**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for joining us in this interview. Having gotten your consent to record, I will start the interview now. Before I start, the interview is in 6 sections.

I will start with section one, which is about demographic information. Under this section, I have 5 questions.

**Participant 8:** Okay.

**Interviewer**: Can you share your age, gender and country of origin?

**Participant 8**: I'm 46 years old. I'm a male, and I am originally from Nigeria, in Africa.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you. What is your highest level of education, and what country did you obtain your degrees from?

**Participant 8:** My highest level of education is second degree and I had one in Nigeria, a masters in information technology and another master's in project management from the United Kingdom.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you. So, you have 2 Master's degrees?

**Participant 8:** Yes, I do.

**Interviewer**: Okay. So that means you have a bachelor's degree plus one master's degree in Nigeria, and one Master's degree from the United Kingdom?

**Participant 8**: Yes, please.

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

**Participant 8:** It’s okay.

**Interviewer**: How long have you lived in the US? Maryland, specifically.

**Participant 8**: Yeah, I've been here for 8 months now, all together in US and Maryland specifically.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. Next question is, what is your current profession or job title?

**Participant 8**:[Uh] Currently, I work as direct support Professional, caring for individuals with challenging behavior.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. The last question under the Demographic Information section. What was your profession in Nigeria before you migrated to the US?

**Participant 8**:[Uh] My last profession in Nigeria, I worked as a finance manager in an IT company.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you. We move to Section 2. Under this section, we'll be talking about Push and Pull factors that influence why people migrate from one country to the other, let me say, from their country of origin to another country.

Under the section 2, we have about[uh] 4 questions. I will start with the first one, really quick.

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 8:** Yeah [uh] ,my desire to leave Nigeria, and to come specifically to the United States was primarily because I believe, and it's my opinion, that the world economy revolves around America, because that is a common currency with which most economies around the world are being measured. So, I believe, being within the system here will afford me opportunity to be able to measure my growth in real time.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you so much. Why, Maryland in particular? That's the next question. Why did you decide to come to Maryland? Why not other States?

**Participant 8**: Yeah, I chose Maryland, because from the little research I was able to do, I realized that it's a state where we have [uh] a multicultural society, where we have so many countries present here, a mixture of Africa, South America and I believe within that environment, it will afford me opportunity to be able to integrate faster into the system in America.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you. What challenges have you encountered during the migration process?

**Participant 8**: Among the challenges that I've encountered, which I'm still facing is getting a job, this is one major thing in my desired field.

Then the opportunity to go out to meet with, to have a good time has been limited, basically because of the crime rate being reported around. So those two factors are the major ones that I'm facing currently.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. We move to Section 3 - Professional Experiences. In this section, I also have about 5 questions. The first question is- I want you to tell us your career growth or career trajectory in Nigeria before you relocated to the US. You will come back to your career trajectory in the US later but first, I just want you to tell us about your career trajectory in Nigeria before you moved over to the US here.

**Participant 8:** Okay. So, after my 1st degree in Nigeria, I graduated from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife in Nigeria. I finished from the Department of Economics. So, I started off working in an IT company as a junior account’s manager, and because of personal development and commitment to my job, I was able to rise to the position of finance manager in the company and that was basically the company where I worked while I was back home in Nigeria.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Participant 8:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Thank you. Like, how many years did you work in Nigeria before you left.

**Participant 8**: Altogether I worked 13 years in Nigeria before I left.

**Interviewer:** Oh! 13 years. Okay

**Participant** 8: Yeah.

**Interviewer**: In the IT industry?

**Participant 8**: Yes, in the IT Industry.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. How would you describe your current career trajectory in the United States?

**Participant 8**: Well, because I've not been here for a long time. I've only spent 8 months. I've only had a job since I came in, which is a direct support Professional, assisting those with challenging behavior. It has just been the only job I've been doing, and I hope in the days to come, I will be able to explore jobs in my desired fields, relating to information technology.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. The next question is about [uh] your skills and qualifications. How well do you feel your skills and qualifications are being fully utilized in your current position?

