CULTURAL BELIEFS, BEHAVIORS, AND MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG FIRST- AND SECOND-GENERATION HAITIANS

by

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Abstract

This quantitative study was a correlational exploration of cultural beliefs and behaviors related to family, work, and social activities, and their impact on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants to the United States. Eighty respondents completed a marital satisfaction survey and a cultural beliefs and behaviors survey of 150 questions each. Of the 80 participants, 40 were first-generation and the other 40 were second-generation immigrants. All of the participants were 18 years old and older, lived in an urban area, and were married. It was hypothesized that first-generation Haitian Americans would score higher than their second-generation counterparts regarding interdependent cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, and social activities, which would positively correlate with marital satisfaction. It was also hypothesized that second-generation Haitian Americans would score higher than their first-generation counterparts regarding independent cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, and social activities. It was expected that these scores would positively correlate with marital satisfaction. The relationships between the variables were explored through the performance of descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The results of the analysis of variance indicated no significant differences in marital satisfaction scores between first and second-generation Haitians. In addition, the multiple regression analysis indicated that cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with social activities, family, and work were not significantly related to marital satisfaction for either first or second-generation Haitian immigrants.

Dedication

To God, my Creator, and Jesus Christ, my Savior and Redeemer, who guided me and inspired me throughout the process. God gave me strength to keep going when stress, frustration, and discouragement overwhelmed me and threatened my success. Thank you Lord!

To my beloved wife, Nicole Exantus, who consented to greater sacrifices during those long and painful evening hours of research and writing, time during which she lacked my precious presence and the quality moments we usually spend together. Thank you for your remarkable understanding. I am forever indebted to you. I am really appreciative of your words of encouragement and all the contributions you have made toward this great lifetime achievement. You believed in my ability to complete this great life milestone. You never missed any opportunity to encourage me to pursue my goal with perseverance and resilience. We have made it. This achievement is also yours. To my dear son, Stephen Moses Exantus, who was often unfairly robbed of my attention during some of those long evening hours of research, thank you for your understanding. You have been my inspiration and motivation. I hope you choose to pursue excellence as well.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors (family, work, and social activities) and how they related to marital satisfaction among first-generation and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings. In that regard, the study compared the cultural approach of two distinct generations of people of the same country of origin and examined their cultural beliefs and behaviors on marital satisfaction.

Over one million people currently immigrate to the United States of America every year (Kisselev, Brown, & Brown, 2010). These immigrant individuals and groups have to adapt to the American culture to have a happy and successful life in the host society. This process of adaptation is known as acculturation, which is a process of mutual change of individuals and groups of different cultures that come into continuous contact (Dominguez & Maya-Jariego, 2008).

A large concentration of Haitian immigrants lives in American urban settings (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). According to Bhattacharya (2011), the acculturation process is often stressful. Haitians migrating to the United States experience cultural adjustment or adaptation similar to other immigrant groups (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). However, limited literature exists to explain the exact nature and impact of cultural distress and cultural identity as established through cultural beliefs and behaviors on marital

satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants (Nicolas, Desilva, Prater, & Bronkoski, 2009).

Immigration and acculturation in America are topics that have been studied by many researchers, including Bernstein, Park, Shin, and Cho (2011), who explored the numerous changes the immigrants experience during the process of acculturation. Glick (2010) studied immigrant families for over a decade and discovered that immigration drives much of the growth and diversity in the United States population. The very nature of American society has been shaped by the shifting mix of immigrants and their offspring. Piedra and Engstrom (2009) examined the segmented assimilation of immigrants and identified the factors that contribute to different rates of acculturation among immigrant parents and their offspring. The authors also explained how intergenerational acculturation patterns impact the way the second generation faces external obstacles, and the difficulties immigrant families have with acculturating into American society. Piedra and Engstrom argued that the acculturation process often results in numerous and consequential social problems affecting the immigrants' personal lives and eventually, their marital relationships.

According to Piedra and Engstrom (2009), empirical research on immigrants' acculturation and assimilation can help social workers better understand the environmental stressors that increase the vulnerabilities of immigrants to potentially harsh experiences. Piedra and Engstrom linked such experiences to the process of acculturation to which the immigrants are subject in a new country or society. In addition, they expressed a belief that results from studies will equip social workers who work with

immigrant families, and they will be positioned to achieve the essential goal of social work, to enhance the lives of people and to improve environment.

Cultural competence is essential when providing counseling services to families of other cultures (Vespia, Fitzpatrick, Fouard, Kantamneni, & Chen, 2010). Human services professionals in the United States can benefit from this study, as they often provide social services to individuals from diverse ethnic groups (Vespia et al., 2010). The results may provide a better understanding of the immigrant populations from a cultural perspective. In addition to cultural competence skills, human-service professionals must understand the cultural differences between generations of immigrants, and how those differences affect their work and social activities, work relationships, family relationships, and marital satisfaction.

The findings of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on acculturation and its impact on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitians in the United States, as no other empirical study can be found in the literature that specifically address cultural beliefs and among Haitian immigrants with respect to work, family, and social activities as they relate to marital satisfaction. Findings from this study may encourage further studies on immigrant groups in the United States with respect to the impact of their cultural beliefs on their work and social activities, family relationships, and marital satisfaction.

Background of the Study

Immigration is a global issue because one of the foremost reasons millions of people from poor countries migrate to richer ones through legal and illegal channels is to provide better lives for themselves and their families (Liebert, 2010). Immigrants come to

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the United States from all parts of the world. According to the U.S. Census, the foreign-born population was 32.5 million in 2002, which represented 11.5% of the total U.S. population. Results from the U.S. Census 2000 indicated there were 420,000 documented Haitian immigrants residing in the United States, making this immigrant group the second largest group among the Black foreign-born population (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011).

The problem the researcher proposed to investigate pertains to cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities, work and family relationships, as they relate to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in the United States. The research questions that were central to the study are the following:

1. How do cultural beliefs and behaviors as identified through the *CBBAP* relate to marital satisfaction among first generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting?

2. How do cultural beliefs and behaviors as identified through the *CBBAP* relate to marital satisfaction among second-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting?

Belizaire and Fuertes (2011) posited that the stress Haitian immigrants experience is often associated with learning a new language and work skills, following new social and cultural norms, and coping with financial hardship. The authors cited a study conducted on Haitian immigrants by Mena, Padilla, and Maldonado (1987) on acculturative stress and found that individuals who migrated before the age of 12 years experienced less acculturative stress, and that first-generation individuals experienced greater acculturative stress than did later generation individuals. The first-generation

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Haitian immigrants tend to stick to the values and norms of their country of origin while trying to adjust to the American culture (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). Clinging to such values and norms creates a stressful situation that can lead to other social problems for the immigrants.

Haitians migrating to the United States experience cultural adjustment or adaptation like any other immigrant group, which subjects them to stress and related social problems (Oksana, 2010). Many Haitian immigrants who are stressed and overwhelmed by the cultural adaptation process experience significant social problems, and this acculturative stress rooted in the coping paradigm is typical to all immigrants (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). Oksana (2010) claimed that it is typical for both families and individuals who have immigrated to experience "extreme levels of stress ... during and after relocation" (p. 256). Haitian immigrants are culturally attached to their homeland, and they are frequently confronted with racism and discrimination, and are at risk for poverty in the host society. Those social problems have an impact on their marital satisfaction as well (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011).

Few researchers have conducted empirical research to address the Haitian immigrants' social problems, like Belizaire and Fuertes (2011) who conducted research in which they addressed the attachment, coping, and acculturative stress among Haitian immigrants. Nicolas et al. (2009) argued in a research article on immigrants, including Haitians, that "the exact nature and impact of the empathic family stress experienced by Haitian immigrants is not discussed in the literature" (p. 135). Therefore, this study may fill a gap in the literature by investigating cultural beliefs and behaviors with respect to

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work, family, social activities, and how they impact marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in the United States.

People migrate to the United States for different reasons, and their migration patterns are characterized by either pull forces or push forces (Green, 2009). A pull force can be described as a social or economic condition, such as better economic or educational opportunities. A push force can be perceived as a dangerous or unsafe living condition, such as political, religious or other persecutions, and the push and pull factors have contributed to an exponential rise in the number of people crossing borders worldwide (Green, 2009).

Yakushko, Watson, and Thompson (2008) reported on a study conducted on recent immigrants and refugees, and they argued that immigrants across generations go through processes of diminishing ethnic distinctions, and that ethnicity is gradually reduced to something primarily symbolic. The authors argued it is the unavoidable result of a classic and structural assimilation of immigrants' children, and that the immigrants' cultural beliefs and behaviors will influence their marital satisfaction, drive their social activities, characterize their family and work relationships. First-generation Haitian immigrants must face the dilemma of cultural adjustment or adaptation in the United States, and this is part of the acculturation process (Nicolas et al., 2009). However, Haitian immigrants of first and second generation in the United States experience the process of acculturation and assimilation on two different levels. They experience it on a cultural level and on a social level, and their cultural and social adjustment can be either emotionally distressful or painless (Oksana, 2010).

All immigrants go through the process of acculturation, which is often very stressful (Bhattacharya, 2011). By definition, "acculturation is a process of change persons of one culture must undergo in order to modify their way of life as a result of contact with another culture" (Neseth, Savage, & Navarro, 2009, p. 62). The stress associated with the difficult process of acculturation affects new immigrant parents as well as their immigrant children, and the entire family experiences the painful transition and adaptation because family functions as one unit (Wiley, 2002). Haitian immigrant families in the United States experience the same painful transition and have to overcome the same stress the other immigrants endure (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). Therefore, there is a need to further examine the impact of cultural beliefs on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants.

Bernstein et al. (2011) conducted research on immigrant families and acculturation, and the results showed that acculturation and acculturative stress impact families and children and cause psychological health issues in adolescent and adult immigrants. Among the factors that lead to stress in immigrant families and children include language difficulties, feeling of not belonging, and difficulty reconciling the values, norms, and customs of the host society with the culture of the country of origin (White, Roosa, Weaver, & Nair, 2009).

Cho and Haslam (2010) argued that new immigrant adolescents are likely to experience difficulties adjusting to their new environment, and those difficulties that are associated with the acculturation process put them at increased risk of interpersonal and psychological problems. In addition, the authors reported that school adjustment poses

significant challenges to new immigrant adolescents, as they cannot meet the great internal and external demands to excel academically.

Salgado, Castaneda, Talavera, and Lindsay (2012) conducted a study on acculturative and social support. The findings indicated that there is a significant interaction between the two variables, and that marginalized immigrant groups experience various levels of stressors, that can impact their mental, social, and physical health and well-being. Therefore, social support is one suggested solution to the acculturative stress.

Ahmed, Kia-Keating, and Tsai (2011) examined acculturative stress and cultural resource in terms of their impact on psychological stress. The results indicated that cultural resources, such as religious support and ethnic identity may counteract the effect of sociocultural adversities, such as racial discrimination, by serving a protective role, and those results may have a positive effect on psychological health of new adolescent and adult immigrants.

Silva, Cambell, and Wright (2012) studied intercultural relationships, and the results revealed that cultural beliefs and behaviors relate to intimate relationship, and people from different but similar cultures are more likely to enter into intimate relationships with each other because these individuals tend to have more comparable attitudes, values, and beliefs. Haitian immigrants face daily practical challenges that are social and economic in nature, and they go from figuring out how to take a bus to making friends and finding a job, just like any other immigrant group (Kisselev et al., 2010).

In their challenging quest to meet those social and economic demands, the Haitian immigrants often experience distress that affects their family relationships. The

researchers extended their studies to distinguish the impact of acculturation on first-generation Haitian immigrants and their second-generation counterparts, and asserted that the former experience more difficulty adapting to the host-culture than the latter. The new cultural and social environment will impose its norms and values on the first-generation immigrants and create some serious emotional distress in them, and they have no choice but to adjust painfully to the new system to the detriment of their own culture, values, and beliefs (Kisselev et al., 2010).

Yakushko et al. (2008) posited that first-generation immigrants are very sensitive to their culture and tend to preserve their cultural identity; as opposed to their second-generation counterparts who viewed their parents' culture as a heritage, which they will soon forget, abandon or neglect, and lose through the process of assimilation.

First-generation Haitian immigrants remain attached to the culture of their country of origin, as they encounter a number of unique cultural, social and economic challenges in the United States (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). They express their cultural attachment through their fashion styles, music and entertainment, food, language, family life, and social activities. The authors also indicated that second-generation immigrants express their cultural interests the same way, but with little or no linkage to the culture of their country of origin. The question remains: How those two sets of cultural beliefs and behaviors of two separate generations of Haitian immigrants affect their marital satisfaction?

This study confirms the existing "acculturation theory" by linking it to other theories, cultural identity theory, independence and interdependence theory and family system theory, to investigate the relationship between cultural beliefs and cultural

behaviors and marital satisfaction. Acculturation involves cultural distress, given its complexity; especially in countries that are multicultural (Cote, 2006). This study investigates the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors among two distinct generations of people of a same country of origin and examines the impact of their cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, and social activities on marital satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

The process of acculturation remains a serious dilemma for immigrant families, as they face the challenge and painful experience of losing some elements of their culture of origin and integrate the beliefs and values of the host society for survival purposes. Most immigrants experience significant changes in many aspects of their lives during the acculturation process (Bernstein et al., 2011). Haitian immigrants in the United States experience cultural adjustment like any other immigrant group, but there is limited literature that explains how cultural beliefs specific to family, work, and social activities affect marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants (Nicolas et al., 2009). It is not known how the process of acculturation affects the Haitian immigrants and to what extent cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work and social activities impact marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants. Nicolas et al. (2009) agreed that research on familial experiences of Haitian immigrants is limited and recommended further research in this area. There is a large concentration of Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). They experience acculturative stress that affects their work and family relationships, as well as their social activities.

Yakushko et al. (2008) claimed that new immigrants often experience stress as they adapt to the American culture because they have to face economic and cultural restrictions that are insurmountable in their new environment. In one study, Wheeler, Updegraff, and Thayer (2010) researched conflict resolution in couples from Mexico, marital satisfaction, with a focus on cultural beliefs and behaviors, and the findings indicated the existence of a potential link between cultural beliefs and behaviors and marital satisfaction. According to Wheeler et al., empirical studies provided support for the hypothesis asserting that cultural beliefs and behaviors focus on social activities, while work and family relationships are associated with marital satisfaction. Is it possible to establish a relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors and marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants? For the purpose of this study, the researcher will investigate the possible relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors and marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in the United States to help fill the gap in the literature.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors (family, work, and social activities) and marital conflict among first-generation and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings. The research is a quantitative and a co-relational study. "Cultural beliefs and behaviors" are considered the primary independent variable, and "marital satisfaction" is considered the primary dependent variable, because "independent variables are those that influence or affect outcomes, and dependent variables are those that depend on the independent variables and they are the outcomes or the results of the influence of the independent

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variables" (Creswell, 2009, p. 50). In this study, cultural beliefs and behaviors affect marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants.

"Correlation" was deemed the most appropriate methodological approach for the study, for it allowed the researcher to establish relationships between the variables, which are cultural beliefs, behaviors, marital satisfaction, and first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in the United States. The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (2009) defined correlation as a "relationship between two or more variables such that systematically increases or decreases in the magnitude of one variable and are accompanied by systematic increases or decreases in the magnitude of the other" (p. 29).

