**Please scramble the audio 50:42 – 50:48**

**Interviewer**: Thank you so much for joining me in this interview this evening.

**Participant 27:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer**: Having gotten your consent to record this interview, I want to let you know that the recording is in session, so we'll go ahead and start the interview now.

**Participant 27:** Okay

**Interviewer**: Before we start, I want to let you know that there are 6 sections in this interview. We will start with section one. We have a set of questions in each section. Section one, we have about 5 questions. So, I will go straight away to the first question, and the first question is can you please share your age, your gender, and your country of origin?

**Participant 27:** Okay, the age is 29, country of origin, Nigeria. And what else was the question?

**Interviewer**: Your gender

**Participant 27:** Gender, male.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. The next question is, what is your highest level of education, and what country did you obtain your degree from?

**Participant 27:** My highest level of my highest degree of education would be a master's degree from the UK. A master’s degree in project management, currently also on a Master's degree here in data analytics. I don't know if that counts but yeah, that's my like, my highest yeah, academic…

**Interviewer**: Academic qualification.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. So, you have a bachelor's degree from Nigeria, master's Degree from the UK. Then you are currently working on another master's degree in the US here.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for clarifying that. How long have you lived in the United States? Specifically in Maryland.

**Participant 27:** Specifically, in Maryland, it's about a year and a half, and then generally in the US say about 2 years. Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Thank you.

**Participant 27:** That's just it.

**Interviewer**: The next question is, what is your current profession or job title?

**Participant 27:** So, at the moment I work as a DSP, that's direct support person for people with mental disabilities and I also work as a contractual staff as a site, reliability engineer for SMEs, which is small and medium enterprises. Yes, that's what I do.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you so much. The last question under this section is, what was your profession in Nigeria before you migrated to the US?

**Participant 27:** So, in Nigeria I used to own my own business. I have cars I used for Uber. I give it out for installment payment. And then I have a farm back in Nigeria, and I also collaborate with people and write content for them for their various business purposes. So that's my job basically in Nigeria.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. Let's go to section 2, section 2, push and pull factors. Under this section, we talk about push and pull factors, that is, factors that are responsible for people making decisions to migrate from their country of origin to another country or from one country to the other generally. The first question under this section is, what motivated your decision to migrate to the United States? Were there specific factors in Nigeria that pushed you to leave e.g. economic, social, or political challenges?

**Participant 27:** To be frank, I would say it was, I was constantly always in hum, my finances are always dwindling, and I just wanted financial security, and I feel like Nigeria is not that place for financial security, so that's why I decided to leave. Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. Can you tell me what attracted you to the United States and Maryland in particular?

**Participant 27:** I moved out of Nigeria for the UK first, and that when I was in the UK, I did my survey and everything about Maryland and not Maryland, Say U.S.A, particularly, I discovered to progress in my career my chosen career, I had to move to the United States because of the capitalism settings of the country, and it allows you to reach any height you want as a business owner or as someone that is a business enthusiast. So, for that reason I decided I was going to move to the U.S.A. And that is the major reason. Moving to Maryland precisely, was not the decision I wanted to make. It was because there is a lot more Nigerians in Maryland, and this is where I know people, and by default I had to move to Maryland. That's it.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: The last question under this push and pull factors section is about the challenges that you faced during the migration process. A lot of people face challenges when they migrate to the US.

**Participant 27:** Right.

**Interviewer**: Generally, it could be a challenge before you left, or during the migration process, or when you migrated to the US. In your own case, did you have any such challenges that is related...

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: to your migration to the US.

**Participant 27:** Yes, yes, a lot of challenges and that if I have to speak about them, it's sometimes could be uncomfortable for me to remember them. But yes, it is part of life. One of my, I would say not one, I would say not one of my, because it's actually the major challenge, the major challenge I faced was having to start again, having to start life again as as an individual who has created a niche for himself like back in the UK, I struggled even as the same way back in Nigeria, like, I struggled to start again. Yeah, I discovered this country is a leveler and it's affected me a lot which proceeded to affecting my emotional and mental states as well, and if I had to go to number 2, yes, it affected my relationship, my relationship with people, and all that. Most importantly, my relationship with my fiance. It affected it. And yeah, so migrating to this place was never easy, but it was still a sacrifice I had to make, but it affected a lot of things for me. Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, thank you for sharing that. And I appreciate your.. I appreciate your perspective, your perspective based on your personal experience, which you know, at times it can be painful, it can be frustrating, and it can be very, very challenging.

