A PUBLIC OPINION ON THE EFFECT OF LANGUAGE BARRIER ON RACIAL ASSIMILATION

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Abstract

Despite the collegiate and congenial relationship that exists between Thais and foreigners, especially Nigerians, in academic and nonacademic environments alike, there are still traces of discrimination, isolation, and discrepancies, and this discriminatory gap must be breached. To actualize interracial assimilation, a mastery of English is a necessity and a major factor. School authorities, field and office workers, students, and the government must mobilize their efforts toward this goal, playing major and important roles in producing a society in which no such sociocultural or linguistic gaps or discriminatory activities exist. The objective of this study is to explore the effects of the language barrier in the assimilation between Nigerians and Thais to understand why a racial gap exists between the groups. A mixed method of primary and secondary research has been used to analyze this research, including a literature review, documentation, and interviews. The results reveal that the language barrier, cultural differences, inferiority complexes, orientation, religious beliefs, the media, personally preconceived notions of the respective other, a lack of interest due to personal reasons, the inability to carry on a discussion, and, above all, parental advice based on ancient customs, are the main hindrances in the assimilation between these two groups of people. Thus, the stronger the barrier, the less assimilation there is. Nigerians living in Thailand need to learn the Thai culture, language, and traditions to generate a clear and mutual understanding between Nigerians and Thais. This research reveals that if Nigerians and other foreigners speak the Thai language, there is a reduction in discrimination and an increase in the tendency for mutually respectful relationships to exist.

Keywords: Assimilation Barrier, External factors, Socialization.

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my Pastor, Mr. Johnson Amosu, my parents, family members and friends who have given me all the moral, spiritual and financial support to enable me to go through this course successfully to the completion of this Independent Study.

DECLARATION

I, Tony Nwabueze, hereby declare that this research work is solely mine and it is original unless specific acknowledgements verify otherwise.

Signature: …….

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background

The purpose of this study is simple yet critically important. It argues that despite the collegiate and congenial relationship that exists between Thais and foreigners, especially those of African ancestry, in academic and nonacademic environments alike, there are still traces of discrimination, isolation, and discrepancies. Most Thais associate blackness to all manners of evil or unfavorable vices, such as bag-snatching, pick-pocketing, and uncleanliness (Farrell, 2015). The inability of most Thais to speak and communicate in English has further led them to distance themselves from dark-skinned people, especially Nigerians, thereby creating a peculiar and uncomfortable conundrum (Farrell, 2015). This discriminatory gap needs to be breached.

In the researcher's quest to uncover the cause of these assimilation barriers, two questions arose: "What are the hindrances to assimilation?" and "Is the English language the most significant hindrance?" The researcher discovered from this study that among all hindrances to assimilation, the most significant obstacle is the language barrier. As such, to actualize interracial assimilation, a mastery of English is a necessity and a major factor. School authorities, field and office workers, students, and the government must mobilize their efforts toward this goal, playing major and important roles to actualize a society in which no such sociocultural and linguistic gaps or discriminatory activities exist.

To more clearly illustrate this gap, a 2006 advert for Snowzy published by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) declared that "you need just be white to win." In a 2013 interview, when asked whether Thailand's distaste for the dark-skinned precipitated simply from their perception of beauty or whether it was related to racism, Thai critic Miss Kaewmala stated

that “at the most simplistic level, white equates good and beautiful and black the opposite” (Olivia, 2015). She asserted that “this remains deeply ingrained in the Thai psyche.” She was explicitly clear in her posture, and indeed, it is clear in that racism and discrimination is experienced even by Thais with dark skin and not only by black foreigners. Indeed, this dislike for dark skin is ingrained in the mind of the average Thai (Olivia, 2015). Most Thai citizens with darker skins are seen as poor urban settlers from the rural northeast. Furthermore, they are placed in the same class as black people, who, as explained earlier, are believed to engage in unlawful and unethical social vices.

Further confirming the ingrained racism in the psyche of most Thais, an uproar was raised in 2014 when Miss Nonthawan Maeya Thongleng won the Miss Thailand World Beauty Contest. As per the rules of the contest, the judges based their judgments on beauty, class, grace, wit, and a host of other character-revealing qualities. However, most people revolted against their decision simply because her skin was darker than that of the other contestants. This dislike and distrust for the dark-skinned is also reflected in all spheres of life in Thailand, including in business. In Bangkok and other provinces, most African teachers experience difficulties as soon as their background is discovered (Ashby, 2016).

With the background of the current study laid out, the literature review follows the introduction chapter, indicating what research has previously been published about assimilation’s relationship with culture and language. The literature analysis is followed by the methodology and subsequently by the research findings, recommendations, and the conclusion.