According to Kim, Sarason, and Sarason (2006), acculturation conceptualized at the individual level can be described as psychological acculturation, which refers to changes within the individual in cultural attitudes, values, and behaviors. They further explained that acculturation involves cultural distress, given its complexity and the differences among cultures; especially in countries that are multicultural, like the United States, where the concept of a dominant culture can be problematic. The cultural distress resulting from the process of acculturation among immigrants involves cultural changes that impact work and social activities, as well as family and spousal relationships. The findings of this study contribute to options for practice considerations, for the study also informs the professionals in the human service field, such as social workers, counselors, and school teachers. The findings can put at their disposal new resources, which can allow them to develop relevant and effective interventions. The results can help professionals in the field of marriage and family counseling in particular to design

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appropriate interventions and provide adequate services to Haitian immigrants and other immigrant communities.

Rationale

Rehman and Holtzworth-Munroe (2007) reported other studies on many cultural in which marital satisfaction is addressed. Acculturative stress is also addressed, but there is a gap in the literature concerning cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, social activities, and marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitians living in American urban settings (Flores, Tschann, Marin, & Pantoja 2004). The authors also argued that there is a great need for further study on marital satisfaction and cultural beliefs and behaviors across cultures. The present study examined the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors and how they relate to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in the United States. The researcher used two instruments: *Cultural Beliefs and Behaviors Adaptation Profiles (CBBAP)* and *Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R)* to conduct the study.

The process of acculturation affects immigrants and their marital relationships differently, whether they are first- or second-generation immigrants (Flores et al., 2004). Like Wheeler et al. (2010), Flores et al. (2004) studied marital conflict and acculturation among Mexican American husbands and wives. Flores et al.'s findings indicated that more acculturated husbands and wives engaged in less avoidance of conflict and were more expressive of their feelings in an argument. The results also showed that husbands who were more acculturated reported more conflict concerning sex and consideration for

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the other. Bicultural and more acculturated husbands reported that their wives were more verbally and physically aggressive, compared with mono-Mexican husbands.

Conclusively, it is clear that more acculturated husbands and wives are involved in more direct expressions of conflict in their marriages, compared with less acculturated husbands and wives. But, is this study representative of the immigrant population at large? The authors called for further study on marital satisfaction involving other cultural groups. Therefore, a study that addresses the impact of cultural beliefs and behaviors on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting is important.

To date, there is a scarcity of information in the literature that explains how cultural beliefs and behaviors affect marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings. Segal and Mayadas (2009) studied the issue of acculturative stress as it relates to marital relationship among immigrants in general, but they did not address specifically the relationship between interdependent and independent cultural beliefs and behaviors and marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants. Therefore, the study of how cultural beliefs and behaviors relate to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants in the United States is deemed important.

The information gathered in the study may inform the professionals in human service field with respect to implications for practice considerations, and lead to improvements in service delivery to this specific population and other immigrant populations as well. In this regard, Rehman and Holtzworth-Munroe (2007) who conducted a study on marital communication on three cultural groups, argued that

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positive and negative communication behaviors are associated with cultural beliefs. Given the existing gap in the literature concerning the impact of cultural beliefs and behaviors on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants, the findings of this new study explained the relationship conflicts and marital satisfaction among these two groups and within intercultural marriages in general.

Research Questions

Haitian immigrants living in the United States experience social and cultural adjustment like any other immigrant group. The acculturation process is a life-changing experience for them, and it affects them a great deal culturally (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). This researcher sought to examine how cultural beliefs and behaviors specifically of family, work, and social activities relate to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting.

3. How do cultural beliefs and behaviors as identified through the *CBBAP* relate to marital satisfaction among first-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting?

4. How do cultural beliefs and behaviors as identified through the *CBBAP* relate to marital satisfaction among second-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting?

Significance of the Study

Mitchell (2010) claimed that there is a great need for further study on marital satisfaction and cultural beliefs and behaviors across cultures. The process of acculturation affects immigrants and their marital relationships differently, whether they are first- or second-generation immigrants. There is a gap in the literature concerning

cultural beliefs and behaviors and how they specifically relate to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings. Empirical studies on immigrants documented in the literature focus on the effects of acculturation, cultural distress, and cultural identity, but do not address specifically the cultural beliefs and behavioral effects of independence and interdependence of family, work and social activities on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting. Among those authors who conducted studies on immigrants include Falconier, Nussbeck, and Bodenmann (2013) who studied immigration stress and relationship satisfaction.

Information about how cultural beliefs affect marital satisfaction among Haitian immigrants living in the United States is important because new strategies for developing interventions for practice may emerge from the findings of the study (Mitchell, 2010). Adding to the body of knowledge is a valuable resource to both professionals in the human service field and the Haitian immigrant community as a whole.

Definition of Terms

Acculturation. A process of mutual change of individuals and groups of different cultures that come into continuous contact (Dominguez & Maya-Jariego, 2008).

Assimilation. Identification with the new culture and the abandonment of identification with the culture of origin (Birman & Trickett, 2001).

Collectivist culture. Collectivist culture is defined as a culture in which individuals develop a more interdependent sense of self and think of themselves in relation to others (Bogumill, 1998).

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Cultural behaviors. Cultural behaviors are defined as behaviors characteristic of a particular social or ethnic group (Ojini, Asuku, Oladele, Obuekwe, & Nnabuko, 2010).

Cultural beliefs. Cultural beliefs are defined as the sum of attitudes, behavior patterns, customs, and arts that distinguish one group from another (Ojini et al., 2010).

First-generation immigrant. First-generation immigrant is defined as a person who was born outside the United States and migrated to the country (Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010).

Independent cultural beliefs. Independent cultural beliefs are defined as cultural beliefs that relate to individualist culture (Mitchell, 2010).

Independent. Refers to individuals from individualist cultures, people who view the self as unique and separate from others with a focus on one's own internal traits, skills, attributes, thoughts, and feelings (Milavskaya, Reoch, Koestner, & Losier, 2010).

Individualist culture. Individualist culture is defined as a culture in which individuals develop a more independent sense of self and tend to behave the same way in all situations (Bogumill, 1998).

Interdependent cultural beliefs. Interdependent cultural beliefs are defined as cultural beliefs that relate to collectivist culture (Mitchell, 2010).

Interdependent. Refers to individuals from collectivist cultures who behave according to the impact they may have on the greater community or others, and they put effort into being close to others (Bogumill, 1998).

Marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction is defined as the subjective feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and pleasure experienced by a spouse when considering all aspects of their life (Lavner & Bradbury, 2010).

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Second-generation immigrant. Second-generation immigrant is defined as a person who was born in the United States of immigrant parents (Conger et al., 2010).

Assumptions

The theoretical assumption concerning immigrants is that cultural distress leads to marital conflict among this population as they are adapting to the host culture (Hwang & Meyers, 2007). Four important theories were considered for this study: acculturation theory, cultural identity theory, family systems theory, and interdependent and independent theory. The acculturation theory was the foundation of the study. Acculturation is the process of cultural change the immigrants go through as they come in contact with the host-culture (Birman & Trickett, 2001). According to Reber (2009), acculturation is a process that creates distress in the immigrant who is about to lose his or her cultural beliefs and values. The acculturation theory was appropriate for this study because it involves immigrants.

The cultural identity theory plays a significant role in understanding the relationship between cultural beliefs and family, social, and work relationships, and their impact on marital satisfaction, which was the purpose of this study. Cultural identity theory was used to explore the life experiences of immigrants (Fereshteh, 2007). Therefore, it was a good fit for this study. Family systems theory related to the study because it sustains family members who form a unit system and are interconnected (Wiley, 2002). This study involved family and spousal relationships. Interdependent and independent theory related to the study because it sustains that people from an individualist culture would score higher on the independent side of the scale, and people from a collectivist culture would score more on the interdependent side of the scale

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(Singelis, 1994). The study involved first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants, and they have different cultural beliefs. The interdependent and independent theory helped understand how each cultural group scores on the scale. It is also assumed that as individuals from a collectivist culture adapt to an individualist culture, their responses may move more toward the independent end of the continuum (Singelis, 1994).

Those four theories are the best fit for the study because this study investigated the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors and their impact on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants. The scope of the study itself involves acculturation, cultural identity, social and family relationships, and two separate generations of a same culture.

The topical assumption pertains to the cultural differences in beliefs and behaviors and marital satisfaction between first-generation and second-generation immigrants, and they experience acculturation differently. Consequently, they are constrained to face and overcome numerous challenges during the process. According to Shirpak, Matika-Tyndale, and Chinichian (2011), adjustment to new gender and marital roles is one of the areas of greater challenge for immigrants, and can therefore cause relationship conflict.

The methodological assumption articulates the post-positivist approach the study took to examine the effects of cultural beliefs and behaviors on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants. Researchers who use post-positivism as belief system take a scientific approach with an emphasis on empirical data collection (Creswell, 2007). Post-positivism asserts that the natural and social worlds can be understood through application of scientific method (Creswell, 2013). Post-positivist

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researchers also view inquiry as a series of logically related steps, and they use multiple levels of data analysis (Creswell, 2007). It was assumed that the participants of the study would provide truthful and genuine answers to the questions of the survey. The answers were expected to be adequate and sufficient enough to establish a correlation between cultural beliefs and behaviors and marital satisfaction among first-generation and second-generation Haitian immigrants in the United States.

Limitations

The study has geographical limitations. It was conducted only on Haitian immigrants living in the New York area. There is a significantly large Haitian immigrant population in multicultural American urban settings. According to Migration Information Source (2011), there were 535,000 Haitian immigrants living in the United States in 2008, and 70% of them resided in Florida and New York. The same source revealed that in 2008, the Haitian immigrant population in New York was 128,750 or 24.1% of the total Haitian population in the United States, making it the second largest Haitian immigrant population in the country after Florida (247,991 or 46%). New Jersey is the third largest (40,773 or 7.6%) followed by Massachusetts with 37, 936 or 7.1% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

The study is limited to a restricted segment of the Haitian immigrant population because only first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants who were married participated in the study.

Nature of the Study

The study was a correlational quantitative study. Given the purpose of the study, which was to examine the relationship between independent and dependent variables, the

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quantitative methodology seemed to be the most appropriate methodology to use. The study was a correlational study of cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work and social activities, and how they relate to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in the United States. Respondents who were under 18 years of age, unmarried, and unable to speak, read, write, and understand English were excluded from the study. Respondents were not recruited as married couples, but as married individuals. Their spouses were not required to participate in the study, but those who participated had to be married at the time the study was conducted, be first- or second-generation Haitian immigrants, and speak and understand English. Belizaire and Fuertes (2011) studied Haitian immigrants, but they did not focus on the first and second generation, and how their cultural beliefs affect their family and social activities.

A stratified sampling technique was used to select the participants, as two segments of Haitian immigration population, first- and second-generation immigrants, were recruited among Haitian immigrants living in New York City. Bordens and Abbott (2011) argued that *stratified sampling* allows the researcher to obtain a representative sample by dividing the population into segments or strata. It is easier to find participants within a Haitian-American social organization because it contains the two specific immigrant groups on which the study was being conducted. The sample was drawn from the *Haitian Evangelical Clergy Association.* The required number of participants to ensure validity was 80.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Cultural beliefs of the immigrants in the United States continue to impact their social and family relationships, as they go through the process of cultural and social

adjustment in the host society. There is a need to conduct further research in this area to develop a better understanding of the cultural and social experience of the first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants in the United States, and how that experience affects their marital relationships. Chapter 1 laid the foundation or groundwork for the study and described the nature and the complexity of the immigration process, the acculturation process, and the social challenges the immigrants have to face in America, as they adapt to the host culture.

The remaining chapters provide further supportive information concerning the study. Chapter 2 provides a detailed literature review that focuses on interdependent and independent cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities, work and family relationships, and how they relate to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation immigrants. Chapter 2 also provides a historical overview of the phenomenon, addresses the stress associated with the acculturation process, and its impact on immigrants' social and economic life and their marital relationships.

Chapter 3 explains the methodological approach for the study, which includes the population, the sample size, and the ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents the data analysis. Chapter 5 concludes the study, the findings, and recommendations based on knowledge gained from the study.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

People migrated to the United States from all parts of the world throughout history in search of better living conditions, especially after the collapse of the communist regime in Eastern Europe (Nesteruk & Marks, 2011). They fled their countries either for economic reasons or political or religious persecutions (Green, 2009). Those people who left their homeland to reside permanently in a foreign country are referred to as "immigrants" or "migrants," and they all have been subject to the process of acculturation (Telzer, 2011). Telzer (2011) described acculturation as a complex process in which immigrants adapt to a new culture, and their beliefs, values, and behaviors may change as a result of that contact between the two cultures. The process of acculturation is directly associated with the concept of cultural distress, which Farrell (2007) defined as the manifestation of negative cultural adjustment or adaptation to the host or dominant culture.

Immigrants, therefore, face the challenge of retaining the cultural values of their native culture and attaining compatibility with the host culture (Telzer, 2011). Immigrants lose some values and important elements of the culture of their countries of origin as they adjust to the host culture. This difficult process creates stress in the immigrants and can impact their family and their marriage (Faconier, Nussbeck, & Bodenmann, 2013). The purpose of this study is to examine how cultural beliefs and

behaviors specifically of family, work, and social activities relate to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in the United States.

Empirical studies have been done on immigration addressing the acculturation phenomenon within various immigrant groups, including the Haitian immigrant population in the United States (Valenta, 2009). Efficient and appropriate interventions have also been designed and implemented by human service professionals in the field to better serve the immigrant populations. However, there is a lack of research on the effects of cultural beliefs and behaviors specifically of family, work, and social activities on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), the Haitian immigrants formed the second largest immigrant group among the Black foreign-born population in the United States with 420,000 documented permanent residents (as cited in Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). It is therefore important to examine this immigrant population and understand the impact of their cultural beliefs and behaviors on their marital satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

The scope of the study covers three major and important aspects of the immigrant life, which include the process of acculturation, the struggle to maintain or adopt certain cultural beliefs and values, and the strong need to maintain or develop healthy work, social and family relationships. The theoretical foundation of the study is built upon those three factors. The synthesized theoretical framework consists of acculturation theory, which is being used in conjunction with the theory of interdependence and independence, cultural identity theory, and family systems theory.

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Acculturation Theory

Arends-Toth and Van de Vijver (2009) defined acculturation as "a process of cultural change and learning that individuals experience as a result of prolonged intercultural contact" (p. 163). The acculturation theory focuses on assimilation into the dominant culture over the span of many generations. Acculturation provides an understanding of the cultural change that occurs as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups (Birman & Trickett, 2001). Assimilation, on the other hand, involves identification with the new culture and the abandonment of identification with the culture of origin.

The acculturation theory was used in conjunction with the theory of interdependence and independence to measure cultural practices and beliefs under the family category, work category, and social activities category among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants because these theories appeared to be relevant and helped explain the cultural change that occurs as a result of contact between the two cultures. Cultural practices and beliefs are measured under the family category, work category, and social activities category among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants.

Fuertes and Belizaire (2011) conducted a study on acculturative stress among Haitian immigrants in the United States, and the results indicated that increased number of years living in the country and greater anxiety were negatively associated with quality of life. Further, higher levels of adaptive coping were associated with higher quality of life and lower levels of acculturative stress.

Cabassa (2003) studied acculturation theory to examine the theoretical models and assumptions that drive acculturation measures. Cabassa argued that acculturation

entails social and psychological exchanges that take place when there are continuous

contact and interaction among people from different cultures. The author concluded that

if researchers really want to understand how acculturation influences people, they need to

produce measures that include contextual factors and superficial indicators, such as time

spent in the United States or language spoken at home.

