have to work harder and do more than others in similar positions to you? What makes you say that?? What kinds of pressure do you experience in this way?
- Have you noticed others who may have an easier or harder time? In what ways do you think their experiences at your organization are similar or different to yours?

- Do you feel you have to present yourself differently than white (women) employees? Do you dress differently, change the way you speak at work compared to when you are not at work? If so, how?
- What industry do you work in?—You asked this above at the beginning of the interview
- What is the racial/ethnic composition of your workplace? How about your immediate team?
 - Probe: What is the racial composition of leadership staff at your organization?
- Are you having a positive experience at your organization? What makes you say that?
- Do you participate in any affinity groups for Black women at your organization? If so, what are those experiences like?
- Do you socialize with colleagues outside of work? If so, what's that like?

Section VI: Perceptions of the Race and Gender in Workplace

Now, let's dive deeper into your perceptions of the racial climate in your workplace. I would like to hear more of your experiences in that space.

- How would you describe the racial climate at your workplace? Is it different from how you envisioned before you were hired? If so, how?
- Do you think there is racism and/or prejudice within your workplace? How so? What makes you say that?
- Do you think race plays a factor in how you are perceived or treated in at work? If so, how? How about gender?
- Have you personally experienced racism and/or discrimination since you've been here? If so, can you describe an incident where you think you may not have been treated fairly because of your race? Gender?
- How do you think your race and gender impact your workplace experience?
- What is it like to be a Black woman in your organization?
- In your experience, what role does gender play compare to race and ethnicity in your workplace?
- Do you think from different racial/ethnic backgrounds get along at your company? Have there been any incidents that lead you to believe that employees may not be getting along? Do you feel close to other Blacks at your organization? Co-workers? What makes you say that?
- Do you feel close to other Black women who work at your organization? How do these relationships affect your work experience?
- Do you feel the Black immigrant women in your office get treated differently than the Black American women in your office? If so, how?
- What role do you think your ethnicity in your everyday experiences at work? Do you think your work experiences as different than those of your Black American counterparts? How so?
- Do you think your ethnicity impacts how you are treated by your co-workers/leadership? If so, how?

- How long do you plan on staying at this organization? Where do you see yourself in 5 years, etc.?

Conclusion

And, lastly, how would you rate your work experience overall? (On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the lowest rating and 10 being the highest rating) What makes you give that rating?

Thank you for your participation. It is greatly appreciated. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

If there's anything else you would like to talk about, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at yaakeene@wharton.upenn.edu. Please contact me if you know of anyone else who might be eligible to participate.