**Participant 27:** Oh, yeah.

**Interviewer**: We go to section 3, section 3, we talk about professional experiences. You mentioned earlier that in Nigeria you had a lot of private businesses that you did.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: But I just wanted you to put it in a kind of a summary. If you can just walk me through your career trajectory in Nigeria before you relocated to the United States right from the moment you finished college, university, because for some people, before they go into business, they work for maybe a private or a public organization for a few years. Then they move on to doing business. I want to know if your case is similar to that, or it's kind of different based on what what you actually experienced, right from the time you completed your bachelor's degree and you migrated out of Nigeria.

**Participant 27:** Okay for me, I would say growing up, I had always hustled my way up. I have always, I'm a DIY person, that is a do-it-yourself person. I like to find my way myself because I don't like to depend on people. So, in my university days I, studied chemistry and studying chemistry had opened my eyes to how I have to like, how I can make money from different aspects of science and technology. So, from that onward, I said to myself, like when I finish, I'm going to give myself a gazetted time like, I'm going to try and look for a job for so so amount of time. and if I don't get it, I would focus on myself and just go into business. So why, on my NY... During my NYSC, I discovered that no, I'm not going to look for a job, because for me I am employable, but I feel like, I don't like to be micromanaged, and it was Nigeria. I definitely know my onions in Nigeria, so for that reason I just put money in place. I got my startup revenue from the businesses I've been doing back in universities, which are, basically I sell what do we call it? ‘Thrifts’ from there is one place in Lagos they call ‘Katangua’, so I pick ‘thrifts’ from there, I take it, to my university there, which is Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, sell it as branded ones and others. So, I had my money like already, like I had a little bit of startup. So, with that I bought my first car for initially, the car was supposed to be for comfort and luxury purposes, which is to like take myself to places, and you know but then I just sat down and thought to myself, there’s no sense in this when I can use this to make money and all that. So that was the beginning of my business career. And again, it is Nigeria, and I know how it works. I know what I need and what I need not do. And so that's I just had to yeah, do that. And the money I make, I put it, I split it into 3. I put some into the farm business. I put the rest back into the Uber business and the other rest, I use it to feed myself so, but it's not an easy job, because they come back to you and say a lot of things, and then you have to like you know. Sometimes I even have to take soldier and everything and use it to threaten, and all that so at that point the business was dwindling. While I was doing my NYSC, I worked for a company called Tycoon Technologies and I only write content on how to, and I make targeted ads for them. So, While I was there, I made enough connections to like, just invest more in farm produces and all that. So, after that I got a lot of I mean, I made some profit, and I just, I just decided, no, I'm not investing in the new agricultural year. I just. I just packed the money, and I moved out of Nigeria. So, I think that was my life in Nigeria, basically, in summary, I would say that was it. Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Thank you for sharing that. That's quite an interesting journey that you had back in Nigeria. It seemed like you managed several businesses. You were into IT. You were into transportation. You were into trade, you were into farming, you also worked for an IT company. You did a lot of content creation. That's quite a good experience to have back in Nigeria. And you managed businesses. You managed processes, you managed people, you managed resources.

**Participant 27:** Yes.

**Interviewer**: Which is quite interesting to me. So, you also said earlier that you moved to the UK.

**Participant 27:** Yes.

**Interviewer**: Before we move to the next question. I wanted to know the total number of years that…

**Participant 27:** I spent in the UK

**Interviewer**: No, no, that you worked and managed these businesses in Nigeria before you relocated to the, before you moved to the UK.

**Participant 27:** So, I did these businesses for (inaudible). So, I did these businesses for about 5 years in Nigeria. I started in 2017, roughly 2017, so 18, 19, 20, 21 and then in 22, I moved out of Nigeria in 2020, in 2021 I moved out of Nigeria. Yeah,

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Participant 27:** So

**Interviewer**: And

**Participant 27:** 5 years about that

**Interviewer**: How long did you stay in the UK before you moved over to the US?

**Participant 27:** I Stayed in the UK for 2 years or 2 and a half years, just within that range.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. We're going to go to the next question, which is, your career trajectory in the United States. But before that I wanted to bring your attention back to an expression you used earlier, you said when you moved over to the US, you realized that it is a leveler. You used that word, “it’s a leveler”

**Participant 27:** Yeah, yes.

**Interviewer**: So, looking at your background in Nigeria, having done these different businesses, managed business, and you lived in the UK for 2 years. And now seeing yourself as you mentioned earlier, doing like a regular 9 to 5 person job here. And it's also appeared to me that you are doing 2 jobs at the moment?