Interdependent (INT) and Independent (IND) Theory

According to the interdependence (INT) and independence (IND) theory, an

individual or a person from an individualist culture would score higher on the

independent side of the scale, while a person from a collectivist culture would score more

on the interdependent side of the scale (Singelis, 1994). Bogumill (1998) defined

individualist culture as a culture in which people view themselves as unique and separate

entities, a culture where the focus concern is on the self. Bogumill also described a

collectivist culture as a culture in which people tend to think of themselves in relation to

others, a culture where the focus of concern is on others. The INT and IND theory

underlie two different cultural beliefs that influence people's social behaviors and

interactions.

Somech (2000) posited that individualistic cultures put priority on personal goals,

autonomy, and self-reliance. Those beliefs and attitudes are relevant to the IND theory.

First-generation Haitian immigrants are goal-oriented individuals who feel proud of their

own accomplishments and derive satisfaction with their performance based on their own

achievements (Nicolas et al., 2009). It can be implied that first-generation Haitian

immigrants are from an individualistic culture, and therefore may experience more

cultural distress than their second-generation counterparts as they adapt into the multicultural American society.

Fernández, Paez, and Gonzalez (2005) studied interdependent and independent self-construals, and sociocultural factors in different collectivist societies. The findings indicated individuals in those societies emphasized loyalty to ascribed groups and duties and obligations towards in-groups, families, clan, ethnic, and religious groups. Their beliefs and behaviors are in conformity with the INT theory.

Cultural Identity Theory

Mana, Orr, and Mana (2009) claimed that immigrants' identities are defined as "the repertoire of immigrants' cultural and social positions vis-à-vis those of the host majority group" (p. 450). *Cultural identity* is the identity of a group or culture or of an individual as far as one is influenced by one's belonging to a group or culture (Bhugra, 2004). It is also "the identity of a social group that reflects the individual's self-perception or self-definition as a member of that cultural group, i.e. a group of individuals characterized by a shared cultural heritage" (Tartakovsky, 2009, p. 655).

The cultural identity theory underlies some important cultural elements that can help understand the relationship between cultural distress and marital satisfaction among two groups or generations separated by some cultural differences (Cote, 2006). Concerning acculturation of immigrants within the context of identity theory, the author argues in his research article that acculturation among immigrant people can be seen as a special form of individualization of the life course.

Cultural identity involves race or ethnicity. Racial identity is more broad and refers to a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that the

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individual shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group, and ethnic identity refers to a common heritage shared by group and includes history, language, rituals, and other beliefs and cultural practices (Bhugra, 2005). Fereshteh (2007) conducted a study on second-generation Iranian-Americans and studied the relationship between ethnic identity, acculturation, and psychological well-being. In this particular study, the author used the *identity theory* to explore the life experiences of second-generation Iranian-Americans. The study considers personal and environmental factors, such as language proficiency, ethnic ties, and interaction with the environment. The author argues that cultural identity is the stage where the individual feels confident and comfortable with his or her identity.

In a study conducted by Cote (2006), in which the author discussed the role of the individualization theory, identity theory was described as being essential in understanding the adjustments made by the individual as part of the acculturation process. In this process the author is referring to, the individual adopts new beliefs and values from the receiving culture and retains beliefs and values from the culture of origin. It is to say then there is a mix of beliefs and values, give-and-take with the new immigrant adapting to the new culture. There appears to be a connection between the identity theory and the acculturation theory, and they appear to be intercomplementary to some degree.

Family Systems Theory

Family systems theory involves family relationships that include spousal and parental relations (Murry, 2006). Murry (2006) conducted a study in which family systems theory was used to explain family violence issues. Family systems theory

postulates that family members are interconnected in such a system that when one member changes, it has an impact on the others (Wiley, 2002). Wiley (2002) added that according to family systems theory, family functions as a unit, and what affects one member of the family affects the other members as well.

Rothbaum, Rosen, Ujiie, and Uchida (2002) conducted a study on family systems theory, which they compared to attachment theory. Rothbaum et al. showed the similarities and the differences between the two theories. Among the similarities is the fact that both theories emphasize the quality of the marital relationship to be key to overall family functioning. Further, Murray's (2006) study used family systems theory to explain family violence issues.

Theoretical Synthesis

Acculturation theory, INT and IND theory, attachment theory, cultural identity theory, and family systems provide an understanding of the cultural change and its effect on individual culture and family relationships. These theories relate to cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, and social activities and concern marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitians.

 After synthesizing the aforementioned selected theories listed and discussed, the researcher established a strong foundation for examining how the process of acculturation, cultural beliefs and behaviors specifically of family, work, and social activities impacting marital relationship among several generations of immigrants. The tenets of all selected theories align with the topic of the study. The acculturation theory focuses on the assimilation into the dominant culture over a long period of time, and it refers to the cultural change that occurs as a result of contact between two or more

cultural groups (Birman & Trickett, 2001). The researcher sought to understand the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, and social activities and their impact on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting.

Cultural identity theory, on the other hand, focuses on the identity of an individual or a group, and it involves race and ethnicity (Bhugra, 2005). This theory provides a clear understanding of the adjustments made by people going through the acculturation process. The cultural identity theory relates to the study because it underlies some important cultural elements that can aid in understanding the relationship between cultural distress resulting from the process of acculturation and marital satisfaction among two groups or generations of immigrants separated by some cultural differences. Similarly, this study involves two specific groups: first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in the United States.

The process of acculturation can cause cultural distress to the first generation of immigrants who tend to hold on to their culture of origin, which, as a result, affects their marital relationships. Citing the findings from the aforementioned research conducted on Mexican American husbands and wives, Flores et al. (2004) stated that "the acculturation process can be a stressful experience for individuals and families, and that interpersonal conflict may occur as a result of differential acculturation among individuals or change in family structure or gender roles that are caused by the acculturation process" (pp. 39-40). The same study also suggested that when wives are acculturated, they are more willing to express problems in their marriages than when they are less acculturated, and that the latter couples are more matrimonially distressed. The second-generation immigrants who

tend to assimilate or adapt into the dominant culture more easily experience the process with less or no distress.

The family systems theory sustains that when one member of the family is affected or influenced, the rest of the family is affected or influenced as well, based on the assumption that the family functions as one unit (Rothbaum et al., 2002). Marital satisfaction is affected by the acculturation process, in connection with the cultural loss associated with the cultural adaptation process, which also has an impact on the entire family that functions as one unit.

Based on the tenets of these three theories, and the IND and INT theory, there is the assumption that a person from an individualist culture would score more on the independent side of the scale, while a person from a collectivist culture would score more on the interdependent side of the scale.

Methodological Approach

The researcher used correlational quantitative methodology to conduct the study. The most appropriate approach is correlation. The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (2009) defined correlation as a relationship between two or more variables such that systematic increases or decreases in the magnitude of one variable are accompanied by systematic increases or decreases in the magnitude of the other(s). The study examined the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors as they related to family, work, and social activities, and how they affected marital satisfaction among first-generation and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings. The study was a correlation, and cultural beliefs and behaviors were considered the primary independent variables, and marital satisfaction was considered the primary dependent

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variable. *Correlation* was deemed the most appropriate methodological approach for the study, for it allowed the researcher to establish the relationship between the variables that involved two separate groups (Creswell, 2009).

Review of Critical Literature

Immigration is a world-wide phenomenon (Maciel, Van Putten, & Knudson-Martib, 2009). International migration is estimated at 200 million people; for instance, between 225,000 and 250,000 immigrants arrive in Canada every year, and the United States accepts approximately one million legal permanent residents per year (Gushlak, Pottie, Roberts, Torres, & Demeules, 2011). Haitian immigrants represent the second largest group among the Black foreign-born population in the United States (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). Several scholars have studied the effects of acculturation on immigrants, but there is limited empirical literature that examines the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors and how they relate to marital satisfaction among Haitian immigrants in the United States. To develop an understanding of the impact of cultural beliefs and behaviors, with respect to the acculturation process, specifically of family, work, social activities, and how they relate to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitians, the following review of critical literature was conducted.

Historical Overview

From 1892 to 1954, more than 22 million immigrants, mostly Europeans and Asians, entered the United States through the portal of Ellis Island, which made this small island located in New York Harbor, the most famous gateway to the new world. The flow of immigrants from all parts of the world to the United States had significantly increased over the years, and today, approximately one million legal permanent residents enter the

United States every year (Gushlak et al., 2011). According to Camarota (2010), the U.S. Census 2008 indicated that there were 546,000 Haitian immigrants in the United States, which made them the fourth largest immigrant group from the Caribbean.

Dominguez and Maya-Jariego (2008), have addressed over the years the issues of immigration and acculturation and their consequences on the immigrants. Among those researchers is Oksana (2010), who studied the stress and coping strategies in the lives of recent immigrants; and Nicolas et al. (2009) who studied empathic family stress and found it to be a sign of family connectedness in Haitian immigrants. Those recorded empirical studies have been based on reported social problems, economic hardship, and mental and physical health issues the immigrants experience in the host- culture (Ahmed et al., 2011).

Cultural Beliefs

Nastas (2012) defined culture as a dynamic network of specific and cognitively represented shared knowledge and meanings that while activated, in an implicit or explicit manner, shape and influence the individuals' cognitions, emotions, motivations, and behaviors (p. 107). Nastas also posited that intercultural contacts are constantly increasing, particularly in multicultural societies like the United States, which fuels scientific interest toward a better understanding of cultures. It can be inferred that cultural beliefs form a value system held dear to individuals of different cultures. It can also be inferred that Haitian immigrants in America, like any other immigrant group, have their own cultural beliefs, a value system they cherish.

Cultural Identity

Tartakovsky (2009) saw cultural identity as reflecting on a person's way defining him or herself and the way they perceived themselves a part of a group with cultural commonalities. On the other hand, Vilme and Butler (2009) viewed ethnic identity as respect and pride for a cultural group stemming from individual self-knowledge. Cultural identity involves race or ethnicity. Racial identity is more broad and refers to a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that the individual shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group, and ethnic identity refers to a common heritage shared by group and includes history, language, rituals, and other beliefs and cultural practices (Bhugra, 2005).

Haitian immigrants have a very rich native culture and are very much attached to it (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). External life events can produce identity change, and that change is often related to life experiences, such as work, marital and family relationships, social network interaction and political orientation (Brygola, 2011). A logical inference from White et al.'s (2009) analysis was that cultural identity can be threatened and even transformed by environmental change, and in the context of the immigrants adjusting to the host-culture, such cultural change may lead to acculturative or cultural distress.

Cultural Distress

Farrell (2007) defined cultural distress as the manifestation of negative cultural adjustment or adaptation to the host or dominant culture. The concept of cultural distress is directly associated with the process of acculturation. Marital satisfaction can be hindered by existing conflicts in the marital relationship, leading to marital conflict. Marital conflict is defined as overt expressions of disagreement between marital partners

(Flores et al., 2004). Haitians migrating to the United States cope with cultural adjustment or adaptation like the other immigrants, but there is limited literature relating their cultural distress to marital conflict.

Acculturation

Dominguez and Maya-Jariego (2008) described acculturation as a process of mutual change of individuals and groups of different cultures that come into contact. For Neseth et al. (2009), acculturation is a process of change persons of one culture must undergo in order to modify their way of life as a result of contact with another culture. The aforementioned definitions, as articulated by the authors, demonstrate that immigrants, while attached to the culture of their country of origin, must accept some cultural changes as they integrate into the host-society. Haitian immigrants, especially those of the first generation, experienced the process of acculturation, which impacted their lives in many aspects.

Acculturative Stress

Oksana and Yakushko (2010) defined stress as a "combination of cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physiological reactions to events that evoke subjective individual reactions" (p. 259). The authors also referred to the stressors experienced by new immigrants as *culture shock.* Belizaire and Fuertes (2011) described acculturative stress as the psychological impact of adapting to a new culture. It can be inferred that there is a direct link between acculturation and acculturative stress. White et al. (2009) sustained that acculturative stress directly results from the acculturation process, and it may include some important factors, such as language barriers, loss of feeling of

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belonging as well as stress associated with reconciling values, norms, and customs of the host-society with the culture of origin.

People who migrate to the United States face a cultural dilemma as they are forced to adapt to the host culture, and for that matter, are prone to cultural changes and to lose some important elements or aspects of the culture of their country of origin during the acculturation process (Bernstein et al., 2011).

The pressure to adapt and the fear of losing some of their cultural heritage put the new immigrants through a tremendous amount of stress, which affects their work, social, and family relationships (White et al., 2011). It is a long cultural agony described as acculturation that affects all aspects of their lives in the United States, including marital relationships. The Haitian immigrants living in the United States are no exception. The immigrants are confronted with the challenge of retaining the cultural values of their native culture while simultaneously attaining cultural compatibility with their host culture, and this can be a difficult and complicated process for them (Telzer, 2011).

First-Generation Immigrants' Cultural Beliefs

Dere, Ryder, and Kirmayer (2010) described first-generation immigrants as those immigrants who came to the host country as adults, and therefore are attached to the culture of their country of origin; moreover, they are subject to the process of acculturation to a greater extent than for other generations. First-generation immigrants are very sensitive to their culture and tend to preserve their cultural identity (Yakushko et al., 2008). Vilme and Butler (2009) reported in a study of Haitian immigrants that first-generation Haitian immigrants were subject to ostracism, physical, and verbal abuse from members of other cultures or ethnic groups. The author also reported that the negative

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stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings were extremely traumatic to Haitian immigrants.

According to Belizaire and Fuertes (2011), a study conducted by Mena et al. (1987) revealed that individuals who migrated before the age of 12 years experienced less acculturative stress than did earlier immigrants. It can then be inferred that individuals who migrated as adults experienced more difficulty adjusting to the host culture. This idea supported the first three-fold hypothesis of the study sustaining that first-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, and social activities and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction. The first-generation immigrants' beliefs and behaviors impact their family units to a great extent (Yakushko, 2010).

Second-Generation Immigrants' Cultural Beliefs

Charles (2006) reported that the total population of second-generation Haitians in the United States, ranges from 544,000 to 637,000; and in New York City, it ranges from 163,000 to 191,000-300,000. Second-Generation immigrants are those who were born in the host-culture of immigrant parents. They go through the process of acculturation easily and embrace the host-culture through assimilation (Deaux, Bikmen, Gilkes, Ventunea, & Joseph, 2007).

Second-Generation immigrants tend to identify themselves with the host-culture, and therefore are not so much attached to the culture of their first-generation parents (Shariff, 2009). That view of second-generation immigrants supported the second three-fold hypothesis of the study predicting that second-generation Haitian Americans would

score higher regarding IND cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, and social activities and this would positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is perceived as an individual's subjective evaluation of the overall nature of marriage that reflects the degree to which an individual's expectations toward marriage are present in his or her own marriage (Sharaievska, Kim, & Stodolska, 2013). Sharaievska et al. also posited that there have been unhappy marriages and high divorce rates in the United States, which have had detrimental effects on spouses and children over the years.

Factors Influencing Marital Satisfaction

Gender ideology. Gender ideology is defined as how a person identifies herself or himself with regard to marital and family roles that are traditionally linked to gender, and it provides a lens through which marital dynamics, such as wives' independence and allocation of housework, are viewed (Minotte, Pedersen, Mannon, & Kiger, 2010). Differences in values and worldviews and perceptions of gender roles can pose serious challenges that affect marital satisfaction, for it is reported that in the United States approximately two thirds of interracial marriages and one-half of intraracial marriages end in divorce (Sharaivska et al., 2013).