**Participant 8**: So, as regards my skills[erm], it is partially being utilized because most of it relates to information technology because from day to day I have to deal with individuals, speak to them, my communication skill comes to play. Then, my interaction with people too comes to play with individuals and … I would actually like to do more in the area relating to my field, so that I will be able to put to practice all I've done in the past, and all I've learned in the course of my personal developmental growth.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you for sharing that. The last question under this section.

What barriers have you faced in the professional landscape such as licensing requirements, recognition of foreign qualifications or workplace discrimination. What strategies have you used to overcome these challenges.?

**Participant 8**: So like, I said, I'm still trying to secure a job in my desired field, and the licensing wouldn't be an issue for me, because aside my degree qualification which I've gotten before coming to the United States. I've also gotten some certification which are relevant to my field here. So, I'm just trying to see how to get more interviews and eventually lands my 1st job in America in the IT field.

**Interviewer:** Okay [erm] yeah. You talked about your certifications, your degrees and your uh] desire to get job in IT field, in the IT industry?

**Participant 8:** Yes, please.

**Interviewer**: There's one factor there that you didn't mention but it's okay because not everybody has that; not everybody experienced it but just wanted to point your attention to it so that we don't miss it if you feel like there was anything that's been like, maybe a workplace discrimination?

**Participant 8**: Yeah [uh], there has been workplace discrimination but [uh] I don't really give much attention to it, because wherever I'm working I always like to be happy, and if I'm not happy I would rather prefer to take my leave, so as much as it depends on me. I try to[uh], how do I put it? [uh] I try to put my mind off it and focus on what I'm able to do and focus my attention on the people that are most interested in me.

So, if an individual is not showing interest, or the client I'm dealing with is not showing interest, I don't allow that to bother me or to weigh me down. I keep my heads off, and continue to do what I know how to do best.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for explaining that. So, in other words, even if you feel like maybe somebody is not welcoming, you just focus on the big picture; what you think is important to you, and you act very professional, irrespective of whatever attitude anybody is showing around you.

**Participant 8**: Definitely.

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

**Participant 8**: Hmm.

**Interviewer**: We talk a little bit, talk more about that in a bit in the next, next section, section 4. Section 4 is about cultural assimilation and social integration. So, [uh] I'll go to the 1st question under this section.

How would you describe your experience of cultural assimilation in Maryland here?

**Participant 8**: [Sighs] cultural assimilation has not been too bad, because the majority of the people have had interactions with are from Africa or they themselves are migrants. Yeah, so it has not been too bad generally that's the way I can put it compared to my experiences while I was in other countries like United Kingdom or Canada. So here, because majority of the people I interact with are also immigrants. So, it makes it look like there has been basically no much difference for me.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. So, you also spoke about, looks like you have lived in other countries before, you mentioned United Kingdom, you mentioned Canada.

**Participant 8:** Yes, please.

Interviewer: So, you lived in those places before you moved to the United States.

**Participant 8:** Yes, please.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. [Erm]Question 2: I don't…let me not preempt your answer to question 2 since you said there, there hasn't been much cultural challenge.

Question 2 is actually about if you have experienced any cultural or social challenges since you migrated?

**Participant 8:** Not, no.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Participant 8:** I can't remember any for now.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. Question 3. You may have touched on this a little, too, but let me still go ahead and read it in case you have anything to add to it.

**Participant 8:** Okay

**Interviewer**: How have you navigated cultural differences in your personal and professional life?

**Participant 8**: Yeah, what I've done basically, it's just to keep my head up. I don't allow people's attitude or their speech to weigh me down. So, I just keep my heads up at all times.

Professionally, too, I make sure at all times I lean towards those who I know are friendly

and ready to mingle with immigrants, so it makes it easier for me to get along my workplace.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. [Erm]the last 2 questions in this section are: Cultural assimilation and social integration section. I'll combine the 2 questions into one.