**Participant 27:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer**: Based on what you said, okay.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Now, how would you describe your current career trajectory in the United States?

**Participant 27:** I mean I wouldn't say for sure, I know what is, to come tomorrow, but at the moment I'm doing another master's in data analytics. I’m also preparing myself for a certification I'm supposed to be having later in the Fall, which is some certification for the field I want to go into properly, which is cloud engineering and why, why, I would not be able to certainly say what's to come is that for my profession or my professional career I know that it has to I'm sure you would know that it has to come with some other things which are like my stay in this country. You are aware that some jobs are not even open to like, if you're not a permanent resident or a citizen, and all that. So, I would say, but it was, it was a hard decision for me to work to, work under somebody which actually, I never had problem like doing it back in the UK, because, yeah, I made the decision. It was hard, but I made the decision but getting to the U.S.A, because I've already created a niche for myself again in the UK. I found it difficult, because maybe I found it difficult, because I was employed under Nigerian company owners, and I do not think they have the acumen to run businesses or manage people like properly. I think they manage people in an archaic manner, and that is my only problem, but my long-term career profession will be to find myself in IT field and to use the experience I get from the IT field to integrate it into chemistry, because that is my first degree. That is the course that is the subject I know the most, chemistry and physics, so I'm making sure I will go back there. I haven’t certainly found what I would do exactly, or the business I want to run, but I know that I'm going to do something that is unique, and it's going to be in this country, and that is the major reason why I moved to this country because I discovered that this company, this country, supports small scale businesses, and it's a capitalist world. As long as you want to like, do something, do it right, and there's a chance for you that you can, you can actually make it, so my long-term plan is not to work for someone for too long. That is, it. Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. Thank you for sharing that. That's quite interesting. Let's talk about your skills. You have a bachelor's degree in chemistry.

**Participant 27:** Yes.

**Interviewer**: Master's degree in a different field.

**Participant 27:** Yeah, business management.

**Interviewer**: You are currently working toward specialization in cloud engineering

**Participant 27:** Yes

**Interviewer**: ...with a vision to build business in the future.

**Participant 27:** Yes.

**Interviewer**: But...

**Participant 27:** And I'm currently doing a master's in data analytics

**Interviewer**: Data Analytics, thank you. Now, with all these skills, all these exposure and experience that you have, how well do you feel your skills and qualifications are being fully utilized in the current job that you are doing?

**Participant 27:** Erm (laughs) In the current job I'm doing because the site reliability engineer job I'm doing is only for contract purposes like I have a brother that is a software engineer, and he has some associates who have small IT companies. So, I only, test, for them from the back end and check apps and software they develop, if the icons and everything are working fine and all that, and then I report back to them that, okay, this is working, this is not working. And okay, this is what we need to work on. So, it is only when they build softwares, or when they develop an app or anything that I can work, if they do not I don't work on that for, and it mostly happens during the spring to summertime. So but for the DSP job, I think my skills are very, very on unutilized. In fact, I'm not supposed to find myself in this field, but because I have bills to pay and everything. So, that is why I'm currently here. So if we are talking about if my skills are utilized. Well, I wouldn't say my skills are totally unutilized here, because there are some things that I will do, and they would see that a person without a certain skill would not have done it this way. So I think there are some times like my skills are put to use in this job. But if I had to say on a scale of 10, in this job, my skills, are about only utilize like 4, or maybe 3. But the other job when it comes like, okay, yeah. 7, 8. Yeah. That's that's my reflection on that.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for. Thank you for that answer. Lets go to the barriers that people face in the professional landscape in the US. These biases are in different dimensions, but talking about biases like licensing requirements, recognition of foreign qualifications.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Or even workplace discrimination, as many people have talked about. In your own case, what kind of barriers have you faced in the professional landscape, such as I mentioned in terms of licensing requirements, recognition of foreign qualifications or workplace discrimination. What strategies have you used to overcome these challenges?