1.2 Rationale

The researcher finds studying the relationship between the black race and all other races in Thailand to be particularly interesting and intriguing. This interest has been cultivated by the researcher's studies of other Nigerians' experiences as well as his own personal experiences as a student in Thailand. The studied relationship exists between the researcher and his classmates, the police, taxi drivers, and market women. As a result, the researcher has chosen this topic to first discover and then understand the factors that cause this racial gap and, ultimately, racism between some Thais and Nigerians and other black people in Thailand.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study has two objectives:

1 To study the effects of the language barrier on the assimilation between Nigerians and Thais.

2 To confirm and understand why a racial gap exists between Thais and Nigerians.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study covers specifically selected Nigerians and Thais living in the Bangkok area. It includes selected students and people from occupational fields such as teaching, banking, law enforcement, retail, trade, and transportation.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This study is limited by its focus, which is Nigerians and Thais living in the Bangkok metropolitan area.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study hopes to produce results useful in strategizing important components of the Thai government. It also aims to draw the attention of the government and concerned nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to this problem, thereby providing more information to generate a better model for creating and maintaining a healthy relationship between Thais and Nigerians and other foreign nationals.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The "definitions of terms" section reveals the definitions and meanings of terms used in this paper.

1.7.1 Language Barrier

A language barrier can be defined as the difficulty in expressing oneself, difficulty in obtaining directions, difficulty in explaining one's expectations, poor performance, and ineffective communication (McIntire, 2014). A language barrier is in play when people do not communicate on the same level, such as by speaking the same language.

1.7.2 Assimilation

This is the way in which a culture and society socially, culturally, and politically influence minorities to integrate into the majority. Immigrants or minority ethnic groups settling down in a new environment with a vastly different ethnicity from their own often mingle with new customs and new social contacts to whom they might introduce their own culture. Thus,

Johnson asserts that "in assimilation, change is in a gradual process to a perfection point. However, full assimilation is only identifiable when one can no more distinguish between new members of a society and native members" (Johnson, 1963:296).

Even though assimilation naturally primarily affects immigrants settling down in a new land with a different culture, it can also be actively applied to achieve certain benefits. For example, any group, such as a state, immigrant population, or an ethnic group, may choose to assimilate a particular culture different from theirs for reasons such as political relevance, economic advantages, governmental favors, etc. On the other hand, a group may be forced or compelled to assimilate into a culture because of imperialistic conquests on the part of the new cultural group or because of drastic changes in its population. Assimilation can be attained via intermarriage, naturalization, immigration, communication, cultural transference and others.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the literature review and the relationship of assimilation with culture and language. Therefore, its primary purpose is to express the perceptions and understandings of scholars and what various academics have written or stated about the concepts of culture, language, and assimilation, the revealed inter-relational coexistence between them, and their effects on environments and groups.

2.2 The Concept of Culture

From Moore's perspective, culture is changing at all times. In cultures, people display a wide range of behaviors and levels of attention to guiding value orientations. In other words, culture is continuously being constructed through human interaction and communication, the participative roles of individuals, the creation of newer cultural aspects, and the interaction of language and culture in the generation of meaning (Moore, 1991). In view of this, Masgoret and Ward suggest that a culture learning approach to intercultural contact and changes is to first identify the cross-cultural differences in the communication (both verbal and nonverbal), rules, norms, and practices that contribute to misunderstandings between cultures (Masgoret & Ward, 2006). Following that, the approach focuses on exploring ways to mitigate confusing and frustrating interactions that result from intercultural misunderstandings.

Consequently, the culture learning approach suggests that intercultural effectiveness is attained in much the same way as any other attainable skill or behavioral goal (Masgoret &

Ward, 2006). The act of learning a new culture comes with its own special social skills to help avoid stress, and there are always difficulties in the cross-cultural interaction among individuals when such social skills are not applied. This is because adaptation can be achieved by learning the culture-specific skills and behaviors required to navigate the new cultural environment. In the same manner, Arnold proved that all people are part of a culture based on their membership of a social group or society.

Avruch's definition of "culture" agrees with Tylor that culture encompasses the knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and habits exhibited by every member of a society (Avruch, 1998:6), while Adler argues that culture is the patterns, ways, and behaviors of a group that demonstrate their past achievements and handiwork, which reflect their traditional ideas and values (Adler, 1997:14). Consequently, Hofstede concludes that culture is the collective thought programming of the mind, separating or distinguishing the members of one group or category from the people in other groups (Hofstede, 1997:5). Matsumoto reasons that culture is the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared and passed on among groups of people in different manners from generation to generation (Matsumoto, 1996:16). Spencer-Oatey explains culture as the basic orientations, assumptions, life values and subsequent behavioral tendencies shared by a group that does not influence or determine the members' characters individually (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:3). Furthermore, Schein clearly defines culture in managerial terms as how people feel about the organization, the authority system, and the degree of employee involvement and commitment (Schein, 1990). Having looked at several opinions of writers on culture, the interrelationship between culture and assimilation must now be explored.

