**Interviewer**: Good morning, sir, and thank you for joining me for this interview.

**Participant 28:** You’re welcome

**Interviewer**: And since you have given me permission to record the interview, I want to let you know that the interview is now in progress, and is being recorded. So, before we start, we have 6 sections in this interview. Under each section there are a certain number of questions that I will ask you under each of the 6 sections. So, for section one, it is demographic information. Under this section I have 5 questions. So, let's just start straight away with the first question, and the first question is, can you please share your age, your gender, and your country of origin?

**Participant 28:** Okay. I was born in 1960, I’m a male, and from Nigeria

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you so much. I'm trying to get my calculator to calculate the age ,1960. Okay, 65 years. Thank you.

**Participant 28:** You’re welcome.

**Interviewer**: Can you tell us your highest level of education? And what country did you obtain your education from?

**Participant 28:** Well, I attended Federal polytechnic Ado-Ekiti, and I had some professional exams in accounting.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Participant 28:** From Nigeria, Institute of Chattered Accountants of Nigeria.

**Interviewer**: So, you're Certified Chartered Accountant.?

**Participant 28:** Certified under AAT.

**Interviewer**: Okay, a professional accountant back in Nigeria. Okay, thank you. And with a degree from the Polytechnic. Thank you for sharing that. Let's go to number 3. How long have you lived in the United States? Specifically in Maryland.

**Participant 28:** Going to 3 years now.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you so much. What is your current profession or job title?

**Participant 28:** I'm into healthcare, so I'm a CMT.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Participant 28:** DSP (Direct Support Professional), as precise.

**Interviewer**: That’s Direct Support Professional. Okay, thank you. You already said you were a professional accountant back in Nigeria. The last question is, I wanted to ask, but I still want to ask the question, all the same, in case you have anything to add. What was your profession in Nigeria before migrating?

**Participant 28:** Oh, I'm a school proprietor. I own a school offering creche, nursery, primary, secondary. So, I'm in school owner in Nigeria, I'm still the school owner as of today. So of course, it's still back in Nigeria.

**Interviewer**: Okay, yeah. Thank you. So, you run a school, a school that has K-12, education. That's from grade 1 to grade 12.

**Participant 28:** Yeah, okay, if that’s the way you know it to be here, but in Nigeria, it is a creche, nursery, primary and secondary.

**Interviewer**: And secondary. Okay, yeah, thank you. Section 2, we talk about push and pull factors. These are factors that people consider before they migrate from their country of origin to another country, or let's say generally, the factors that people consider before relocating from one country to the other. So, the first question under this section is, what motivated you to migrate to the United States? Were there specific factors in Nigeria that made you to leave, eg. economic, social, or political challenges?

**Participant 28:** Actually, I've been visiting US for some time, but due to insecurity in Nigeria. So, I came in and seek for asylum.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you, sir. Okay. The US is a big country, and people choose where they want to live within the US based on different factors or different reasons. The next question I wanted to ask is in 2 parts. The first part is what I know you said. You've been visiting the United States before you finally relocated. But the the question I wanted to ask is, what attracted you to the United States in general? and why Maryland in particular?

**Participant 28:** You know I told you because of security reason back in Nigeria. I got here and I see that I can be secured. I said, let me, and that's why I decided to stay back and coming to Maryland, I've been visiting Maryland, and I know Maryland, so let me stay back in Maryland.

**Interviewer**: So, you're familiar with Maryland environment?

**Participant 28:** Yes.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that, sir. The last question under this section is about the challenges people face when they leave their country of origin and move to another country. These challenges can be even before they move. A lot of people face difficulties in mobilizing resources. Some people during the migration process they run into different challenges, some people, when they finally migrated trying to settle down in the new country, they encounter different challenges. In your case, will you be able to tell us what challenges you have encountered during your own migration process?

**Participant 28:** Because, you know, as I said, I decided to come, and before I left Nigeria, I made that arrangement for my accommodation. So, I got a place even before I left Nigeria. And getting back here, I decided to do some CMT certification training. And here I am. So, I wouldn't say challenges, because I made up my mind to do it.