**Participant 27**: Particularly, I would not say, I've overcome any of these challenges, this particular one that you mentioned, because me coming to this country and doing this course is not a decision I want to make. It’s just a starting point for me. Because I realized that I did my survey. I realized that they do not really appreciate you, if you don't have like an educational background from U.S.A. I mean the labor force in this place. They really don't appreciate you that much where you have to do WES evaluation and all that. So, because I had to face that kind of discrimination, I well, I never really tried. Even before trying. I had to put it to myself. No, I have to get a degree here first, so that I'll have to put that behind me and doing that I know that getting a degree here would override that. Oh, get the worst evaluation for this or that, even though I would get it. But having a degree here would already give me an hedge so that being said about licensing, and I think the credibility of some licenses from out of the country like could not be verified, and all that. So, they don't really trust, and I do not blame them in the world of technology and dubious act and everything. We have people like doing a lot of things. And then so I mean, that part starting to write another, maybe certification, or whatever is not my problem, but I know that I know that maybe sometime later in the future, maybe there will be some credibility to our own certifications, qualifications, and all that. But for now, I think it's a cause of our social and socioeconomic and what do we call it, a problem. Not because of their own. What do we call it? I mean, they award people with degrees that are not people that never went to school awarded degrees in Nigeria, so I wouldn't blame them for this thing. So that's why I just decided to take my degree again. Yeah, so that's it.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. Thank you for providing that insight. You believe that one way you can overcome those issues of problem of recognition, of foreign qualifications and licensing is for you to have a degree within the US here.

**Participant 27:** Yes, yes, not not because my degree back in Nigeria is not valid, or is not supposed to be recognized, but I do not necessarily blame them for not recognizing it as well because of how our society has portrayed us to be as a people. So, instead of pointing fingers, I decide to always find solution for myself. That's it.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. Thank you for that. Before we move to the next section, I don't want to. I want to be sure that I'm not leaving this particular point out of the context. How about workplace, discrimination? Have you experienced workplace discrimination before, since you moved to the US. And how did you? How did you manage it? How did you handle it?

**Participant 27:** Yes, I have experienced what, even even among my own people, have experienced workplace, discrimination, and among black Americans I have experienced it, and among race like whites, too. and the Hispanics. So what I would say is that I've experienced this, and I know that everyone is different and our tolerance level is very different, but I know what I want. I know where I'm going. I know where I've been coming from. I'm speaking as a person now, not for the people like or for immigrants in general, or something. But, speaking for myself, I think for all these discriminations. There's really a lot of work to be done on the orientation of people but when I get anything of such, I try to address it to the maybe my supervisor, or but at one point I stopped doing because I think it isningrained in everyone, unconsciously. And because I just see that even if you let them know your displeasure about something, they flush it down the drain and let you see that, oh, they didn't mean it like that, and all that. So, there was no point, and I just knew I have somewhere I’m going. Let me just shove this aside and keep going. So yes, workplace discrimination is really a thing, and it's still it's not that it's still in in abundance in our midst at the moment.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you so much. We move to the next section. But I wanted to clarify something based on your response. You said two things that I wanted you to clarify for me.

**Participant 27:** Okay.

**Interviewer**: The first thing you said was that you said you have experienced it even among your own people.

**Participant 27:** Yes.

**Interviewer**: What do you mean by your own people?

**Participant 27:** So workplace discrimination is not about race alone. It could be about even experience. It could be about ethnic group as well. So what I mean by my own people are immigrants like myself, even from the same country like Nigeria. But they may discriminate you because you're not from a certain ethnic group and or they may discriminate you because they may think if I was allowed to speak my language like Yoruba, but I would say it in English in the best way possible. What? When did you even come to this country like they, they they make it seem like oh, maybe you're doing too much at some point or something. So, discrimination is not even about race alone or ethnic group, or maybe it spans across a lot of things. And then, yeah.That’s why I said, even my own people

**Interviewer**: Thank you for sharing that. That means even within the same, the group of people from the same ethnic group there can still be class and group. And all this kind of sentiments that can make someone experience discrimination within that small group.

**Participant 27:** Exactly, and that is one of the reasons why I don't let I agree with thick skin to discrimination from workplace, because it is really something that is inevitable because it doesn't matter who you're working with the environment you're working with. And it still happens if those people they don't have the right mindset and orientation.