Family of origin. Family of origin from a social and cultural context, as well as in the context of immigration and acculturation, refers to the family characteristics and cultural background of the individual, and it is connected to gender differences and their relationships to experiences (Kuncewicz, 2011, p. 89). Systems theory posits that parents' marital quality influences their children's future adult relationship quality, and that strong

and stable parental relationships have been shown to be a context suited to help children learn to create future satisfying and fulfilling relationships (Gray, Shafer, Limb, & Busby, 2013).

The role of culture in family of origin remains an important factor in marital satisfaction. Therefore, a couple of different cultures or different family of origin may have difficulty experiencing such satisfaction. First- and second-generation Haitian immigrants share different cultural beliefs and values, and their individual cultures influence their marital satisfaction differently. Because differences in values, worldviews, and perceptions of gender roles are believed to be important factors that affect marital satisfaction (Sharaievskka et al., 2013), first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants who are married are expected to face the same cultural challenges with respect to marital satisfaction.

Sociocultural characteristics. Sociocultural characteristics refer to factors, such as age, education, income, occupation, class, race, and gender that affect spouses' interactions and satisfaction with marriage (Sharaievskka et al., 2013). Marital satisfaction may be linked to the age of the married couple because people from different age-groups have different interests, desires, and tastes. Reczek, Liu, and Umberson (2010) cited Bryan and Conger (1999) who explained that "the longer couples are married, the more they come to rely on one another and the less they rely on others for support" (p. 1206). The authors also argued that age may make longer term marriages less susceptible to the outside effects of relationship with parents.

Britt and Huston (2012) studied the role of money arguments in marriage and reported that money plays a prominent role in couples' lives, and that financial problems

are a primary stressor for couples. It is to say that money arguments are an important indicator of relationship satisfaction. Belizaire and Fuertes (2011) claimed that first-generation Haitian immigrants encountered serious socioeconomic obstacles in the United States and are at risk for poverty and thus are often overwhelmed by stress, which significantly impacts their social and family relationships.

Marital Satisfaction and First-Generation Immigrants

First-generation immigrants often experience feelings of loss from ties to family and friends in their country of origin, which may lead to lower coping strategies (Leidy, Park, Cladis, Coltrane, & Duffy, 2009). Recent immigrants are also affected by the process of adapting to a new culture, and that adjustment and cultural change lead to cultural distress that affects their social and marital relationships (Samiento & Cardemil, 2009).

Among the stressors resulting from the process of acculturation for the new immigrants include language difficulties, discrimination, and lack of social and financial resources (Samiento & Cardemil, 2009). First-generation Haitian immigrants, like their Black-Caribbean counterparts, experience acculturative stress related to socioeconomic difficulties (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011).

Marital Satisfaction and Second-Generation Immigrants

Although some researchers suggested that acculturative stress could also affect second-generation or later generation immigrants who are struggling to integrate difficult and conflicting cultural values and ideas (Samiento & Cardemil, 2009), it is strongly believed that more highly acculturated individuals who have incorporated the dominant culture's values, would experience less stress (Leidy et al., 2009). It can be implied that

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second-generation immigrants experience a higher degree of marital satisfaction than their first-generation counterparts, given the fact that acculturative stress are related to socioeconomic stressors, which are less likely to affect later generation immigrants than their earlier counterparts.

Family Systems

Family systems is a social intervention model that has four components: capacity-building help-giving practices, family needs, family strengths, and social supports and resources (Trivette, Dunst, & Hamby, 2010). Family systems is also a theory, and its major tenet sustains that family members are interconnected, and when one member changes it impacts the whole family (Rothbaum et al., 2002). The family systems intervention model or theory provided an understanding of the effects of cultural beliefs and behaviors on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants and the overall family functioning (Murray, 2006).

Cultural Beliefs, Behaviors, and Family Relationship on Marital Satisfaction

Similar Cultures

Silva et al. (2012) studied intercultural relationships, and the findings revealed that individuals from different but similar cultures tend to enter into intimate relationships with each other because they are more likely to have comparable attitudes, values, and beliefs. The authors also reported that people from cultures that emphasize collective over individual objectives are more likely to see each other as potential mates. It can be inferred that people are more comfortable to have intimate relationship with their own kinds, if only they can find some complementary values that bring them on a common ground amidst their different backgrounds. Factors for potential conflicts in the intimate

relationships exist when the beliefs and values are distant between intimate partners. First-generation and second-generation Haitian immigrants have different cultural backgrounds. Both groups tend to enter into intimate relationships with individuals within their own generations, and this tendency is believed to be related to cultural similarity.

Different Cultures

Immigrants of the first and second generation experienced the process of acculturation differently because they do not have the same cultural attachment. Miller et al. (2013) viewed acculturation as phenomenon that results when groups of individuals of different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns or either or both groups. Immigrants who entered into intimate relationship with individuals outside their generation or cultural group tend to experience relationship conflicts. Their cultural differences can go from preference for language use with children, food, music, movies, to dress style.

 First-generation immigrants are often more comfortable in the language of their cultures of origin; and language difficulties, along with reconciling the values and the norms of the host society, may result in acculturative stress in those immigrants (White et al., 2009). Their second-generation counterparts tend to feel the same way, but they experience less or no stress because their assimilation into the host culture is often easier and faster (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). Montazer and Wheaton (2011) cited Rumbaut (1997), who reported that children born in the host country are less likely to identify with their parents' countries of origin and are more likely to identify with the cultural and social values of the host country. It can be inferred then that first-generation Haitian immigrants and second-generation Haitian immigrants have two different cultural

backgrounds, and their cultural beliefs and behaviors, as related to family, work, and social activities, impact their marital satisfaction differently.

Impact of Family Relationship on Marital Satisfaction

      Family relationships and first-generation immigrants. To understand those first-generation immigrants, it is necessary to understand them within their families. One can infer from the preceding factual analysis that first-generation immigrants are family oriented individuals. The Haitian immigrants in the United States reportedly rely on family support to survive the stressful experience they face in the host society (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). They are also very much attached to their culture, and tend to pass their cultural heritage, beliefs, and values onto their children born in the United States (Nicolas et al., 2009).

      Family relationships and second-generation immigrants. Haller, Portes, and Lynch (2011) reported that as of 2008, there were 39.9 million foreign-born persons in the United States, which represented 13% of the population. Kasinitz et al. (2008), based on a cross-sectional sample of both second-generation and comparable native minority persons found that, on average, second-generation youths are doing better, educationally and occupationally, than their minority counterparts and had advanced significantly ahead of their parents' generation. In light of those studies, second-generation immigrants experience less stress adapting to the host culture, and are more likely to succeed than their first-generation counterparts.

      Yoo and Kim (2010) researched the attitudes and beliefs among second-generation immigrants and their findings revealed a link between parents who cared for their children and the children who later on provided social support to their aging parents.

The study indicated a reciprocal relationship between parents and their second-generation children. Yoo and Kim also argued that families provided social support knowing that at some point in their own life course, they would receive social support. It is then a reciprocal relationship. Haitians living both in their homeland and the United States hold those same cultural beliefs and family values, and they expect their adult children to take them into their homes or care for them when they become old.

Impact of Work Relationship on Marital Satisfaction

Work relationship and first-generation immigrants. Brettell (2011) noted that first-generation immigrants are subject to workplace discrimination and are constantly demeaned at place of work, and the workplace discrimination influenced both raises and promotions. Brettell conducted the study on five immigrant groups, including Haitians, and also indicated that several immigrants clearly articulated the discriminatory racial and class hierarchies in the United States.

Helms et al. (2014) asserted in a study on first-generation immigrant couples that economic pressure, cultural adaptation stress, and marital quality are all related. Helms et al. also and mostly argued that first-generation immigrants experience socioeconomic problems because they have limited English proficiency, low education, and low income, which affect their marital relationship negatively. The above-mentioned difficulties experienced by first-generation immigrants are often referred to as acculturative stress (Helms et al., 2014).

In a study on family and work relationships, Sangberg, Yorgason, Miller, and Hill (2012) reported that chronic illness, depression, and work stress all take a toll on marital satisfaction. The study established a link between work environment, as well as mental

health status of the individuals, and marital distress. Married couples who have good jobs tend to experience happiness in their marriage because empirical literature indicated that being employed and having a good marriage are associated with greater life satisfaction (Vansteenbergen, Kluwer, & Karney, 2011).

Work relationship and second-generation immigrants. Pines, Neal, and Hammer (2011) noted that second-generation couples seem likely to be the most stressed of working couples because they have double family responsibilities, for they have to care for their own children and their aging parents. Pines et al. also asserted that the value of work and marriage is well documented in the literature, and that satisfaction in one is associated with satisfaction in the other, and stress in one is associated with stress in the other. Therefore, couples who experience burnout on their jobs, tend to experience burnout in their marriage as well (Pines et al., 2011). Compared to their first-generation counterparts, and despite their dual family responsibilities, second-generation immigrants seem least likely to experience acculturative stress, as they experience no language barrier, less socioeconomic problems, and less culturally adaptation issues to the host-society (Viruell-Fuentes, 2009).

Impact of Social Activities on Marital Satisfaction

Bartolli, Bilancini, and Pugno (2013) revealed that generally speaking, the decrease in happiness among Americans is mainly predicted by the decline in social connections. One may infer that in some particular areas, such as marital relationships, a decline in social connections may lead to a decrease in marital happiness or satisfaction.

First-generation immigrants and social activities. Viruell-Fuertes (2009) argued that migration entailed the disruption of important sources of social connectedness

for first-generation immigrants, and to overcome the worries, the stress, and the frustration that often overwhelmed them, they used transnational family ties. Bal and Perzigian (2013) reported that immigrants and sometimes their descendants maintained social ties with their kin and nonkin. However, Bal and Perzigian also argued that evidence found in the literature suggested that factors, such as economic demands, transportation limitations, and immigration processes, influenced first-generation social ties. Olwig (2011) stated that "transnational family relations allow the immigrants to resist their subjugation in host and home societies, because such relations enable the migrants to move between host and home societies emotionally, culturally, and materially when conditions in either become intolerable" (p. 42). Bitew and Ferguson (2010), explaining the importance of social connections, asserted that strong bonds with family, friends, teachers, and the community are crucial factors in the immigrants' lives to ensure real success.

First-generation students are at greater risk for a difficult transition from high school to college, and students who are academically and socially involved experience a smoother transition (Smith, 2009). Smith (2009) argued that the students who developed and maintained social relationships with their parents, teachers, peers, and others are more like to succeed because those students had to face a series of obligations and expectations or social norms that compelled them to maintain appropriate attitudes and behaviors toward their college education.

Further, social networking experiences can be altered by social anxiety and stress resulting from the process of acculturation (Feinstein, Bhatia, Hershenberg, & Davila, 2012). First-generation Haitian immigrants, although they find themselves constrained to

transnational family relationships to cope with acculturative stress, may experience great difficulty engaging in social networking outside the family circle due to social anxiety and pressure (Olwig, 2011). First-generation Haitian immigrants experience social anxiety, and they also often experience depression and other psychological distress associated with the process of adjusting to the host-culture (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011).

Second generation immigrants and social activities. Second-generation immigrants are reportedly struggling with parental expectations and the expectations of the host country, and they find themselves in the middle of two cultures (Tiron & Goodberry, 2011). Children of immigrant parents are often unable to get educational or homework support from home, or any academic advice from their parents who either had little schooling in their country of origin or were educated in a totally different educational system (Bitew & Ferguson, 2010). Therefore, the students have to develop and maintain a social network outside the home that includes teachers, peers, and friends to get academic support. First-generation Haitian immigrants often have limited English proficiency, and are not expected to be academically involved in the education of their second-generation children (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011).

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Immigration remains a global issue, and according to the United Nations estimates, approximately 191 million individuals, which is evaluated to 3.0% of world population, were living outside their native countries in 2005 (Trask, 2013). Haller et al. (2011), who studied immigrant populations in the United States reported that as of 2008, there were 39.9 million foreign-born persons in the United States, which represented 13% of the population. Trask (2013) asserted that documented literature revealed that

increased flow of migration leads to significant cultural, social, and economic problems for the migrants in the host-society, resulting in serious acculturative stress for themselves and their families. The call for further empirical research on immigrants for a better understanding of the immigrant life and experience and for better professional practice is blatant in the literature (Kim, 2009). A better understanding of the immigrants' social integration requires exploring the connections between their stigma management and social network management (Valenta, 2009).

Vilme and Butler (2004) studied Haitian immigrants, and the findings revealed that negative stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings were traumatic to Haitians. According to Brettell (2011), empirical study exploring first-generation Haitians indicated that newly-arrived Haitian immigrants experience harsh social and workplace discrimination and socioeconomic problems. Documented literature demonstrated that combined racial discrimination and socioeconomic difficulties resulted in acculturative stress that affects first-generation Haitian immigrants' social and family relationships (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). Belizaire and Fuertes (2011) also posited that second-generation Haitian immigrants assimilate to the host culture with less or no stress compared their first-generation counterparts.

The first-generation immigrants appeared to be the most vulnerable group and more affected by acculturative stress, and they are more likely to suffer and live in poverty due to social circumstances (Durbin, Lin, Taylor, & Collaghan, 2011). Although empirical research has shown that second-generation Haitian immigrants assimilate quickly and easily into the mainstream culture, a better understanding of this subgroup is

necessary. The study explored the relationship between cultural beliefs, behaviors, first-

and second-generation Haitians, and marital satisfaction.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate how cultural beliefs and behaviors, specifically associated with family, work, and social activities relate to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting. In this chapter, the research design and sample are discussed, followed by a description of the research population, sampling procedures, procedures for recruitment, and data collection. The instruments used in the study are also be reviewed in detail, along with data analysis procedures, threats to validity, and ethical concerns.

Research Design

This researcher utilized a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors (family, work, and social activities) and marital conflict among first-generation and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings. The survey was given in person by the researcher to increase the rate of response and completion. The advantage of administering the survey in person is that the respondents can ask for clarification about the questions they do not understand (Bordens & Abbott, 2011).

Cross-sectional research designs have three distinctive features, which include (a) no time dimension, (b) a reliance on existing differences rather than change following intervention, and c) groups selected based on existing differences rather than random allocation (Hall, 2008). Therefore, this method is considered a quasi-experimental

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approach. As the research questions aim to determine if there is a significant linear relationship between the continuous independent variables (cultural beliefs and behaviors) and the continuous dependent variable (marital satisfaction), the quantitative research design is the only design that can answer this question in a statistically significant manner (Creswell, 2014).

Sample

Married Haitian immigrants were the target population for this study. The last Census Bureau data (2008) indicated that there are 546,000 Haitian immigrants in the United States. According to the 2008 Census, 24.1% (128,750) of Haitian immigrants in the country live in New York City. The sampling frame consisted of first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants who are married. Participants were excluded if they are under 18 years of age, were not married, and had difficulty reading and understanding the English language. Additionally, the target population for this study was selected from the five boroughs of the New York City area.

A stratified sampling technique was used to select respondents, as two segments of the Haitian immigration population, first- and second-generation immigrants, were targeted among those living in New York City. Bordens and Abbott (2011) argued that stratified sampling allows the researcher to obtain a representative sample by dividing the population into segments or strata. It was easier to find participants within Haitian-American social organizations because they contain the two specific immigrant groups on which the study was conducted. In addition, the association chosen for recruiting participants often addresses the social problems affecting the Haitian immigrant community, such as domestic violence.