**Interviewer**: Thank you so much. We go back to pro professional experience. Why, I said, we go back to professional experience is because you, we just did an introduction based on what you were doing in Nigerian, and your background. I just wanted to know your career trajectory in Nigeria, right from the jobs you have done, if there's a way you can just summarize it briefly, the kind of jobs you have done, because I just don't want to assume that right after you left school, you just started running a school or managing a school. It's possible you must have worked in certain places. You don't have to mention the name of these places, but maybe you can tell me what kind of job it was, the positions you held there before you started your business, and then how you moved to the US up to the point that you migrated to the US. So, if you can just share your career trajectory in Nigeria briefly before relocating to the United States.

**Participant 28:** No, I told you, majority part of my working life is being an accountant. I was a (inaudible) clerk in a company, a freight and cargo company. Then I moved. I moved to accounting line, you know, join a company at Ibadan as an assistant accountant, then moved to Lagos became an accountant, company accountant. Then I discovered I could start my own business. Then I did that.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. Before I move to the next question, I just want to know the like, how many years of experience did you have in Nigeria before you left in total?

**Participant 28:** If you look at it now with the one I told you now is my 3 years in staying here in America. So, and I started my carrier may be about when I was 30 years. So, I'm giving you the calculation where I started.

**Interviewer**: Yes.

**Participant 28:** I started 30 years, my career, then I stayed 3 years in America. Okay.

**Interviewer**: All right. Thank you for sharing that. Give me a second. Yes, based on what you have told me, I think your total working years of experience before you moved over is 32 years.

**Participant 28:** Exactly.

**Interviewer**: Yes, from 1990 to 2022. And you've been in the US since 2022 now. Okay, thank you. You have a very interesting career back in Nigeria. Now let us talk about your current career trajectory in the United States. You've touched on it. You're in the healthcare sector, and you've been doing it for the past 3 years. Are you able to just describe briefly how the journey has been so far since you moved to the US?

**Participant 28:** It's been good, because this is a profession, I know I can, you know call a passion profession, you know. You must have passion for it. You must love to do it, to be caring, and, you know, show love to your kind of individuals. So, it's been good and having the training, you know, go through this training, or, you know, so it makes the job easier for me.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. People talk about the skills they have had before they moved over to to this country, a lot of people talk about the challenges they face if they have acquired skills in a different profession, and when they came over they have to start over in a new direction, a new career. A lot of times, they say that this skill they had before they are not able to utilize it very well in the new profession. They are just starting because they are new in the country. I want to ask that in your own case. How well do you feel your skills and qualifications are being fully utilized in the current job you're doing now?

**Participant 28:** They are different profession entirely, you know, an accountant and a health care giver. They are not really interrelated. But the point is you know, since I can't get what I wanted, then I have to go for alternative. That is the main purpose of doing the job. I know that is healthcare job is the available job that I can easily do to sustain myself here. And erm I have to go for the training, then that is all.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. I want to ask questions about barriers that people face when people are trying to navigate the new environment professionally. Some of these barriers have to do with licensing requirements, recognition of foreign qualifications, and even workplace discrimination. I wanted to also ask in your own case, since you have been around, have you faced any barriers in these major areas in terms of professional landscapes, or such as licensing requirements, recognition, or foreign qualifications and workplace discrimination? What strategies have you used to overcome these challenges if you have faced any challenges in any of these areas before.

**Participant 28:** Oh, really, there is, I would say there are a lot of challenges, as you have said and certification is that I've gone through that, and you know, had the certification at least to a level. The other one is, you know, since I've made up my mind that I want to work in a foreign land, you know definitely there will be some challenges. So, which is, which means I have to endure some, and if I know I can’t endure, then I’ll leave the place and get for another one, you know. That is, it's something that I've planned to do so, I wouldn't allow any challenges to weigh me down on the job, you know, and that is it.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. You are mentally prepared for the challenges that will come, and that helps you to manage those challenges.

**Participant 28:** That is good. Since it's a planned work, it's what I have made up my mind to do, so I shouldn't run away from challenges.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Thank you. Let's move to Section 4. Under Section 4, we will talk about cultural assimilation and social integration. A lot of people talk about culture shock. When they come over to a new environment, they see things in a different way. The way people think the norms and values may be different from where they are coming from. In the society, socially, even in a professional environment. I want to ask you, how will you describe your own experience of cultural assimilation in Maryland here, have you experienced any cultural or social challenges since you migrated? How have you navigated these cultural differences in both your personal and professional life?