2.2.1 Culture and Assimilation

A study on assimilation was conducted at Ramkhamhaeng University in 2013. To promote assimilation, strengthen relationships or social ties, and improve English speaking skills and, thereby, interaction, the researchers introduced the idea of mixing different students from different countries into the same class. Thus, people from different backgrounds and cultures were merged in this research project. The results were significant: Most Thais became courageous and overcame their shyness, some of them becoming outspoken and acquiring self-confidence in communicating their thoughts and expressing their ideas, both within the context of school and beyond. This connects to the work of Jurasek (1995), who explained that the "product" of ethnography is considered less important than "the process of observing, participating, describing, analyzing, and interpreting." Differentiation arises in the case of African Americans in the United States because there was a common belief that African Americans were innately inferior. This belief demoralized and changed the perceptions of African Americans, preventing them from integrating into society. The Race and Reason Movement of 1960 was, conversely, rallying for their integration (Comas, 1961). There was support, however, for the French colonial policy of "assimilationism" during the first half of the twentieth century, much like the continuing colonial policy of the Portuguese (Herskovits, 1962:288-289). This was based on the erroneous idea that only a selected few among non-Western people were capable of being absorbed into the metropolitan system. On the other hand, the minority group refused to assimilate, as was the case of the African American. This affected the militant group known as the Black Muslim, whose members vehemently refused to assimilate due to their treatment at that time. The black race has seen white society as a powerful force prohibiting black people from obtaining full citizenship in a society. This has sparked in them

alienist feelings and a frustrating inability to resolve these feelings, which has ultimately led them to reject the dominant society and culture (Udom, 1962).

In this manner, instances of racism have escalated around the world, including in Thailand. Melinda Lewis has stated that in Thailand, there have been one or two "cringe-worthy" skin-whitening commercials featuring an unhappy dark-skinned person who is miraculously turned into a happy, vibrant, white-skinned beauty. This trend irrefutably proves Thais' preference for light skin, which is an indicator of racism (Lewis, 2014).

However, the early scholars termed assimilation a process. Gumplowicz argues that it is an empowering societal brisk (Gumplowicz, 1883), while Park and Burges call "assimilation" a central fusion—the acquisition of memories, attitudes, sentiments, and historical experiences that are shared among a group of people and that affect their cultural life (Park & Burges, 1924:735). After significant observation, Woolston asserts that assimilation requires the idea of cooperative culture between the society and the immigrant, whereby the immigrant becomes part of the association, at the same time contributing immensely to correcting and improving the society's cultural norms. The immigrant accepts the social mannerisms and norms in the society and passes their importance on to others (Woolston, 1945:424). According to Duncan (1929:185), Woolston (1945:416), Johnson (1963:296), and Gordon (1964:71), the assimilation process progresses gradually. Simons (1901:791) adds that assimilation is a process and not an outcome. Comparably, Hirsch (1942:39) vividly proves that assimilation is not an abstraction that can be separated but rather a natural, progressive process with points or degrees of transformation.

In a clearer explanation of the literature review, Park expressed in a U.S. set of social science books that an assimilated immigrant is a person who speaks the local language, has

acquired the cultural norms through observance of the community, and can indulge in the economic, political, and common life of the people without facing prejudice (Park, 1930:281). After careful studies, Hirsch (1942:39) proclaimed that assimilation is the procedural event of one becoming fully integrated into a community and at the same time being accepted by the community. Dohrenwend and Smith stated in their paper "Toward a Theory of Acculturation" that in the actualization of assimilation, a member of Culture A is recruited to join in the exploits of Culture B at the same status and position (Dohrenwend, 1962:35), while Johnson argued that the word "assimilation" should be expressed with caution to distinguish external assimilation from subject assimilation. External assimilation refers to the manifestation of changes and similarities in appearance and action, while subject assimilation refers to the intellectual life and reasoning of the immigrant (Johnson, 1963:295).

Johnson defines assimilation as a procedural event of change in which an immigrant endeavors to associate him- or herself in a different cultural setting with a group of people and becomes indistinguishable from the group. The process is meant to achieve adaptation both in external and subjective assimilation, and one without the other will result in incomplete assimilation (Johnson, 1963:296). Edward Tylor (1870) referred to culture in his observations of primitive culture as a quality possessed by all people in all social groups who eventually organize themselves in a continuous development, moving from their old ways to modernized ways. Tylor called culture a compound of knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and habits seen and inherited by the members of a society. In addition to the interrelationship between culture and assimilation, the important role and linkage between culture and language must not be neglected.

2.2.2 Culture and Language

Many scholars have written about language and its effects on assimilation. Imberti defined language as the most influential mediator, allowing people to relate to and understand each other (Imberti, 2007). Language is a tool that allows people to communicate essential concepts or references, which provides relational context and perpetual remarks (Imberti, 2007). Tajfel, in one of his books, states that social remark theory (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explains psychological processes related to intergroup discrimination. Nkomo, and Cox assert that the classification of in-groups versus out-groups can be generated when immigrants recognize certain requirements, such as language, that outline cultural differences (Nkomo & Cox, 1996). When a person or a group is unable to identify with other cultural groups, it may lead to negative perceptions or unwelcome attitudes toward such groups (Bartel, 2001). A sense of ignorance due to such differences can prevent immigrants from interacting with locals and thus assimilating with them (Baker & Haertel, 2004). Consequently, the understanding of the relationship between language and social identity patterns is of great aid to cultural assimilation. Hence, learning the local language is necessary to overcome language barriers.