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A power analysis was conducted to determine the sample size necessary to reject accurately a null hypothesis for a regression analysis. G*Power (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996) was used to arrive at the minimum sample size for the linear regression containing two independent variables. The power analysis was calculated with the alpha level set at .05 and the beta level set at .80. The effect size and alpha levels are the standards for computing power analysis in social scientific research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Cohen (1977) recommended two independent variables, for a medium effect size. A sample of 68 yields a power of 0.8 in testing hypotheses (Cohen, 1977; UCLA, 2007). Although more respondents were available to participate in the study, the researcher obtained a sample size of 80 participants, which was sufficient to test each of the hypotheses with a power of .80.

Setting

The sample for the study was drawn from a Haitian religious group in a major New York metropolitan area, an organization consisting of about 100 churches and pastors, large and small, within the New York area. This organization was chosen because it provides access to large numbers of the target population, first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants, which made data collection more efficient.

The person authorized to provide permission to access the population as participants was the chairperson of the organization. However, the members also gave permission to release their names and contact information for the purpose of conducting the study. There was no Institutional Review Board involved for the organization. To obtain permission to get access to the members/participants, the researcher submitted a specific request in writing to the chairperson of the organization. However, an initial

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face-to-face contact was done to initiate the process, which was followed by a formal letter of request.

Instrumentation/Measures

Two scales were used to measure the constructs utilized in this study. The Cultural Beliefs and Behaviors Adaption Profile (CBBAP) (Bogumil, 1998) was used to measure acculturation-related constructs, such as cultural distress and cultural identity. The Marital Satisfaction Inventory – Revised (MSI-R) (Singelis, 1994) was used to identify the nature and extent of distress along several key dimensions of marital relationships. The following are detailed descriptions of each test along with the psychometric properties of the instruments.

The CBBAP consists of a 163 item scale developed to capture a multidimensional pattern of cultural beliefs and behaviors across three domains: family, work, and social activities. In addition to those three domains, the CBBAP was used in this study to also measure acculturation-related constructs, such as cultural distress and cultural identity, as they relate to the acculturation process among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants. Items were scored on a 6-point Likert scale, where 1 was *strongly agree,* and 6 was *strongly disagree.*

The CBBAP includes six factors: reciprocity, family integrity, peer influence on behaviors, value of peers, family ideas, self-reliance, and harmony at work. The alpha reliability measures for the six factors were .80 for reciprocity, .85 for family integrity, .89 for peer influence on behaviors, .81 each for value of peer and family ideas, .71 for self-reliance, and .53 for harmony at work. The total CBBAP score served as the independent variable.

The MSI-R is a 150-item scale measuring both the nature and intensity of relationship distress in distinct areas of couples' interaction via responses of *true* or *false* to each of the inventory items. There are 13 subscales, two validity scales, one global scale, and 10 specific scales assessing relationship satisfaction in such areas as affective and problem-solving communication, aggression, leisure time together, finances, the sexual relationship, role orientation, family of origin, and interactions regarding children. Coefficients of internal consistency average .82; temporal stability (test-retest) coefficients average .79. Each of the MSI-R scales discriminates between distressed-clinic couples and nondistressed-community couples, with moderate to large effect sizes averaging 1.07. Total scores on the global scale were used as the dependent variable.

Data Collection

Using the stratified sampling approach, individual parishioners of a Haitian religious group in a major New York metropolitan area were contacted by telephone requesting their voluntary participation in a study. The researcher made several attempts at various dates and times to reach the targeted participants. Contacting the potential participants prior to gathering them together and explaining the study increased the chance of their participation and their quick responses. A $25.00 incentive was given to the participants for completing the questionnaire, and refreshments were served at the end of the survey.

The researcher gathered the participants in one room and provided basic information about the study. The participants were presented with informed consent materials including the participants' right not to participate, and a description of confidentiality and usages of the study prior to accessing the questionnaire. Additionally,

the researcher provided verbal instructions including the protocol of not allowing the respondents to communicate with each other during the survey. Then, the researcher sat at a desk in the room for the duration of the survey and remained available to answer questions. The survey was given in person by the researcher to increase the rate of response and completion. After completing and submitting the surveys, participants received their incentive. Data collection began after IRB approval. The data collection period remained open until 80 responses were collected.

To avoid a social desirability response set, participants were not informed about the specific focus of the study—if there is a relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors (family, work, and social activities) and marital conflict among first-generation and second-generation Haitian immigrants.

Data Analysis

SPSS statistical software was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were performed on the demographics of the respondents, including gender, age, marital status, and number of children. Next, the internal reliability of the CBBAP was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .7 or greater is acceptable (DeVellis, 2003). Further, this was an assessment of the assumptions of the linear regression, which include multicollinearity, normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Finally, the multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the following research questions:

RQ1: How do cultural beliefs and behaviors as identified through the *CBBAP* relate to marital satisfaction among first-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting?

IV: First-generation cultural beliefs and behaviors (family, work, and social activities)

DV: Marital satisfaction

Hypothesis RQ1.1: First-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis RQ1.2: First-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis RQ1.3: First-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

RQ2: How do cultural beliefs and behaviors as identified through the *CBBAP* relate to marital satisfaction among second-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting?

IV: Second-generation cultural beliefs and behaviors (family, work, and social activities)

DV: Marital satisfaction

Hypothesis RQ2.1: Second-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding IND cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis RQ2.2: Second-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding IND cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis RQ2.3: Second-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding IND cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

A multiple regression was conducted for both the first- and second-generation Haitians. The regression models consisted of three independent variables. Factor 3 of the CBBAP measured beliefs and behaviors related to society, Factor 4 of the CBBAP measured beliefs and behaviors related to family, and Factor 6 of the CBBAP measured beliefs and behaviors related to work. The dependent variable was the total scores on the Marital Satisfaction Inventory. If the ANOVA of the regression analysis produced an alpha level below .05, then the model as a whole was a significant predictor of Marital Satisfaction. If the alpha level was below .05, then the t values were examined for each of the independent variables. If the associated alpha levels were below .05, then individual independent variable made a significant contribution to the model.

Additionally, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between first- and second-generation Haitians on the Marital Satisfaction Inventory. The ANOVA evaluated if there is an overlap in the 95% confidence intervals of the first-generation and second-generation means scores. If the ANOVA produced an alpha level that was below .05, then there were significant differences in the mean scores of first- and second-generation Haitians.

Validity and Reliability

The assumption was that although this study would have strengths, there was also a need to review the limitations of the study. The study had geographical limitations. It was conducted only on Haitian immigrants living in the New York area. Therefore, the results are not generalizable to the entire Haitian immigrant population in the United States. Another threat to this study is the nonresponse bias whereby participants may not have completed or returned the survey, which can influence the outcome of the results due to a low rate of returning the surveys and a low sample size. To overcome this threat, the researcher was available on site to answer any questions. This arrangement should have promoted an increase in responses. Individuals may respond in a socially desirable manner. Social desirability can be a concern when individuals complete surveys. Thus, participants were told that all their responses would be anonymous with no threat of tracking the respondents of each survey.

The convenience sampling was utilized to obtain the needed participants. One foreseen limitation of convenience sampling is that it might not be representative of the overall population (Fässler, Meissner, Schneider, & Linde, 2010). This limitation involves voluntary participation possibly decreasing the number of responses needed for the study. Additionally, because there was a financial incentive, self-selection bias may have occurred, where respondents who were more financially needy might have been more likely to take the survey.

Ethical Considerations

Thus study was conducted based upon permission granted and the ethical standards indicated by the Capella University Institutional Review Board. This

procedure was carried out to ensure the ethical protection of all participants in the study. Respondents were presented with information related to informed consent to ensure that they are aware that they are in involved in a study and had given their consent to participate. There was no deception or coercion involved in this research. Anonymity was insured, for there was no personally identifiable information collected in the survey. There was no exposure to mental or physical risks. Finally, the respondents' decisions to begin the study were deemed as providing their agreement to the terms of the informed consent communicated online prior to beginning the survey.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter, the research questions and hypotheses are presented, followed by a description of the data analysis strategy and organization of statistical results. A description of the sample and preliminary data screening and cleanup steps follow. Results of the preliminary analysis, also known as a test of parametric assumptions, and primary analysis are reported. Finally, the chapter concludes with the results of the study.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to address two research questions. The research questions, along with the hypotheses and description of the independent and dependent variables were as follows.

RQ1: How do cultural beliefs and behaviors as identified through the *CBBAP* relate to marital satisfaction among first-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting?

IV: First-generation cultural beliefs and behaviors (family, work, and social activities)

DV: Marital satisfaction

Hypothesis RQ1.1: First-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis RQ1.2: First-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis RQ1.3: First-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

RQ2: How do cultural beliefs and behaviors as identified through the *CBBAP* relate to marital satisfaction among second-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting?

IV: Second-generation cultural beliefs and behaviors (family, work, and social activities)

DV: Marital satisfaction

Hypothesis RQ2.1: Second-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding independence (IND) cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis RQ2.2: Second-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding IND cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis RQ2.3: Second-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding independence (IND) cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

A multiple regression was conducted for both the first- and second-generation Haitians.

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Data Analysis Strategy and Organization of Results

To evaluate the research questions, an analysis of variance and multiple regressions were conducted. These analyses are considered the primary analyses. The one-way analysis of variance was performed to determine if there were significant differences in marital satisfaction between first-generation and second-generation Haitians. Two multiple regressions were conducted, one for first-generation Haitians and one for the second-generation Haitians to evaluate if social activities, family, and work were significant predictors of marital satisfaction. Before the primary analyses were conducted, descriptive statistics were performed to provide demographic information about the sample. This demographic information included age, gender, education level, employment status, years lived in the United States, and religious affiliation. After the demographic information was presented, Chronbach's alpha was conducted to evaluate the reliability of the three factors scores of the CBBAP associated with social activities, family, and work. Chronbach's alpha values of less than .7 indicate unsatisfactory reliability of a factor. After the Chronbach's alpha was computed, preliminary analyses were conducted for the analysis of variance and the multiple regression to assess if the assumptions necessary to run these parametric test were met.

Description of Sample

The sampling frame consisted of first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants who are married. Participants were excluded if they were under 18 years of age, were not married, or had difficulty reading and understanding the English language. Additionally, the target population for this study was selected from the five boroughs of the New York City area.

Preliminary Data Screening and Cleanup

Frequency distributions were generated for all variables in the data file. There was one missing value for two marital status questions (38 and 86) and three CBBAP questions (46, 99, and 101). No respondents were excluded from the analysis because the five missing values were spread across five different respondents. Factors scores for the CBBAP were then computed for social activities, family, and work by computing the mean from the individual question scores that made up each of the factors (Bogumil, 1988). Marital satisfaction scores were computed for each respondent from mean scores computed from each of the individual Marital Satisfaction Survey questions (Singelis, 1994).

Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity was assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF). The VIF measures how much of the variability of the specified independent variable is explained by other independent variables in the model. If this value is 10 or less than there is said to be no issue with multicollinearity (Field, 2012; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). Based on the results of the individual VIFs, there was no violation in the assumption of multicollinearity for social activities (VIF = 1.05), family (VIF = 1.03), or work (VIF = 1.02).

Descriptive Statistics

There were 80 respondents that participated in this survey. There were 39 (48.8%) males and 41 (51.3%) females. The average age of all respondents was 40 years old (*SD* = 11.06), with second-generation respondents being an average of 12 years younger than their first-generation counterparts. The majority of respondents (83.8%) had college

degrees and was Protestant Christian (66.3%). Additionally, 87.5% of all respondents were employed and 62.6% have lived in the United States for at least 25 years. Table 1 contains demographic frequencies for respondents in total and by generation status.

Parametric Assumptions

An analysis of variance was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in marital satisfaction scores between first- and second-generation Haitians. The independent variable was generation where 1 was first generation and 2 represented second generation. The dependent variable was marital satisfaction where high scores represented higher marital satisfaction. Preliminary tests were conducted to evaluate violations of normality and homogeneity of variance. To test the assumption of normality, the Shapiro-Wilk test was performed. The Shaprio-Wilk test indicated that the distribution of marital satisfaction scores for first-generation Haitians was normal, SW (40) = .963, p = .216, as was the distribution of marital satisfaction scores for the second generation, SW(40) = .962, p = .200. P values for both tests were. 05 or greater. To evaluate the assumption of homogeneity of variance, Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was conducted. Results indicated that there was no violation in the assumption of homogeneity of variance, F(1, 78) = 2.332, p = .131, as the p value was 0.5 or greater.

Table 1
Frequencies: Demographics

	First Generation			Second Generation			Total		
	n	%	*M (SD)*	*n*	%	*M (SD)*	*n*	%	*M (SD)*
Age	40		46.65 (9.52)	40		34.23 (8.83)	80		40.44 (11.06)
Gender									
Male	22	55.0%		17	42.5%		39	48.8%	
Female	18	45.0%		23	57.5%		41	51.3%	
Education Level									
Secondary	1	2.5%		0	0%		1	1.3%	
High school	6	15.0%		6	15.0%		12	15.0%	
College	33	82.5%		34	85.0%		67	83.8%	
Religion									
Catholic Christian	7	17.5%		20	50.0%		27	34.8%	
Protestant Christian	33	82.5%		20	50.0%		53	66.3%	
Employed									
Yes	35	87.5%		35	87.5%		70	87.5%	
No	5	12.5%		5	12.5%		10	12.5%	
Years Lived in US									
0-5 years	2	3.6%		0	0%		2	2.5%	
5-10 years	2	3.6%		0	0%		2	2.5%	
10-15 years	5	9.1%		1	2.5%		5	6.3%	
15-25 years	14	25.5%		7	17.5%		21	26.6%	
25-35 years	22	40.0%		21	52.5%		35	43.8%	
35 years or more	10	18.2%		11	27.5%		15	18.8%	

Research Question 1

To determine if the cultural beliefs and behaviors of family, work, and social activities were significantly related to marital satisfaction, a multiple regression was conducted for both first- and second-generation Haitian. The dependent variable was marital satisfaction where high scores represent higher marital satisfaction. The three independent variables were beliefs and behaviors related to family, work, and social activities. For these independent variables, high scores (above 3) represent independent cultural beliefs and behaviors, and low scores (below 3) represent interdependent cultural beliefs and behaviors. The results of the multiple regression will determine if there is a significant relationship between family and marital satisfaction (hypothesis RQ1.1), work and marital satisfaction (hypothesis RQ1.2), and social activities and martial satisfaction (hypothesis RQ1.3).

Before the multiple regression analysis was conducted for research question 1 among first-generation Haitians, the assumptions of linearity, normality, homogeneity of variance, and homoscedasticity were evaluated. Violations in the assumptions of the multiple regression lead to results that are likely inaccurate and unreliable (Field, 2012; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). To test the assumption of normality of the standardized residuals, a histogram was generated. The results indicated that the residuals fit the normal curve. Therefore, there was no violation in the assumption of normality (see Figure 1). This condition was confirmed by the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality performed on the standardized residuals, $SW(40) = .968, p = .307$. Because the p value was .05 or greater, the distribution was normal.