Are there specific community networks or organizations that have supported your integration? How well have these organizations supported your career advancement If there are any organizations like that at all?

**Participant 8**: No.

**Interviewer:** Oh, okay. When I talk to people, some people mentioned, maybe churches. Some people mentioned professional organizations, or maybe cultural groups; maybe some people that came from a certain part of the country and they meet in the Us. They talked about sharing information and networking. I just wanted to see if you have anything to add to that. But if there is nothing there, we can move to the next section.

**Participant 8**: Yeah. So basically, I would say[uh]maybe my school union and my friends that I have who live around the Maryland here but [uh] not any particular organization.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Participant 8:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Thank you. We go to section 5. I have just 3 questions under this section and this section is about dual cultural and economic challenges.

The 1st question here- Do you feel torn between the cultural expectations of Nigeria and that of the United States? If this is so, how do you navigate this.?

**Participant 8**: Not at all. I don't feel torn or embarrassed by any cultural expectations. It's just been same of the same because majority of individuals have related with are Nigerians. Majority have been Nigerian, so there has been no much difference for me.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. Have you encountered economic challenges related to remittances or supporting family members in Nigeria? What strategies do you use to balance these dual responsibilities?

**Participant 8:** Yeah, I have basically because I don't have much income initially when I came in. So, I was actually spending my savings so I couldn't meet up with my obligations for the first few months but later on, because of my saving culture and desire to take opportunity to work more.

I was able to balance up with time, and it has not been bad in recent times.

So, my saving culture has actually helped me along this line.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Thank you so much. Yeah, we go to the last section.

section 6 and it is about recommendations. I have about 4 questions there.

What changes or support system would you suggest helping highly educated Nigerian immigrants succeed in their careers in the US?

**Participant 8:** Uhm, I will say individuals should be selective in the kind of individuals they associate with because association we always determine the direction and individual we go.

If one is with individual who are career oriented, it will actually help. So for individuals to be able to eventually find their footings in the career path where they were before coming in into the US.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you. Next question - Are there policies or programs that you feel help or hinder the highly educated Nigerian and African immigrants in Maryland and the United States in general.?

**Participant 8:** Hmmm Policies or program? Well, I think the process of getting certified for a lot of educated immigrants before they can start to work is always a rigorous process and it puts a lot of people off. So, if there are ways through which this can be simplified, it makes easier. It’s going to be nice.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so {stutters} certifications more like processes that can help people[uh] to utilize their experiences, their academic qualifications and…

**Participant 8:** yeah, from their country

**Interviewer**: and professional skills from their own country.

**Participant 8:** Yes please.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. Are there any policies or programs that you think should be implemented to address the barriers faced by Nigerian and African immigrants?

**Participant 8**:[Pauses] I think if the system can allow individuals who have a proven track record of experiences in a particular field to be able to work under the supervision of [uh] individual who already certified, like certified professional here, it will make it easier to integrate them into the system rather than waiting for them to first go and get their licensing here, which may take a long time and if the government can make these policies in such a way that it is friendly for foreigners, then it will encourage a whole lot of individuals who have abandoned their career to actually go back to it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, thank you for that suggestion and thank you for sharing that.

Just one more question - Do you have any additional comment or insights you would like to share?

**Participant 8**: Yeah, I would just want to say that as immigrants who are professional from our own country we should learn we should not lose sight of our career just because we are here, we should remain focused and if it involves a little sacrifice of going back to school to get certified, we should be willing to do it because that will help us to be on a high pedestal towards contributing meaningfully into the economy of America.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, thank you. Thank you for that contribution.

Yes, we've come to the end of the interview. I just want to thank you for your time and the valuable input you have shared during this interview. If by the time I publish the findings of this research, you would like me to send you a summary of the research findings, please let me know I will provide a copy by email.

**Participant 8:** Alright, that would be fine. I will appreciate that.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. Thank you so much for your time.

**Participant 8:** Wishing you all the best.

**Interviewer:** I will stop the recording now.