2.3 The term Language Barrier

Barriers to assimilation and cordial, nonracist relationships between members of the black race, especially Nigerians, and Thais include language, culture, inferiority complexes, people's opinions and values, religious beliefs, the media, personally preconceived notions, a lack of interest due to personal reasons, the inability to carry on a discussion, and, above all, parental advice based on ancient customs. This suggests that the stronger the barrier is, the

weaker the assimilation is, and vice versa, the weaker the barrier is, the stronger the assimilation is.

Imberti believes that language is largely the key to a person's social identity: it enables people to say express their thoughts and convey messages. As mentioned above, language is the most influential mediator, allowing people to relate to and understand each other (Imberti, 2007). It serves as the most basic framework that allows people to express themselves with relational context and perpetual remarks (Imberti, 2007). Language is one of the barriers to assimilation, limiting and hindering communication in particular. Language barriers usually occur when people who speak different languages try to speak to one another without any mediator platform. This is why Bartel claimed that the term "language barrier" is a figurative phrase used primarily to indicate the difficulties faced when communicating while speaking different or multiple languages. One of the challenges in the assimilation of Nigerians into Thai culture and the creation of an environment of inclusion, which would cultivate a positive relationship, is language. Not being able to identify with other cultural groups may lead to negative attitudes toward such groups (Bartel, 2001).

When people do not communicate on the same plane, such as by speaking the same language, a language barrier is said to be in play. As outlined earlier, language barriers result in difficulty in expression, difficulty in obtaining directions, difficulty in explaining one's expectations, poor performance, and ineffective communication (McIntire, 2014). Baker and Haertel support this notion, proclaiming that any occurrence of ignorance due to differences in communication can prevent immigrants from interacting with locals. Consequently, understanding of the local language is of great importance (Baker & Haertel, 2004).

As an example of a language barrier, if a foreigner tries to communicate with a Thai person in English, the Thai will likely smile and nod, pretending to understand despite not understanding anything. Many times, people nod and say "yes," when in actuality, they mean "no." Conversely, those who understand English may at times pretend not to when important issues are explained to them in English. Others, using their cultural differences to justify their behavior or actions, might simply claim not to understand by saying, "I don't understand," which in Thai is transliterated as mai kau jai; this is common with most Thai police officers. Nevertheless, there are numerous well-meaning Thais who sincerely want to associate with Nigerians and other black people and foreigners but are unable to do so fully simply because they cannot communicate effectively.

2.3.1 Language barrier Vis-a-vis Culture

One of the primary obstacles to assimilation is culture. Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religions, notions of time, roles, spatial, relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people over the course of generations through individual and collective experiences. According to Johnson, one must identify and embrace the culture and adapt to it subjectively and externally to become indistinguishable from and accepted by the group (Johnson, 1963:296).

Every culture has its own set of dominant values, beliefs, and prejudices. As a result, it is unethical to judge people based on cultural differences. Instead, respect and tolerance are necessary to relate to people of a different culture, allowing one to possibly gain knowledge about the other culture, including the basic orientations, assumptions, life values and,

subsequently, behavioral policies shared among the members of the group, which do not influence or determine their individual characters (Spencer-Oatey, 2008:3).

It is important to know that when endeavoring to relate to people, culture and cultural issues matter because people come into regular contact with individuals from different cultures and backgrounds. It is also important to learn how to communicate with people with whom one may not share a common language, background, or worldview. Though everyone participates in at least one culture, everyone is involved in several other different cultures. Also important to understand is that each culture speaks a particular language. Each culture also has its own spoken and unspoken rules that define what is acceptable within its society. The first step when interacting with people of different cultural backgrounds is to make clear one's own cultural background and how it defines and limits one's worldview. Culturally, fairness and justice are based on certain beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about a person. Therefore, because cultures differ, clarifying one's own cultural background bridges communications and relationships (Masgoret & Ward, 2006).

2.3.2 Language barrier and Self-interest

Boundless says that self-interest is the single most powerful motive that propels people to act. It is a powerful determinant of human behavior, and it influences people's actions, their opinions, and their justifications for whatever opinions they hold or actions they execute. Self-interest is the driving factor behind self-centered care and self-profitable materialism. Although people driven by self-interest may have good reasons for taking or making whatever actions or decisions they take or make, their reasons may be either ethical or unethical, and in most cases, they are in an ethical gray zone (Boundless, 2016).

In view of this, Miller claims that people often have several different reasons for taking certain actions. When their actions are justified by two or more reasons, the action is over-determined. When one's actions are over-determined, one has at least two reasons to justify the actions. Therefore, these actions will continue, even if one of the reasons ceases to exist (Miller, 1999).

On one hand, Labossiere propounds that it is unacceptable to take unethical actions just out of sheer desire. Furthermore, it is acceptable to make an ethical decision as long as the decision is being made for the right reason. However, it is more common that one takes actions to fulfill one's self-interests and gives one pleasure and happiness. Indeed, people should strive to create an atmosphere in which doing the right thing is also prudent, satisfies their self-interests, and gives them pleasure. Nevertheless, such a world does not exist, and as a result, doing what is ethically right often conflicts with people's other interests (Labossiere, 2010). When self-interest is at play, self-centeredness occurs, and one is thereby limited by one's personal concept. Thus, the connection between language barriers and inferiority complexes reveals itself.