Histogram

Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction
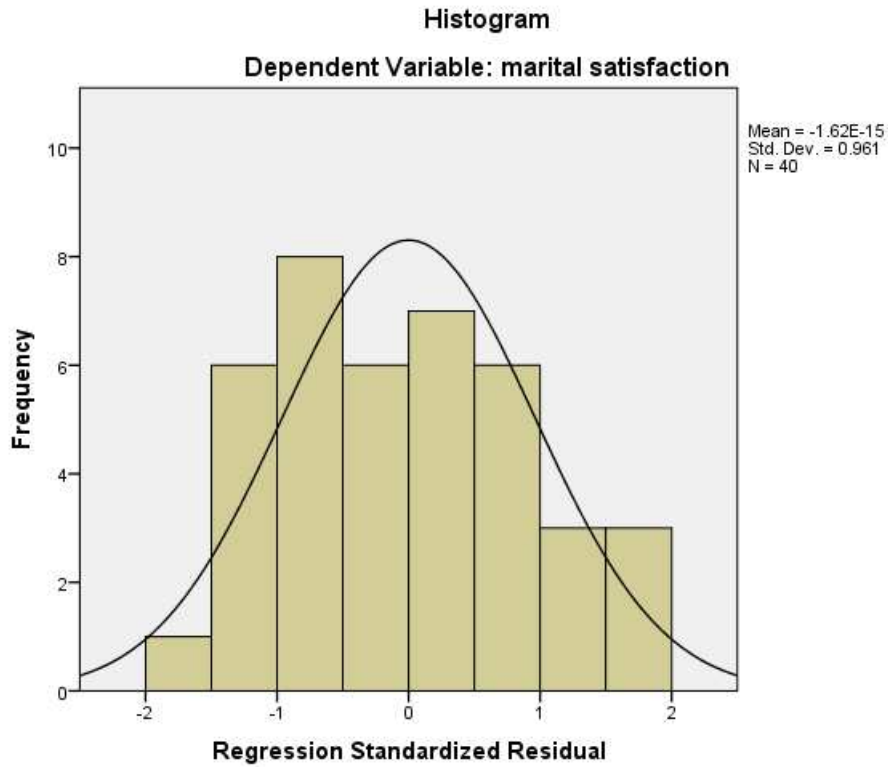
Figure 1. Histogram of the standardized residuals for marital satisfaction indicated no violation in normality for first-generation Haitians.

The standardized residuals and the standardized predicted values were plotted to examine the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity. Figure 2 reveals that the plots are relatively random and evenly dispersed throughout the plot, which indicates that there was no violation in the assumption of normality or homoscedasticity (Field, 2012).

Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction
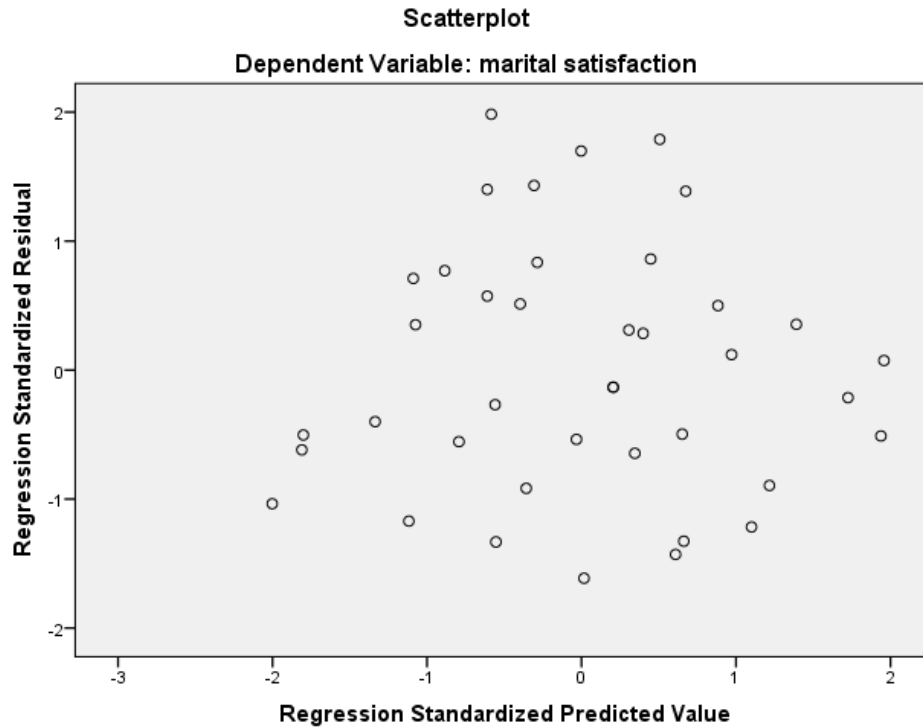
Figure 2. Plot of the standardized residuals and standardized predicated values indicated that there was no violation in the assumption of linearity or homoscedasticity for first-generation Haitians.

The data were also checked for outliers. Standardized DFBetas were calculated for each respondent across all three independent variables. DFBeta is the value that represents the difference between a parameter estimated using all cases, and estimated again when one case is excluded (Field, 2012). DFBetas are calculated to determine if any individual score has a substantial influence on the model, or said another way, is an outlier. DFBetas are calculated for each independent variable and also for the constant, for each respondent. Stevens (2002) suggested looking at cases with absolute values of greater than 2 to determine if any values have a substantial influence on the model. Table 3 consists of the standardized DFBetas for all first-generation Haitians for each of the three independent variables and the constant. It reveals that there is no value greater than

2. Therefore, none of the values are considered outliers. Hence, the multiple regression was conducted without sample alterations.

Details of Analysis and Results

The reliability analysis for this study produced a Chronbach alpha coefficient of .832 for the CBBAP factors of social activities: .514 for the family and .384 for work. The alpha coefficients produced by Bogumil (1998), the original author of this instrument, for these factors were .85 for social activities, .89 for family, and .53 for work. The Marital Satisfaction scale produced an alpha coefficient of .713 for this study, which is comparable to the .79 alpha coefficient produced by Singelis (1994).

Results of the analysis of variance indicated that there was no significant mean score differences in marital satisfaction between first-generation ($M = 193.63$, $SD = 8.49$) and second-generation Haitians ($M = 189.75$, $SD = 10.62$), $F(1, 78) = 3.25$, $p = .075$. See Table 2 for results and Table 3 for analysis of variance regarding marital satisfaction for first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants.

Table 2

Standardized DFBeta Values: First-Generation Haitians

	Standardized DFBETA Social Activities	Standardized DFBETA Family	Standardized DFBETA Work
1	-.07000	-.11867	.08456
2	-.02535	.09046	-.02852
3	.26067	.11478	.18382
4	.00191	-.01749	.04132
5	-.01130	-.03206	-.02614
6	.22655	-.27359	-.11536
7	.11689	.06219	-.07343
8	.05053	-.11444	.00182
9	.04425	.05558	.04515
10	-.01165	-.01359	.02932
11	.15156	-.03696	.16963
12	-.31789	.39720	-.19811
13	-.11650	.08726	-.24198
14	.30089	-.26892	-.16168
15	-.01064	-.00391	.02820
16	.29486	-.02637	-.16135
17	-.18545	.17387	-.28540
18	.13724	-.01548	.10969
19	-.00393	-.11341	-.11718
20	-.10440	-.14388	.19500
21	.13624	.02281	-.03005
22	-.00566	.00371	-.02823
23	-.01093	.26483	.08361
24	.11762	-.03320	.05416
25	-.30093	.02511	-.25680
26	-.11584	-.13781	.02805
27	.00252	.19701	-.09076
28	-.01833	-.00221	.02463
29	-.08561	-.03006	-.04309
30	-.06274	-.04856	.00821
31	.16380	.16022	.45636
32	.10595	-.05176	.11883
33	-.12198	-.00632	.05621
34	-.30224	-.19040	.16002
35	-.00073	-.16352	.08439
36	-.31221	.44407	-.01284
37	-.00566	.00371	-.02823
38	-.22511	.00974	.10679
39	.14538	-.07657	-.19523
40	.10405	-.08637	-.00741

Table 3

Analysis of Variance: One-Way (N = 80)

	First Generation		Second Generation		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*(1, 78)
Marital Satisfaction	193.63	8.49	189.75	10.62	3.25

Results of the multiple regression for first-generation Haitians indicated that the model that included cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with social activities, family, and work was not a significant predictor of marital satisfaction for first-generation Haitians, $F(3, 36) = 1.067$, $p = .375$, which is indicated in p value in Table 5 that is .05 or greater (see Tables 4, 5, and 6). Therefore, based on these results the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between family and marital status (RQ1.1) can be rejected. Additionally, the hypothesis that there is a relationship between family and marital satisfaction (RQ1.2) can be rejected. Finally, the hypothesis that there is a relationship between social activities and marital satisfaction (RQ1.3) can be rejected.

Table 4

Regression Model Summary Table: First-Generation Haitians

R	R^2	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.286	.082	.005	8.465

Table 5

ANOVA Table: First-Generation Haitians

	SS	*Df*	*MS*	*F*	*P*
Regression	229.458	3	76.486	1.067	.375
Residual	2579.917	36	71.664		
Total	2809.375	39			

Table 6

Regression Coefficients Table: First-Generation Haitians

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	*T*	*p*	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	207.246	11.847		17.493	.000		
Social activities	-1.561	1.739	-.147	-.898	.375	.955	1.047
Family	-2.872	2.095	-.218	-1.349	.186	.974	1.027
Work	.601	2.649	.037	.227	.822	.978	1.022

A visual examination of the three individual scatterplots confirms that the relationship between the three independent variables, social activities, work, and family was relatively weak. For example, the scatterplot of marital satisfaction and social activities reveals that the line of best fit is almost a straight horizontal line (see Figure 3). This result indicates that the relationship between the two variables is very weak. A weak relationship is also evident in the scatterplot between marital status and work (see Figure 4).
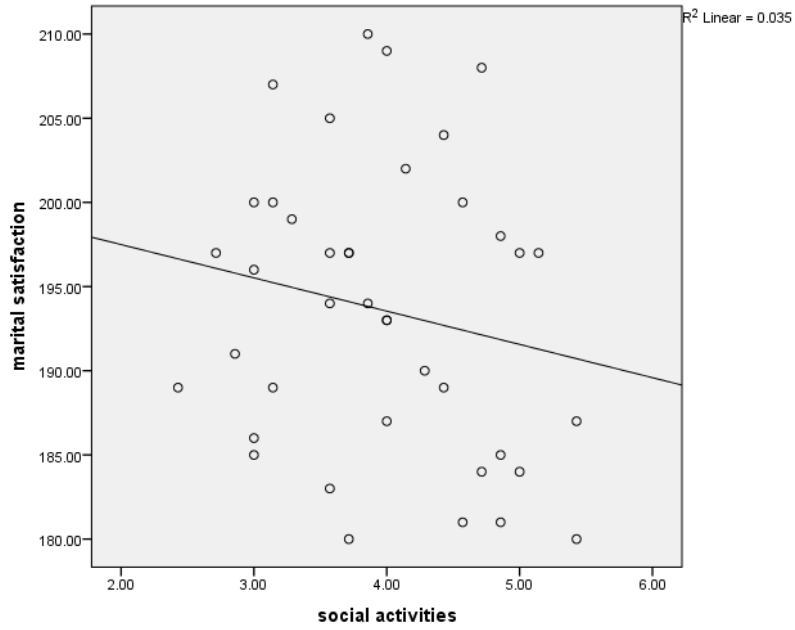
Figure 3. Scatterplot of marital satisfaction and social activity scores reveal a weak linear relationship between the two variables as the plots spread out far away from the diagonal line.
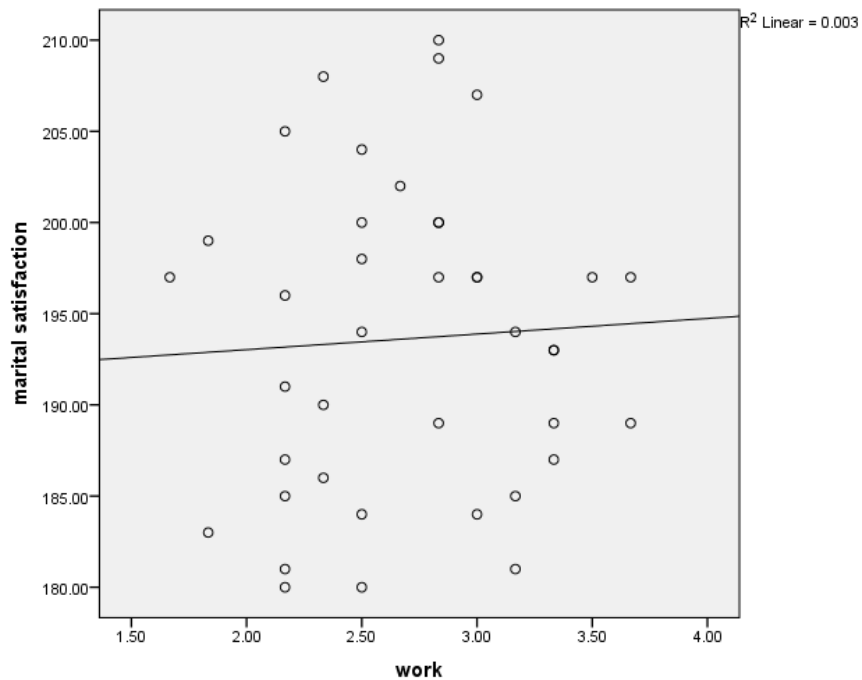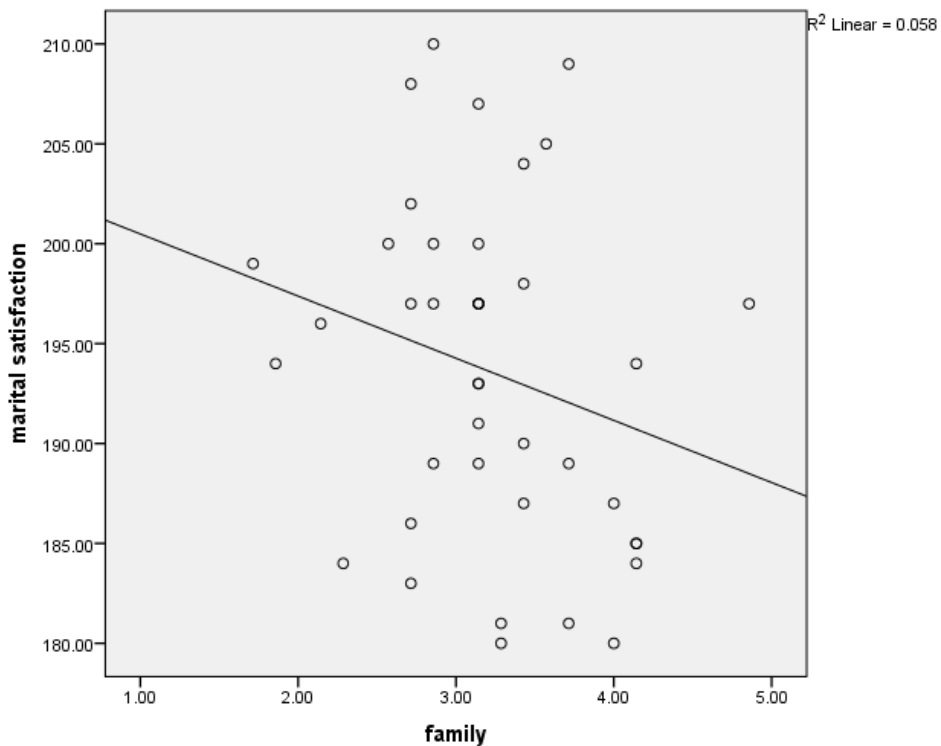

Figure 4. Scatterplot of marital satisfaction inventory and work reveal almost no linear relationship between the two variables as the line is almost perfectly horizontal.