**Interviewer**: The second thing is, I'm not trying to keep you on this section. I just want you to clarify so that I can have that understanding. The second thing you mentioned that jumped at me is you said you believe that it's more like there is an unconscious bias when it comes to discrimination.

**Participant 27:** Yes, yes, I believe so. It is more like when you pour beans in the water, and then some just stay afloat. Some just stay like beneath the water, like if you're in a setting, and let me use the example of school in my school, you get to the classroom the first day, and it just happens naturally, that white people are sitting with white people. Black people are sitting with black people. Indians are sitting with Indians. And that's just how it is. Everyone's without anyone telling anyone to do this or do that, and without us knowing it, I feel, and I believe that there is an unconscious bias like that has already happened in. So, because there might be a minor person that is, from Vietnam or China. Where is he or she supposed to sit down? So this is why I think yes, it happens like unconsciously already. That is it.

**Interviewer**: Hmm, thank you for providing that very interesting perspective. I appreciate that.

**Participant 27:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer**: Let's go to cultural assimilation and social integration. Here, I'm going to frame the first 3 questions into one, because we've been talking about this issue since we started this interview.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: How would you describe your experience of cultural assimilation in Maryland? Have you experienced any cultural or social challenges since you migrated? And how have you navigated cultural differences in your personal and professional life?

**Participant 27:** To be honest, I don't have a strong input in this section, because I, as a person from Nigeria, I've always been making research. I've always and very open person. I like to know what is going on in the world, socially, politically, economically, entertainment wise and everything. So, I know at least a bit of everyone's what do we call it? Cultural what do you call it? Background and everything. It was easy for me, when I moved to the UK to assimilate and to integrate into their social clime also the same thing with U.S.A. I know the set of people that could be hostile. I know the set of people that could be nice to you and everything. I know what, and I mean to some extent I know what and what not to do, and I know that if I was treated a certain way, sometimes it might not be because they are not nice to me. It might be. That is how they are, some things that we call certain names back in Nigeria. They don't even know such names exist here in the U.S.A. So, and the social life to everything. I just have had a share of how it it goes back from when I was in Nigeria. Yeah. So since then, I've always known that. Okay, I have to be very conscious when I get to a setting or a gathering where it is not my home countrymen that are there because everyone has cultures, and you have to respect their cultures. One gimmick I use is that I listen a lot more than I talk. And I look a lot more than I act. That way, I could be able to read the room and also say what I'm supposed to say and not say what I'm not supposed to say. So yeah, that is what I do say in a situation whereby, I'm at the club and in Nigeria, if you're in the club you can just go up to the dance floor and dance and everything. But yeah, you have to be careful. You don't want to like just approach anybody. So that's a part of me listening a lot, or just looking a lot rather than acting a lot. So yes.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. So your multicultural orientation and skills have helped you to be able to navigate this cultural assimilation and social integration

**Participant 27:** Exactly.

**Interviewer**: In the country.

**Participant 27:** Also one big thing I would add to that is that I think one of the things that segregate people in terms of cultural assimilation is also religious beliefs. And of course, I'm a person that is quite liberal with my religion. I don't go to this side or that side too much so that way I've been able to integrate successfully into the whole system.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you so much for sharing that.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: The last question under this section 4. When people come to the United States, or when people move from one country to the other. They kind of look for support system all around them. They look for information, they look for direction they look for connection to ask questions to so that they're able to navigate that new environment. Well, in your case, are there specific community networks or organizations that have supported your integration? How well have these organizations supported your career advancement since you came over to the US?