2.3.3 Language barrier and Inferiority Complex

An inferiority complex refers to the feeling of being inferior to others in one way or another. Inferiority is not completely negative—it can manifest itself in two different ways in people. It can serve as a positive driving force, motivating people to improve themselves to negate the unpleasant feeling that inferiority brings. Alder (1998:139) claims that feeling inferior is a basic emotion that all humans have, and it heavily influences human actions. On the other hand, it can have a crippling effect, directly resulting from an overwhelming sense of inadequacy. Freud, however, disagreed with Alder's view, asserting that inferiority complexes

lead to aggression. Aggression is an expression of frustration, and frustration, in turn, generally leads to aggression. Aggression increases when one feels hindered from expressing oneself or achieving a goal. Often, frustration leads to resigned behavior, an elimination of needs, no future orientations, no plans, isolation, a lack of interest in one's environment, and withdrawal from socialization (Freud, 1993).

This prompted Farooqi to posit that people who are particularly overtaken by this sense of inadequacy compared to others have an inferiority complex. Inferiority complexes have caused many people lose their self-esteem and self-actualization. They have also driven many people to avoid expressing themselves and to become inactive in some areas of cooperation, even though voicing their opinion could have yielded positive results or served as a means of encouragement for others (Farooqi, 2009). The inability to express oneself can lead to extreme aggression and a lack of confidence, which is related to the inability to speak. If one cannot speak, one's ability to associate with others is limited, and this, in turn, limits socialization.

2.3.4 Language barrier and Socialization

Many scholars have submitted that socialization refers to the lifelong process of inheriting and disseminating norms, customs, values, and ideologies, providing an individual with the skills and habits necessary for participation in his or her own society. On the other hand, some scholars argued that socialization is determined by many factors, including the social group with which the individual comes into contact. Thus one's family, as well as one's environment, is the most important social group that influences one's development and behavior. On this ground, during the process of socialization, people adapt to their surroundings and become cultural and social beings. In this way, they begin to act according to the recognized rules of their society, thereby accepting social values in order to fulfill the roles and expectations required of them.

Knight, Umaña-Taylor, and Guimon examined family ethnic socialization as a predictor of ethnic identity rather than the reverse (Knight et al., 2011; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2009; Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, 2010). In this regard, Hughes stated that one's parents' ethnic socialization efforts determine most aspects of one's ethnic identity, such as one's ethnic knowledge and attitudes about one's ethnicity (Hughes et al., 2008). Similarly, Supple, Umaña-Taylor, and Guimond supported the idea that family ethnic socialization is a positive force in the life of youths both in terms of ethnic identity exploration, which is the way in which youths explore their ethnicity, and ethnic identity resolution, which is the level at which youths' ethnic group membership is reflected in their lives (Supple et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, 2010).

Socialization as opined by Umaña-Taylor and Guimond is the process by which infants acquire the necessary traits and skills needed to perform as functioning members of their families or societies. Therefore, it is the highest type of learning process one can experience. Other living species have biological behavioral sets that differ from those of humans: Humans need to employ special techniques to understand their cultural environment and thus survive (Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, 2010).

Confirming Umaña-Taylor and Guimond's statement, an article by Boundless asserts that the cultural range is always evident in human actions, customs, and the behaviors of the surrounding social groups or the society in which an individual has been socialized by his or her family. Most scientists have accepted that socialization defines and influences all aspects of an individual's lifestyle in terms of behavior, beliefs, and actions. The perceptions and roles of a society are important in every area of one's socialization. The family and its individual characteristics, which determine individual socialization, are crucial to properly establish prevention and intervention activities, which are put in place to promote family functioning

(Boundless, 2016). It leads to shorter lifespans, decreased self-esteem, and isolation and deprives people of the opportunity for assimilation and communication.

2.4 Other External Factors that affect Assimilation

There are several external factors within the host community or country that affect assimilation. These can include government-created policies, the degree of prejudice, and the cultural integrity of the society. These systems affect how a child assimilates into a society and determine how emotionally the child reacts to being assimilated into the society. The most important factors that enhance such emotions are location, changes in the economy and environment, and racial discrimination.