Figure 5. Scatterplot of marital satisfaction and family scores reveal a weak linear relationship between the two variables as the plots are spread out far away from the diagonal line.

Research Question 2

Preliminary analysis for the second multiple regression for second-generation Haitians indicated that the standardized residuals were relatively normal and that there was no violation in the assumption of multicollinearity for social activities (VIF = 1.02), family (VIF = 1.01), and work (VIF = 1.02; see Figure 6). Additionally, the scatterplot of the standardized residuals and standardized predicted values indicated there was no violation in linearity or homoscedasticity.

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Histogram

Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction

Mean = -8.50E-16
Std. Dev. = 0.961
N = 40

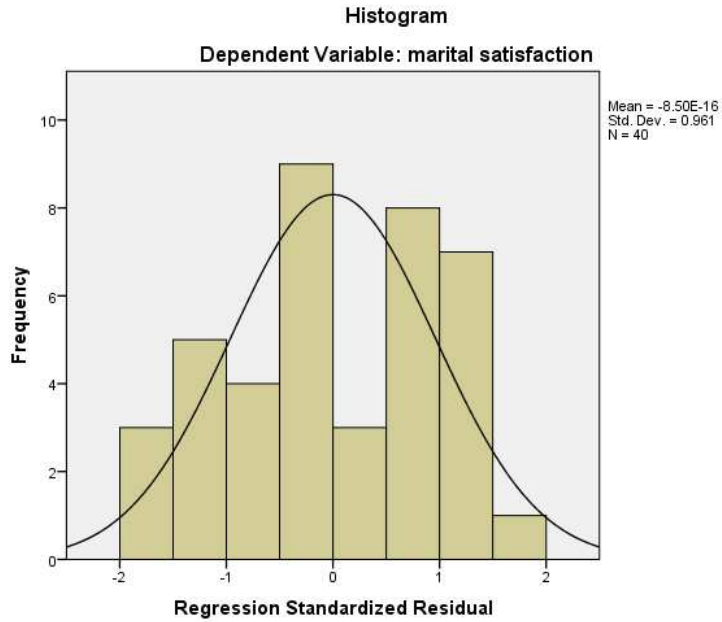*Figure 6.* Histogram of standardized residuals reveals no violation of normality for second-generation Haitians.

Scatterplot

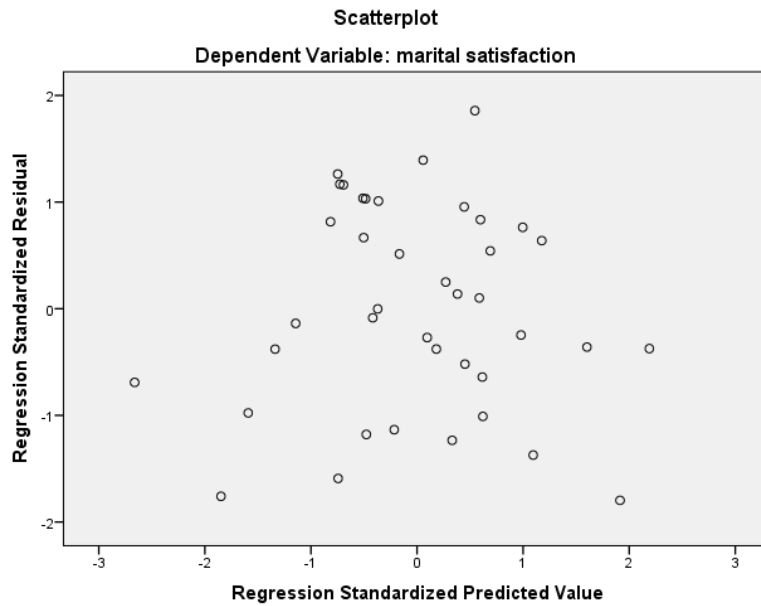**Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction**

Figure 7. Plot of the standardized residuals and standardized predicated values indicated that there was no violation in the assumption of linearity or homoscedasticity for second-generation Haitians.

Standardized DFBetas were calculated for each respondent across all three independent variables. Therefore, none of the values are considered outliers. As a result, the multiple regression was conducted without sample alterations. Results of the multiple regression indicated that the model that included cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with social activities, family, and work was not a significant predictor of marital satisfaction for second-generation Haitians, $F(3, 36) = .427$, $p = .735$ (see Tables 7, 8, and 9). As a result, the hypothesis that there a relationship between family and marital status among second-generation Haitians (RQ2.1) can be rejected. Also, the hypothesis that there was a relationship between work and marital status among second-generation Haitians (RQ2.2) can be rejected. Finally, the hypothesis that there was a relationship between social activities and marital status among second-generation Haitians (RQ2.3) can be rejected.

Table 7
Regression Model Summary Table: Second-Generation Haitians

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.185	.034	-.046	10.86301

Table 8
ANOVA Table: Second-Generation Haitians

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Regression	151.323	3	50.441	.427	.735
Residual	4284.177	36	118.005		
Total	4399.500	39			

Table 9

Regression Coefficients Table: Second-Generation Haitians

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	188.181	17.172		10.959	.000		
social activities	-1.832	2.290	-.132	-.800	.429	.980	1.021
Family	2.357	2.907	.133	.811	.423	.994	1.006
Work	0.293	3.784	-.013	.077	.939	.979	1.021

Scatterplots between marital status and the three independent variables revealed

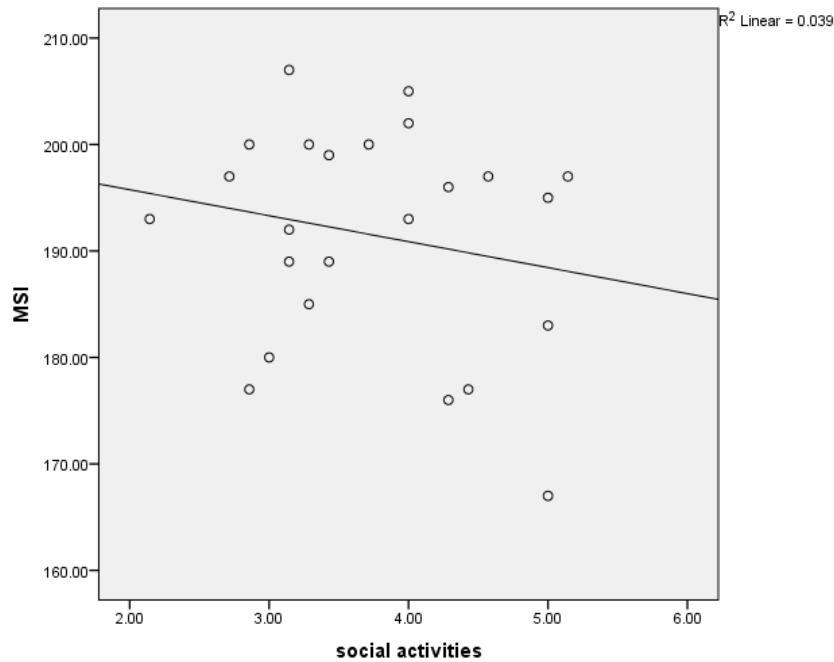weak relationships (see Figures 8, 9, and 10).

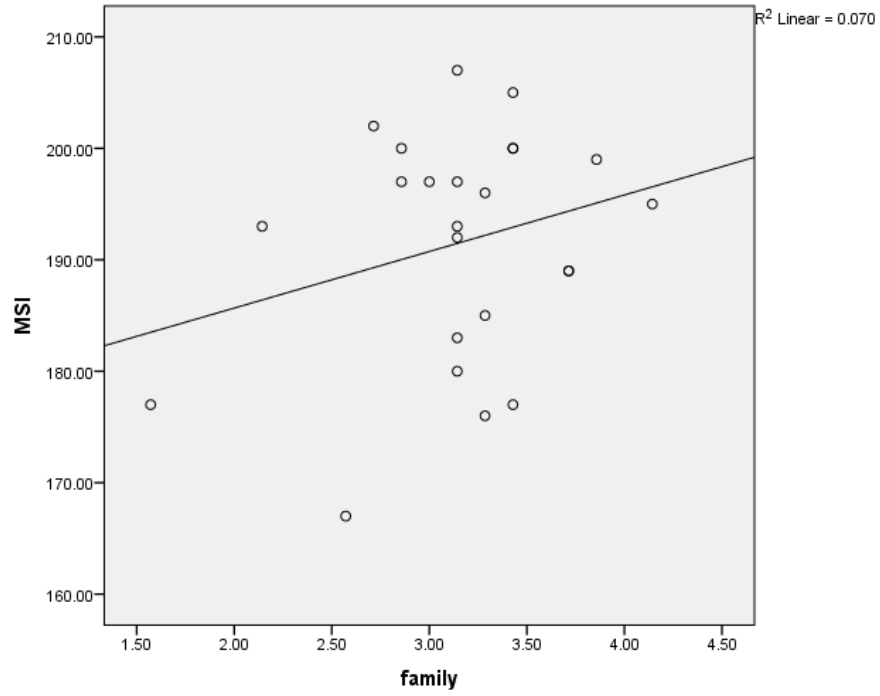*Figure 8*. Scatterplot of marital satisfaction and social activities reveals a weak linear relationship.

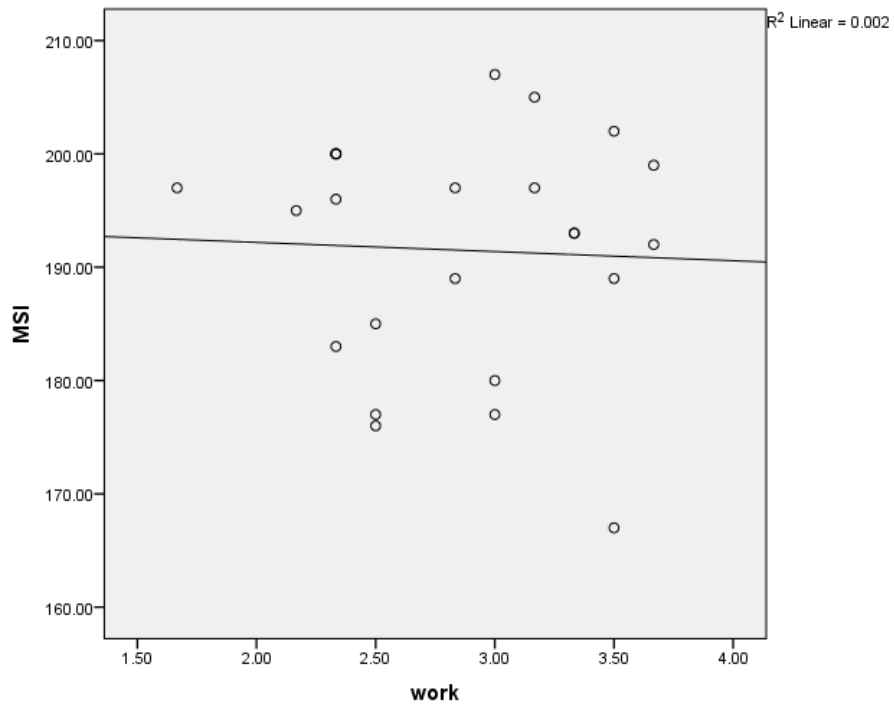*Figure 9.* Scatterplot of marital satisfaction and family reveals a weak linear relationship.

Figure 10. Scatterplot of marital satisfaction and work reveals a weak linear relationship.

Conclusion

After checking for outliers and other violations in the assumption of the analysis of variance and the multiple regression analysis, results of the analysis of variance indicated that there were no significant differences in marital satisfaction scores between first- and second-generation Haitians. Additionally, the multiple regressions indicated that cultural beliefs and behaviors of family, work, and social activities were not significantly related to marital satisfaction for either first- or second-generation Haitians. Therefore, hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 for research question 1 and hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 for research question 2 were rejected.

Further exploration of the bivariate scatterplots between marital status and the three independent variables for both first- and second-generation Haitians showed that the linear relationship between each of the independent variables and marital status was weak. Additionally, statistical power was low, .47, for the regression analysis for both first- and second-generation Haitians as their sample size was 40 for each group. This result means that if there were significant effects in the real world, the statistical analysis only had a 47% chance of detecting this effect, which is below the accepted standard of .80 (Cohen, 1988). Finally, alpha coefficients were low, less than .7, on the family and work factors of the CBBAP, which indicates that the reliability of these two factors among this sample was low.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Although immigration has been and remains an opportunity for immigrants to escape political or religious persecution and poverty (Liebert, 2010), immigration is also believed, to some extent, to have a detrimental effect on individuals and immigrant families through the acculturation process (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). As explained in Chapter 2, the process of cultural adjustment to the host-culture affects immigrants on many aspects of their lives such as family, work, social activities, and marital relationships (Oksana, 2010). It is not known how the process of acculturation affects Haitian immigrants and to what extent cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, and social activities impact marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants.

Haitian immigrants in the United States experience cultural adjustment, just as any other immigrant group, but there is limited literature that explains how cultural beliefs specific to family, work, and social activities affect marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants (Nicolas et al., 2009). This study was conducted in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the effects of cultural beliefs and behaviors of first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants on their social functioning, with respect to family, work, and social activities, and how they relate to

marital satisfaction. It was also an effort to increase the limited knowledge base on the issue.

Summary of Results

Analysis of variance and multiple-regression analysis were performed to determine whether there is a significant relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, and social actions and marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants. The results of the analysis of variance indicated no significant marital satisfaction mean score differences between first- ($M =$ 193.63, $SD = 8.49$) and second-generation Haitians ($M = 189.75$, $SD = 10.62$), $F(1, 78) =$ 3.25, $p = .075$. Also the results of the multiple regressions for first-generation Haitians indicated that the model that included cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with family, work, and social activities was not a good predictor of marital satisfaction among first-generation Haitians, $F(3, 36) = 1.067$, $p = .375$. The results of the multiple regressions for first-generation Haitians showed that the relationship between family, work, and social activities is relatively weak.

The scatterplot of marital satisfaction and social activities indicated almost a straight horizontal line, which revealed a weak relationship between the two variables. The scatterplot indicated the same result for marital satisfaction and work. The scatterplot of marital satisfaction and family also indicated a weak linear relationship between the two variables.

As for the second multiple regression analysis for second-generation Haitians, the standardized residuals were relatively normal. There was no violation with respect to the assumption of multicollinearity for social activities (VIF $= 1.02$) and family (VIF $= 1.01$).

According to the multiple regression results, the model that included cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with social activities, family, and work was not a significant predictor of marital satisfaction for both first- and second-generation Haitians $F(3, 36) = .427$, $p = .735$. In conclusion, the results of the analysis of variance indicated no significant differences in marital satisfaction scores between first- and second-generation Haitians. In addition, the multiple regression analysis indicated that cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with social activities, family, and work were not significantly related to marital satisfaction for either first- or second-generation Haitian immigrants.