**Participant 28:** In the area of cultural differences, the only area where I know I've been able to handle well is my meals, or would I say the type of food you know I'm not used to eating, is it spaghetti they call it here, or noodles, you understand? So.

**Interviewer**: American food, generally, right?

**Participant 28:** God bless you! So, I'm not used to eating that kind of food. So, I and since I would have work that would earn me one or two amount of money every week or every 2 weeks, I get my, I get to African market to buy some food, and that is the only challenge I see there, because they are more expensive, and that is, that is better. I just have to, you know, continue my life by eating good food that I love to eat.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Thank you. Before I move to the next question, I still want to ask a specific question about work environment. The work environment here and the work environment back home in Nigeria, do you see any cultural differences? And do you find anyone more challenging? I know you've talked about personal and cultural and social experience. But I wanted to know from the professional space, if you find anything challenging the way they do things in the professional environment in terms of the norms and values. Maybe you saw things that are different from the way things were done back or from your experience back in Nigeria, and if you found any of them particularly challenging, and how you navigated them.

**Participant 28:** Definitely, there will be challenges, because they are 2 different, how would I say work experience, or you know the way we work in Nigeria is quite different from here. In Nigeria, being a proprietor, the owner, I got some staff, you know, working under me which I'm still paying their salary up to tomorrow, you know. So whatever instruction I give they are bound to follow up, obey my instruction. But here I'm an employee here, so I'm the one obeying here, you understand. So, there are 2 different ways of comparing. One cannot just compare. They are 2 different and opposite ways. So, as I said earlier, the preparation of mind settles most of these challenges and determination to do the job.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that perspective which is quite true. There's one more question under that cultural assimilation and social share integration. When people come, when immigrants arrive newly, they experience different challenges looking for job, accommodation, looking for information, looking for help in navigating the new environment. Some people turn to, maybe family and friends, or they may go to an organization, maybe to seek help. Some people have said, maybe when they came, they went to a Nigerian church, or there was a church that was helpful. In your case, were there any specific community networks or organizations that have supported you during your integration process, and how well have these organizations supported your career advancement?

**Participant 28:** In fact, to be candid, I didn't go for any organization help or whatever, because my leaving Nigeria, I decided that I want to leave. I want to, that my life is not secure, that because I was kidnapped twice in Nigeria. So, and I know there's no way of staying back in Nigeria since so, I made up my mind I got some, remember I told you earlier that the one room apartment that I got. I, you know, was settled before I left Nigeria. So, I made up my mind to let me settle them. Not up to I got some money, you know, which I brought my BTA or basic travel allowance. So, I started my CMT, you know, training about 2 weeks, I got the certification, then I looked for Job, because I know that I can’t just come to foreign land you know, without being something that I've planned for years and become a burden for myself. I mean, I have made up my mind, and I've planned towards that even though it was a very short period of time you know but I just have to move on. That's why I decided to do that.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, thank you for sharing that. And I must say that, that particular experience security issues that you had having gone through something like that 2 times. I think that can be very traumatic. I'm very sorry about that. And that's quite yes, that's quite disturbing, which was the main reason why you had to leave Nigeria. Thank you for sharing that perspective.

**Participant 28:** Okay.

**Interviewer**: We go to section 5. Section 5, we will talk about cultural and economic challenges. There are 2 questions here. Let me start with the first one. Do you feel torn between the cultural expectations of Nigeria and the United States, how do you navigate this?

**Participant 28:** Oh, you know, in Nigeria, if we are to look at our culture, it's quite different from the one experiencing here. But I mean as a person I as I'm you know as a person there, you know. I know that I'm going to experience all these things because I'm going to a place where I don't have their cultural experience. So, getting here the first hitch that I had was this wintertime. In Nigeria, we don't have winter you know that is severe the way we are experiencing here, so, you know it give me and you know make me remember when I got to the airport the way the weather hit you know I was almost shedding tears, you know, because I hadn’t experienced it before. I don't know. It’s so severe like that. As time goes on. I got my own jacket, too. Got whatever that I need to get. And here I am today.