**Participant 27:** Thank you for that question. It's a very important question. I would say that this is one big part, like as a people we have to like treat like importantly. One thing I didn't mention when I said I moved to the UK. I moved from the UK. To this place is that after about 2 and a half months or 3 months in the U.S.A. I moved back to the UK. To spend another 6 weeks before I now decided that okay, I'll come back. I never went back to UK because I wanted to. I went back to the UK because of the hardship I faced before I moved like when I moved here initially. It was so difficult, and I didn't know my onions, I didn't know what and what's not to where and where not to go, and there was no... the only places that wants to like help you, organizations that want to help you are religious organizations, but they are not helping you because they love you. They just want to increase their congregation. That is why they are helping you. And I believe we are in this survey, not we are living our religious beliefs and everything outside right? So if that is…

**Interviewer**: Right.

**Participant 27:** Correct.

**Interviewer**: Right.

**Participant 27:** Like every congregation, or be it Muslim associations or Christian doctrines, they are doing it because they they are doing it because they wanted to have you in a congregation to further increase their number, which is fine. It's a capitalist world. Everyone is doing something to get something, but I feel like as a community of immigrants, there should be a community of immigrant and also like sub communities. Because we are too, we are learned. We are too learned to be suffering as people, and it is sad. But yes, it was difficult, because I never had any any major like backbone or connection or everything at the start. So talking about that one, it was a ugly experience, and yes, it was very ugly and maybe surveys like this could help put things like that in place. Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that experience. Yes, people have different experiences. Some people already have, some people have soft landing when they come, because there's someone who said, Okay, you can stay with me for the first 3 months. There's someone who can provide the right information for people to navigate the new environment. So it's not the same experience for everybody. But I can understand your experience and your perspective and like you rightly said, that's one of the essence of this research to actually understand the challenges people face, because I believe the information is very, very important for people to be able to navigate the new environment better. And of course, it also has an impact in their career outcome eventually.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Thank** you for sharing your experience on that.

**Participant 27:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer**: Let's go to Section 5, dual cultural and economic challenges. There are 2 questions under this section. The first one is do you feel torn between the cultural expectations of Nigeria and the United States? How do you navigate this?

**Participant 27:** That's dicey question for me. If you are asking a cultural expectation about, do I feel torn about the cultural expectations of Nigeria and this place. And how do I feel about it? I think to be honest, I do not really think U.S.A. has that much culture, and if they really do, I think it's fast declining. So I don't feel much expectations for their culture, but for Nigeria, yes, I think I'm yeah obliged to some cultural values that I have to uphold and those ones I feel like this country is struggling to take it away from me as well. Yeah, the. the the major thing is just that I'm trying to keep my heads above water and make sure that in these expectations, like providing for family back home like always remembering that I have a religion, and I have to like make my people proud, and all that, so many other expectations that are expected of me to be met. I'm striving to meet it. But in U.S.A. I do not feel torn about any expectation about anything. Yeah, that's it.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you so much. One more question in this section. And you talked about economic expectation back home so, the the next question I want to ask is about economic challenges in terms of supporting families back in Nigeria. So the question is, have you faced economic challenges related to remittances or supporting family members in Nigeria?What strategies do you use to balance these dual responsibilities?

**Participant 27:** I'm a person that providing is where I find solace. So, when I came to this country, first thing that affected me mentally was that people that I do provide for, I couldn't provide for them any longer, and it affected me a lot, and one of the reasons that I kept going was not even for myself anymore. It was because of them, because they were looking up to. They're looking forward to like they just believed in me, and maybe not because they believed in me, maybe because they depend on me, or they want something from me. But yeah, so the only strategy I use in balancing this is that I don't look at them as dependents or people that are just asking me for money every time I look at them as a reason to keep going, and for that reason, because it is one out of 10 youth that is making it in Nigeria, and I try to understand this. I have friends, I have families, and I'm not obliged to help anybody. But I try my best and so the only way, the only thing I would say is that I turn this weakness into strength. For myself, I turned the when I was down at my lowest, and then they were still asking me and everything I said, Bro, there are some people there that are still looking up the ladder at you and all that. So for that reason, even after I get some bit of relief like I feel a bit better. I still keep going, I still, and I still use that as a motivation rather than thinking about it as oh, it's a problem for me. No, that's it.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you so much for sharing that. Let's go to the last section, recommendations I'm going to ask you 2 questions under this section 2 major questions. Then we can close the interview. You have talked a lot about your career back in Nigeria, how you transitioned to the United Kingdom. And now you came to the United States, and you said something that particularly interested me, that when you came you spent a few months, then you went back to UK for 6 weeks because you felt like, you are really, really struggling, and you really didn’t know how to figure things out in the US.

**Participant 27:** Yes.

**Interviewer**: When you came that time. So, you, having been an immigrant first in the UK, now in the US. And with the experiences you've had over over the course of transitioning from one country to the other, and particularly your experience in the US here. And I also believe that part of your experience are not just the only things that you have experienced, and as an individual. I think you also have a lot of interaction with immigrants like you and other people. So, you kind of have a very good understanding of what people go through when they come in as an immigrant.