Discussion of Results

As research has informed of the negative and detrimental outcomes associated with the process of acculturation on immigrants (Farrell, 2007), obtaining a better understanding of cultural beliefs and behaviors of immigrants and how those factors affect their social functioning specific to family, work, and social activities, and marital satisfaction can add incomparably to the knowledge base. Migrating from one's homeland to a foreign country is believed to be an escape from political or religious persecution or poverty (Green, 2009). Adjusting to the culture of the host society may not be an easy task for first-generation immigrants, for the process tends to affect their social life, including their marital relationships more than their second-generation counterparts (Faconier et al., 2013). This research study explored some cultural and social variables to examine the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors with respect to social activities, family, and work, and their impact on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants.

Sample size. This research study explored the variables to examine the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors and marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings. The researcher used a stratified random sampling technique within a religious and social organization in the New York City area. Bordens and Abbott (2011) noted that *stratified sampling* allows the researcher to obtain a representative sample by dividing the population into segments or strata, and that random sampling is a sampling in which each member of a population has an equal chance of being selected. The present study divided the population between first- and second-generation married Haitian immigrants, 18 years of age or older. Participants who could not read and understand English were excluded from the study. The sample was drawn from the Haitian immigrant population in the New York City area. Each respondent had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study.

The population size was 100. With a margin of error of 5%, a confidential level of 95%, and a response distribution of 50%, the suggested sample size was 80, based on a sample size calculator from *Raosoft*. Similar studies on populations of the same size reflected the same sample size. Data for the study were drawn from 80 first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants, 40 from each generation, living within the five boroughs of New York City area. Analysis of variance and multiple regression analysis were conducted to examine the linear relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors, as they relate to social activities, family, and work, and the extent to which they can predict marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitians.

Research questions and theoretical framework. The impact of the process of acculturation and assimilation on an immigrant's life in general is well documented in the literature, but its effect on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants has not captured the interest of the researchers in the field as yet. Two research questions were proposed to explore this phenomenon.

RQ1: How do cultural beliefs and behaviors as identified through the *CBBAP* relate to marital satisfaction among first-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting?

RQ2: How do cultural beliefs and behaviors as identified through the *CBBAP* relate to marital satisfaction among second-generation Haitian immigrants living in an American urban setting?

To facilitate the exploration of the phenomenon, a synthesized theoretical framework was developed and included the acculturation theory (Birman & Trickett, 2001); cultural identity theory (Bhugra, 2004); family systems theory (Rothbaum et al., 2002); and the IND and INT theory (Singelis, 1994). Six hypotheses were tested to determine whether a relationship exists between the variables.

Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 1 Results-RQ1.1

The first hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis RQ1.1: First-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction. This hypothesis was not supported by the findings of the study, but was aligned with the theoretical framework.

H1a: First-generation Haitian Americans did not score higher regarding INT

cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, and it did not positively correlate with

marital satisfaction. The results of the analysis of variance and the multiple regression

analysis indicated that family was not significantly related to marital satisfaction among

first-generation Haitians. Therefore, the hypothesis that there was a relationship between

cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family and marital satisfaction among first-

generation Haitians was rejected. Results of the analysis of variance and the multiple

regression analysis for first-generation Haitians indicated that the model that included

cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with family was not a significant predictor of

marital satisfaction for first-generation Haitians, $F(3, 36) = 1.067$, $p = .375$. This finding

is indicated in the *p* value in Table 5 that is .05 or greater (see Tables 4, 5, and 6).

Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 2 Results-RQ1.2

The second hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis RQ1.2: First-generation Haitian Americans will score higher

regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work and this will positively

correlate with marital satisfaction. This assumption was not supported by the findings,

but was aligned with the theoretical framework of the study.

H2a: First-generation Haitian Americans did not score higher regarding INT

cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work, and did not correlate positively with

marital satisfaction. The results of the analysis of variance and the multiple regression

analysis indicated that work was not significantly related to marital satisfaction among

first=generation Haitians. Therefore, the hypothesis that there was a relationship between

cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work and marital satisfaction among first-generation Haitians was rejected.

Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 3 Results-RQ1.2

The third hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis RQ1.3: First-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction. This assumption was not supported by the findings of the study, but was aligned with the theoretical framework.

H3a: First-generation Haitian Americans did not score higher regarding INT cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities, and did not correlate positively with marital satisfaction. The results of the analysis of variance and the multiple regression analysis indicated that family was not significantly related to marital satisfaction among first-generation Haitians. Therefore, the hypothesis that there was a relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities and marital satisfaction among first-generation Haitians was rejected.

Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 1 Results-RQ2.1

The fourth hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis RQ2.1: Second-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding IND cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction. This hypothesis was not supported by the findings, but it was aligned with the theoretical framework of the study.

H4a: Second-generation Haitian Americans did not score higher regarding IND cultural beliefs and behaviors, and it did not positively correlate with marital satisfaction.

The hypothesis that there a relationship between family and marital status among second-generation Haitians (RQ2.1) was rejected because results of the analysis of variance and the multiple regression analysis indicated that the model that included cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with family was not a significant predictor of marital satisfaction for second-generation Haitians, $F(3, 36) = .427$, $p = .735$ (see Tables 7, 8, and 9).

Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 2 Results-RQ2.2

The fifth hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis RQ2.2: Second-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding IND cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work and this will positively correlate with marital satisfaction. This hypothesis was not supported by the findings, but it was aligned with the theoretical framework of the study.

H5a: Second-generation Haitian Americans did not score higher regarding independence (IND) cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work, and it did not correlate with marital satisfaction. Results of the analysis of variance and the multiple regression analysis indicated that the model that included cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with work was not a significant predictor of marital satisfaction for second-generation Haitians, $F(3, 36) = .427$, $p = .735$ (see Tables 7, 8, and 9). Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected that there was a relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work and marital status among second-generation Haitians (RQ2.2).

Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 3 Results-RQ2.3

The sixth hypothesis was the following:

Hypothesis RQ2.3: Second-generation Haitian Americans will score higher regarding IND cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities and this will

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positively correlate with marital satisfaction. An analysis of variance and a multiple regression analysis were conducted. This assumption was not supported by the findings, but it was aligned with the theoretical framework of the study.

H6a: Second-generation Haitian Americans did not score higher regarding IND cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities, and it did not correlate with marital satisfaction. The results of the analysis of variance and the multiple regression analysis indicated that the model that included cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with social activities was not a significant predictor of marital satisfaction for second-generation Haitians, $F(3, 36) = .427$, $p = .735$. Therefore, the hypothesis that there was a relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to social activities and marital status among second-generation Haitians was rejected.

Explanation of Unanticipated Findings

The multiple regression analysis results and the analysis of variance results indicated that there were no significant differences in marital satisfaction scores between first- and second-generation Haitians. Additionally, the multiple regressions indicated that cultural beliefs and behaviors of family, work, and social activities were not significantly related to marital satisfaction for either first- or second-generation Haitians. Therefore, hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 for research question 1 and hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 for research question 2 are to be rejected because they are not supported by the findings of the study. However, the findings of other studies, as reported in Chapter 2, are aligned with the hypotheses of the present study. For example, Silva et al. (2012) conducted a study on intercultural relationships, and the findings revealed that individuals from different but similar cultures tend to enter into intimate relationships with each other

because they are more likely to have comparable attitudes, values, and beliefs (Silva et al., 2012). The authors also reported that people from cultures that emphasize collective over individual objectives are more likely to see each other as potential mates. First-generation and second-generation Haitian immigrants have different cultural backgrounds. Both groups tend to enter into intimate relationships with individuals within their own generations, and this tendency is believed to be related to cultural similarity.

The unanticipated results indicating no significant relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to family, work, and social activities, and marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants may be due to the size of the sample (80), relatively small and geographically limited (New York City), and the demographics that restricted the participants who were excluded if they are not married or unable to read and understand English. A large sample drawn from the general population tended to produce more accurate results (Bordens & Abbott, 2011).

All six hypotheses are aligned with the theoretical framework of the study, which included the acculturation theory, the cultural identity theory, the family systems theory, and the INT and IND theory. The theoretical assumption concerning immigrants is that cultural distress leads to marital conflict among this population, as they are adapting to the host culture (Hwang & Meyers, 2007).

The acculturation theory is the foundation of the study. Acculturation is the process of cultural change the immigrants go through as they come in contact with the host culture (Birman & Trickett, 2001). According to Reber (2009), acculturation is a process that creates distress in the immigrant who is about to lose his or her cultural beliefs and values. Cultural identity theory is used to explore the life experiences of

immigrants (Fereshteh, 2007). Family systems theory relates to the study because it sustains family members who form a unit system and are interconnected (Rothbaum et al., 2002). INT and IND theory relates to the study because it maintains that people from an individualist culture would score higher on the independent side of the scale, and people from a collectivist culture would score more on the interdependent side of the scale (Singelis, 1994).

The findings of the study suggested no or a weak relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work, family, social activities and their impact on marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants. Recruiting the second-generation Haitian immigrants to participate in the study was a very difficult task, given their busy lifestyles and lack of interest, and those issues affected the size of the sample. Although the sample size, which is relatively small, may have been also an influential factor, it appears that marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants is associated with factors within the marital relationship other than cultural beliefs and behaviors. First-generation Haitian immigrants tend to preserve their cultural heritage and pass it onto the next generations, and the first-generation Haitian immigrants adolescents tend to embrace their cultural heritage (Vilme & Butler, 2004). Therefore, there are no significant cultural and behavioral differences between the first- and second-generation Haitians with potential to impact marital satisfaction among the two groups.

Haitian immigrants are family-oriented individuals, and they are socially connected through established social networks that provide social, emotional, and economic support to the members of the community, and it is a common practice among

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minorities and immigrants because family often serves as a critical source support (Foner, 1997). They maintain a high level of loyalty and support for each other, and they often share prestige and blame associated with members' actions (Nicolas et al., 2009). In addition to social connectedness and mutual support, compatibility of character, unity, faithfulness, education, hard work, and sex role also relate to marital satisfaction among Haitian immigrants. Those are core values that affect marital satisfaction among Haitian married couples, whether they are from first- or second-generation immigrants. Therefore, according to the findings of the study, cultural beliefs and behaviors specific to work, family, and social activities are not so important to marital satisfaction among first- and second-generation Haitians.

Implications for Practice

Nicolas et al. (2009) posited that research on familial experiences of Haitian immigrants is limited and recommended further studies in this area. There is a large concentration of Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). They experience acculturative stress that affects their work and family relationships, as well as their social activities. Therefore, the findings of this study will add to the knowledge in the human service field and help scholar professionals, such as professors, administrators, social workers, counselors, and school teachers to design appropriate interventions and provide adequate services to Haitian immigrants. The findings may also contribute to the options for implications for practice considerations.

Information about how cultural beliefs affect marital satisfaction among Haitian immigrants living in the United States is important because new strategies for developing interventions for practice may emerge from the findings of the study (Mitchell, 2010).

Adding to the body of knowledge is also a valuable resource to both professionals in human service field and Haitian immigrant community as a whole.

Limitations

The sample of the study was drawn only from Haitian immigrants living within the New York City area. Therefore, it has geographical boundaries. According to Migration Information Source, there were 535,000 Haitian immigrants living in the United States in 2008, and 70% of them resided in Florida and New York. The same source revealed that in 2008, the Haitian immigrant population in New York was 128,750 or 24.1% of the total Haitian population in the United States, making it the second largest Haitian immigrant population in the country after Florida (247,991 or 46%).

The study was conducted within a restricted segment of the Haitian immigrant population, as only married individuals, age 18 years old and older with adequate proficiency in English could participate. There are reportedly a large number of Haitian immigrants with limited English proficiency and single individuals living in New York City and other major American cities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Therefore, the sample was not representative of the general Haitian immigrant population in the United States.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research study provides an understanding of cultural beliefs and behaviors associated with family, work, and social activities and how they affect marital satisfaction among Haitian immigrants on a regional level only. The study has some limitations. It did not include participants from the major American cities, single individuals, and those immigrants with limited English proficiency. Further studies involving a larger sample of the population that includes participants from major American urban settings, singles,

and immigrants with limited English proficiency, would be necessary to have a more accurate understanding of the issue. More research is needed to identify the causes of social problems and marital conflicts among Haitian immigrants and develop new and appropriate interventions in that area.

Conclusion

Acculturation is a difficult process for all immigrants, and the acculturation process for those immigrants is often stressful and can affect their family, work, and social life and can have significant impact on their marital satisfaction (Bhattacharya, 2011). The process of acculturation can cause cultural distress to the first generation of immigrants who tend to hold on to their culture of origin, which, as a result, affects their marital relationships. Citing the findings from a research conducted on Mexican American husbands and wives, Flores et al. (2004) stated that "the acculturation process can be a stressful experience for individuals and families, and that interpersonal conflict may occur as a result of differential acculturation among individuals or change in family structure or gender roles that are caused by the acculturation process" (pp. 39-40).

According to Piedra and Engstrom (2009), empirical research on immigrants' acculturation and assimilation can help social workers better understand the environmental stressors that increase the vulnerabilities of immigrants to potentially harsh experiences. According to Bhattacharya (2011), the acculturation process is often stressful. Haitians migrating to the United States experience cultural adjustment or adaptation like the other immigrant groups (Belizaire & Fuertes, 2011). This study examined the relationship between cultural beliefs and behaviors as they related to family, work and social activities, and how they affected marital satisfaction among first-

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generation and second-generation Haitian immigrants living in American urban settings. This exploration has been an attempt to understand the impact of cultural beliefs and behaviors on marital satisfaction among Haitian immigrants and to contribute to the body of knowledge in the human service field for professional practice.

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APPENDIX A. STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL WORK AND SIGNATURE

I have read, understood, and abided by Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01) and Research Misconduct Policy (3.03.06), including the Policy Statements, Rationale, and Definitions.

I attest that this dissertation or capstone project is my own work. Where I have used the ideas or words of others, I have paraphrased, summarized, or used direct quotes following the guidelines set forth in the APA *Publication Manual*.

Learner name and date	GRAHAM EXANTUS, December 11, 2014
Mentor name and school	Dr. INGLISH MORGAN-GRADNER, School of Public Service Leadership

APPENDIX B. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HAITIAN

AMERICANS

1. **Sex: Male**____ **Female**____

2. **Marital Status**: (A) Married __ (B) Divorced and Remarried __ (C) Widowed and

   Remarried __

3. **Country of birth**?

   A. Haiti___   B. United States of America___

4. **Mother's country of origin**?

   A. Haiti___   B. United States of America___

5. **Father's country of origin**?

   A. Haiti___   B. United States of America___

6. **I am a Haitian immigrant or Haitian-American of first generation** (*Born in Haiti*)

   A. Yes____ No____

7. **I am a Haitian-American of second generation (***Born in the United States***)**

   A. Yes____ No____

8. **Approximate amount of time you have lived in the United States**:

   (A) 0-5 Years___ (B**)** 5-10 Years ___ (C**)**10-15 Years ___ (D**)**15-25 Years ___ (E**)** 25 -35

      Years ___ (F**)** 35 years or more ___

9. **Level of education completed**:

   Elementary ____ Secondary ____ High School ____ College ___

10. **Place of education**

   A. Haiti ____ B. United States ____ C. Haiti and United States ____

11. I am married to a first-generation Haitian immigrant

    A. Yes____ No____

12. a second-generation Haitian immigrant

    A. Yes____ No____

13. **I am a: Catholic Christian ☐ Protestant Christian ☐ Voodoo Practitioner ☐ Other:**

    _____

14. I consider myself : Haitian ☐ American ☐

Demographic questionnaire designed and created by Graham Exantus, 2014