**Interviewer**: And I believe you are very, very used to the weather and everything now.

**Participant 28:** Oh, thank God! Thank God! At least no option, at least, for now you know no, no, no option. And that and that is part of why I decided to stay back in Baltimore you know. That is, you know, I believe it's still better off than other states, though I've not been there. But I got the news of people talking about that. Baltimore is good. Baltimore is good for that, is it.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. The last question under this section 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 28:** It will happen definitely, because I have children. I have brothers and sisters who are of age, you know, so they are my dependant. Even while I was in Nigeria, they, I do handle their, you know, financial obligation to them. But now, when I got here the little I can send to them, I still do it! So, and I thank God for it.

**Interviewer**: Thank you for sharing that. We go to the last section, which is section 6. We will talk about recommendations. And I have 2 major questions in this section 6. As someone who has lived in the US and Maryland for the past 3 years, as someone is coming with loads of experienced professional skills, business management skills and experience and ideas. Back in Nigeria, you had a very thriving career spanning over 32 years before you came over here. And also, I believe that since you've lived in the US, in Maryland here for the past 3 years. I believe that you have also interacted with immigrants like you, and you have a kind of a little understanding and exposure to the challenges they face. So, the question I want to ask is based on all this experience that you've had as an immigrant in Maryland here, do you think that people that come from Nigeria that are highly educated, and they have very good skills, professional experience, do you think the way they survive this professional environment, this surviving work environment here, do you think there are policies, programs or structures that are already in place that help them or hurt them. I mean are their policy, programs that are already in place, that you feel like, help them to thrive well with everything they are bringing in? On the other hand, do you also feel like there are policies, programs, or structures that slow them down to advance in their career?

**Participant 28:** Like rightly said somebody, coming from Nigeria with load of experiences and you know a well, well to do someone coming like myself. Like getting here, if you don't have the work permit, it can slow you down, you know, you might not be able to to work you know, and the other benefits. So, there are some policies that can slow one down, you know, in making progress here (inaudible) after going through those, you know, I have been able to achieve one or 2 areas in that policy, at least, you it will help (inaudible) definitely being an immigrant coming to a new place, there will be established policies that an immigrant must go through. So, you know that the range you know of the time before you can go through those policies is going to slow one down, you know. So, but after you know, getting over it, at least one can thrive.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. The other question is still about how to help and support people that are highly educated back in Nigeria or Africa in general, and when they come over to the US and Maryland, specifically, what kind of changes or support systems do you think that if they are put in place can help these highly educated immigrants succeed in their career in the US here and in Maryland, specifically?

**Participant 28:** You know, our purpose of coming to migrate to US is really quite different from each other.

**Interviewer**: Hmm.

**Participant 28:** You know, so depends on what you are coming with. If you are coming to work with a work visa you, you have different advice that one should give, you know. But if someone coming, you know as a visitor to America and wants to stay back in America, you know there are some things you have to put in place. There are some things you have to do so, it depends. It depends on their purpose of coming, you know, but the most important thing is that one should advise you are in a foreign land, be a law abiding person, that's all.

**Interviewer**: Thank you so much. We are now coming to the end of the interview. But before I close the interview, I just want to ask you if you have any additional comment or insight that you would like to share.

**Participant 28:** Not, really because I don't. If one is then how would I just put it? But it's not a question per se. But erm well, don't let me go far. Don't let me go far. Since I've been able to assist, at least in asking some questions at least. I'm okay

**Interviewer**: Yes, absolutely. You've yes, you ‘ve shared your perspective, which are very, very interesting. And your understanding of the issues that we discussed are very central to the core of my research, and I want to thank you for your time and your valuable input that you have shared during this interview

**Participant 28:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer**: And if you want me to send you a summary of the study findings when the whole research is completed, please let me know. I will provide you with a copy.

**Participant 28:** Oh, you can send it. You can send at least let me know to the end, what you have started.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. I'm going to do that. I really appreciate your time coming this morning. So, I'm going to stop recording now.

**Participant 28:** Alright. Thank you.

**Interviewer**: Thank you so much.