**Participant 27:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: So, the first question I wanted to ask you is based on these experiences and what you have observed and what you have seen and what you have experienced. Do you think that in this Maryland that you live, and in the US in general, do you think there are things that are on ground like maybe policies or programs or practices that kind of help immigrants to succeed in their careers when they come over? And, on the other hand, do you also think there are policies, programs, and practices that rather than help immigrants to succeed, it kind of slows them down, it kind of makes it difficult for them to succeed in the professional career that they choose when they, come here to live.

**Participant 27:** So I would I would be frank with you. Maryland has been a blessing to immigrants, especially African immigrants, unless we are going to be a hypocrite about this. I was supposed to be in Texas, but I moved to this place because of friendly policies towards immigrants! Like what do you call it? My driver's license, I never even had an opportunity to have my SSN before I had my driver's license. So, I'm talking about it that there are also places that you can work with just the tax identification number which you can't do that in the majority of other states. I'm not saying, it depends on the kind of immigrant you know. Some immigrants are students and normally as student, you're not supposed to work some certain hours and all that. And so, but generally we would say that for me, Maryland has been a State that had put policies in place to help immigrants such as during the just concluded election after Trump came in, I was hearing things about the ICE going to hospital schools’ blah blah! But to my surprise, I got to a certain hospital and they placed some poster cards or boards there that seeking health solution is your right you will be protected, and everything. Schools also are told to call the I don't know maybe the principal or the police if the students are being harassed, and everything so or profiled, in whatever way. So, I think Maryland, I, for one, think they have put measures in place to support immigrant to some extent. Yes, so yeah. And for generally too speaking to people, a lot of people move down to Maryland from other States, and there is a reason why there is an influx of African immigrants in Maryland, and I think majorly, the reason is because this place is immigrant friendly, so I think they have tried, and but they could do more. For me. I think they have tried. Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Thank you so much for sharing your perspective on that question. So, the other question I want to ask now is, also based on your experience, your interaction, your awareness, your exposure to the realities, and what immigrants face when they come, what kind of changes or support system would you suggest that if they can be put in place, can help highly educated Nigerian immigrants succeed in their careers in Maryland here, and in the US?

**Participant 27:** That's a good question. First of all, I was disappointed…(inaudible)…yeah, it is a very important federal policy and going forward I think if there is a way the State Government and the Federal Government could just verify people's qualifications, not discriminate people's qualifications, and I know for sure that there, there are citizens that, that don't even have qualifications that immigrants have, that don't have the skills and experience that immigrants have, but that are in this and in certain jobs, because, okay, maybe they do not trust immigrants, which is understandable, but I think they should start looking into how it will benefit the country and the state more rather than how they want to, how they think, oh, it should go, or it should not go. So, when you put people that are not capable of or not so capable into roles that they are not supposed to fill, it causes a backlog and a lot of problems, especially in a managerial or hierarchical kind of firm. So, I think majorly, we really need to, they really need to do better in recognizing qualifications, and maybe some policies to protect learned people or highly educated people, so that people would not feel that their skills are underused. So, it is very, very essential because this is one of the problems, half of the people probably doing some some certain jobs in this country, as immigrants are not supposed to be there, they are supposed to be in some other parastatals, helping the government and providing more tax for the government, but because of they have been sidelined, and they have been profiled to think we are not capable of doing certain things. Then the State is also losing in some ways. The Federal Government is also losing in some ways, so that is, and being a country of, this country was built by immigrants. So I think these policies were supposed to or needs to be reviewed, and maybe they just need to protect immigrants better in this aspect.

**Interviewer**: Hmm, thank you so much for your time. I know you could have used your evening for something, maybe, for yourself or your family. I appreciate your time and the very, very interesting perspective that you've shared with me in this interview this evening.

**Participant 27:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer**: If you would like to have a summary, a copy of the summary of the findings, once I finish this research, please let me know I'm going to provide you with a copy.

**Participant 27:** Yeah, I wouldn't mind.

**Interviewer**: Thank you so much for your time. I'm going to stop the recording now.

**Participant 27:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer**: Thank you.