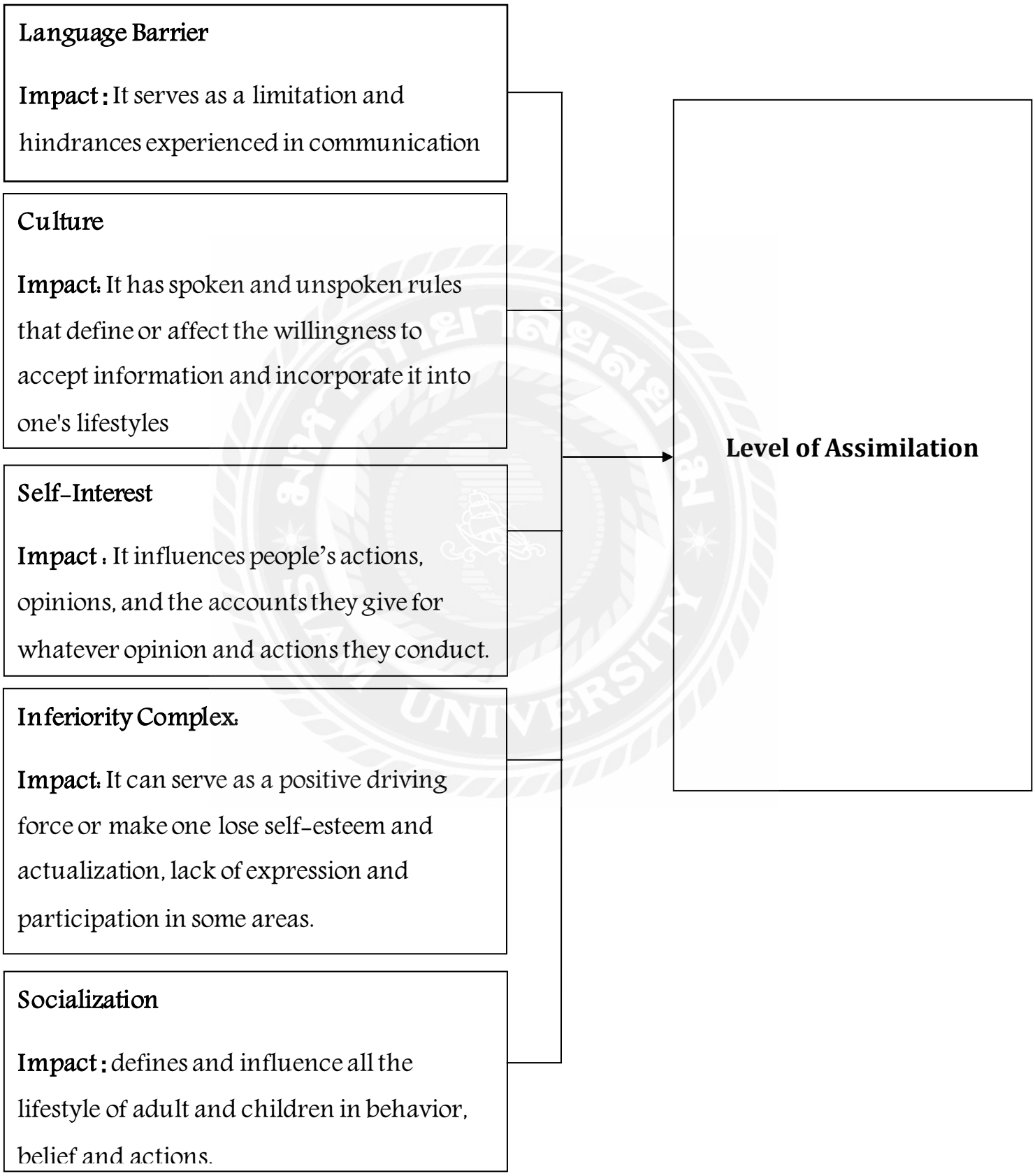
The dislike of a particular race has resulted in the creation of minority groups, which reinforces separation and thereby deprives the group of the opportunity to assimilate. Throughout the history of assimilation, certain behaviors and beliefs have hindered some member or groups from assimilating. One of these beliefs is the notion that some racial or ethnic groups are not worthy of being assimilated (Comas, 1961). In addition, issues such as genocide, mass expulsion, and segregation policies have proven that some groups cannot be assimilated because of their "obvious" inferiority. An example is South Africa's apartheid, a result of the belief that there must be an economic, social, and political separation between Europeans and Africans to enhance the full development of both groups. Another factor is the readiness of a group to assimilate into its new society. For instance, Chinese immigrants to Thailand are always ready to assimilate, while Dutch immigrants do not assimilate as readily and easily.

Some scholars argued that cultural assimilation is the process by which a person's or group's language is transformed so much that it beings to resemble that of another person or group. This can also affect native residents whose environment becomes dominated by another

social group, which Hirsch suggests inevitably results in the natives lacking a sense of belonging in the new community. However, when immigrants culturally assimilate into their new society, they develop a cultural identity that gives them a sense of belonging (Hirsch, 1942:39).

From the standpoint of some scholars, naturalization has occurred when an immigrant gains status as a full-fledged member of the local group in terms of culture and language and is granted full citizenship and or permanent residency. It is furthermore the understanding of the social dynamics that exist within the society into which a foreigner hopes to be integrated and become a member. In this kind of assimilation, citizenship is of utmost importance, although Dohrenwend has proclaimed that permanent residency has the same effect as citizenship in this type of assimilation (Dohrenwend 1962:35). This prompted Masgoret and Ward to state that intermarriage assimilation occurs when people from two different countries, cultures, or traditions marry. Intermarriage refers to marriage across races and ethnicities, and it is highly influential, as it prevents people from fully passing their culture on to their children but helps build a solid and everlasting relationship between two different groups (Masgoret & Ward, 2006). When a group or an individual enters into a society, they adapt and share their language and culture, which all strengthen people's relationships with other groups. This adaptation and sharing also increases the number of people in a society's labor force, which allows jobs to easily be executed and thus leads to a maximization of production and profit in terms of economic input and output.

2.5 Conceptual Framework



2.6 The Summary of chapter two

After examining the conceptual framework with the responses, it appears that the major hindrances of racial assimilation between Nigerians and Thais are a lack of confidence; a lack of expression and communication, which is related to cultural differences, the language barrier, and inferiority complexes; limitations within one's personal concept as a result of self-interest; and socialization. These factors are outlined in the conceptual framework.

This chapter has reviewed the factors that hinder assimilation without touching on the ways to assimilate into a society. Thus, later in the paper, a brief explanation of three means of assimilation and the merits and demerits of each are discussed vividly. In the process of assimilation, the individuals or groups might lose their culture, traditions, identity, and other lifestyle characteristics that make them unique. There may also be unemployed people who are forced by the situation to engage in unlawful acts, such as drug trafficking, prostitution, robbery, and other, related crimes. The next chapter indicates the methodology of this research.

Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used in this study. It describes the methods and channels employed in gathering data. Therefore, its main aim is to determine and analyze the most appropriate methods to achieve the study objectives. Hence, the purpose of the study is also outlined. Then, the methods used to obtain the data are discussed. These methods include a literature review, documentation, and interviews.

3.2 Research Design

The research design for this study is based on similar, previously conducted research studies. To ascertain the appropriate structure for this study, the primary and secondary phases through which every study is conducted were applied. These phases include identifying the purpose of the research, defining the concept of the research, explaining the collection process of the data, defining the process of the analysis and interpretation of the data, and presenting the findings and recommendations of the study. The method used to analyze the obtained data is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. This study analyzes the major barriers to racial assimilation in Thailand, which are culture, the language barrier, and socialization.

3.3 Method of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected during this study. The primary data were collected from 30 oral interviews and 100 questionnaires, solidifying the research. The secondary data were collected from documented sources, newspapers, books, online publications, articles, journals, and other materials on the Internet.

A mixed approach was applied in this study to explain the situation in a clearer and more precise way. The data collected from the different sources were properly collated; thus, the applied design aimed to summarize the data that had been gathered. The interviews were carried out in July and August 2016, and the selected students were from Ramkhamhaeng University, Siam University, and Kasem Bundit University. The church members were members of Mount Zion Miracle and Deliverance (MMD) Ministries, situated in the Ramkhamhaeng area. The people interviewed in the church were Thais, Nigerians, and other African nationals working as teachers in rural areas who always visited Bangkok on the weekends. The two professors represented in the interviews were from Ramkhamhaeng University and Siam University, respectively. One of the police officers was from the Humark police station, while the other one was from the Laphrao police station. The traders were found at Bang Kapi Market and the Ramkhamhaeng area of Bangkok. The below table divides up the respondents by occupation.

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Students	14 out of 30	46.67 %
Church members	8 out of 30	26.67 %
Professors	2 out of 30	6.67%
Drivers	2 out of 30	6.67 %
Police Officers	2 out of 30	6.67 %
Traders	2 out of 30	6.67%

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

A qualitative data analysis was applied in this study. Data were collected from documented sources, questionnaires, oral interviews, newspapers, books, online publications, articles, and journals. The data were analyzed to determine the factors that affect assimilation.

3.5Research Questionnaire – See Appendix

แบบสอบถาม **Questionnaire**

3.6 The Summary of chapter three

This chapter has specified the two means in which the data collection was conducted. Primary data were gathered via oral interviews with 30 people. More than 150 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to people from different workplaces, including churches, and 100 questionnaires were returned. Of those interviewed, fourteen (14) were students, accounting for 46.67% of all interviewees. Church members accounted for eight (8), which is 26.67% as a percentage. The groups of professors, drivers, police officers, and traders were each represented by two (2) people, resulting in 6.67% for each sector. The secondary data were gathered via the Internet and documented sources. The next chapter outlines the findings of the research.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter clearly explains the research findings on the effects of the language barrier on the assimilation of Nigerians into Thai culture. It vividly expresses and analyzes the ideas and responses of the interviewee and recommends constructive solutions to foster assimilation. The assimilation of Nigerians into Thai culture is threatened or hindered by the language barrier, cultural differences, and socialization.

4.2 Responses to the statement

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Most Thai men find it difficult to associate with foreigners than Thai women do.	11 11%	45 45%	40 40%	4 4%
2. Most Thais are afraid when black people walks up to them.	14 14%	28 28%	45 45%	13 13%
3. Most Foreigners face price discrimination in the market and beyond.	24 24%	39 39%	36 36%	1 1%

4. Most Thai girls feel shy about walking in public with their foreign boyfriend, especially if he is black.	15 15%	20 20%	51 51%	14 14%
5. Most Thais support other Thais over foreigners, even when they know the Thai is wrong.	15 15%	34 34%	33 33%	18 18%
6. Most Thais always smile, even when they are not happy.	28 28%	48 48%	18 18%	6 6%
7. Some Thai police officers always look furious when they see black men.	15 15%	20 20%	57 57%	8 8%
8. Most Thais see black people as a threat.	12 12%	22 22%	46 46%	8 8%

4.3 Response to the statement "What Should Be Done to Establish a Close Relationship between Thais and Nigerians?"

According to the respondents, it is easy for Thais and Nigerians to establish a close relationship, and this can be extended to other foreigners. At the same time, it is difficult because most Thais do not speak English. Due to their inability to communicate in English, they mostly try to avoid foreigners.

One of the interviewees said that the first thing one needs to do in a foreign country is to learn the language, the culture, and the traditions. Furthermore, people need to know each other very well, culturally and intellectually, to form a close relationship. This idea was supported by almost all interviewees. The participants were asked why most native Thais do not try to express themselves in English, as they would, through this, become fluent. Most students revealed that this attitude originated from the past when the Thai language was used for education and for similar improvements. They suggested that primary and high schools should introduce English as a major course with dedication. They also said that the opportunity to use English is rare, as Thai language is used for day-to-day activities in Thailand. Thus, many people forget what they learned in English classes within a short period of time, as all their communication is in Thai.

Another factor that may impact the assimilation of black foreigners is racism. In Thailand, a "cringe-worthy" skin-whitening commercial or two have been shown, featuring an unhappy dark-skinned person who is miraculously transformed into a happy, vibrant, white-skinned beauty, thanks to some cream. Nevertheless, one must ask about the meaning behind this trend. Does a preference for light skin automatically signify racism? How exactly are black people viewed and treated in Thailand? Are things worse in Thailand than they are in the West?

An African American revealed that, in his experience, when a dark-skinned person goes to Thailand, the person should bear in mind that he or she is going to be treated like a foreigner. In view of this, the person should expect rejection, unless he or she identifies as an American. If this person is not identified by the Thais as an American, he or she will be seen as a "nobody" because of his or her person's dark skin and all the stigma that comes with it. Most Thais are warned about pickpockets, and they often feverishly clutch their belongings when out in public, based on the public opinion or what they have seen in movies. This opinion is especially

prevalent in the presence of black people, as most Thais often clutch their belongings when they see a black person. They suddenly think that the black person is going to rob them, even when no such intention has been given by the posture, disposition, or communication of the black person in question. Most Thais try to relate to Nigerians and other black people; however, a twinge of detestation of black people still exists among many Thais, as if they are diseased or are struck with some disability or cureless ailment. Although most Thais claim that the detestation is based on personal understanding and ideology, a few of the respondents confirmed the existence of partial detestation.

The majority of the respondents confirmed that most Thai women prefer white foreigners regardless of their country of origin, although, in most cases, these white foreigners treat them in a disrespectful manner. Though Thai women are not happy about this situation, because they believe in the goodness of white skin, they endure the disrespect. There are some Thai women who are happily married to white men, but very few admit to being attracted to black men. Such women do not care what other people think about them. The following are responses to the close-ended questions.

4.4 Response to the statement "Most Thai Men find it more difficult to associate with Foreigners than Thai women do."

The questionnaire shows that the percentage of people who strongly agreed with the above statement is 11%. Going deeper, 45% strongly agreed, 40% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed. This indicates that Thai women generally relate more with foreigners than Thai men do. It was determined that the reason was that women have friendlier dispositions and more open-minded to socializing than men. The interviews also revealed that men are more likely to

keep things to themselves out of shyness, insecurity, and their need for privacy. People have the inalienable right to make personal decisions, especially decisions regarding intimate matters. People have the right to live their lives in a manner reasonably isolated from public scrutiny and devoid of external meddling.

Based on the information gathered in the interviews, most Thai men do not want to be bothered. They prefer living relatively isolated lives, staying on their own or among other Thais to maintain the integrity of their privacy. This could result from a lack of confidence, which hinders the progressive development of an individual.

This research discovered that the major cause of shyness was fear. Fearful children are more likely to develop shyness compared to less fearful children. Moreover, shyness prevents individuals from speaking up and speaking out as well as from relating and associating with other people. Responses also confirmed that inability to speak a foreign language rendered most Thais shy, while some said that it was a way to avoid communication, which can be proven when a Thai person meets a Nigerian or another foreigner who speaks Thai.

Based on the responses, most Thai men feel insecure around foreigners, especially Nigerians, because of the language barrier, self-doubt, and a lack of self-confidence or assurance. This has had a significant influence on Thai men's behavior. Physical insecurity springs from emotional insecurity, which is a general feeling of unease or nervousness and can make someone feel inferior to their peers in some way. This creates a sense of vulnerability or instability that threatens the ego and self-image. Thai women are more open-minded; hence, they socialize more than men, who are often insecure, do.

4.5 Responses to the Statement "Most Thais are afraid when black people walk up to them".

The answers to the questionnaire indicated that 14% strongly agreed that Thai locals are usually afraid when black people walk up to them. Furthermore, 28% agreed, 45% disagreed, and 13% strongly disagreed. This indicates that a minority of the sample size is frightened when a black man walks up to them, while the majority of respondents are unafraid. In the interviews carried out following the questionnaire, it was discovered that this notion is based on personal understanding and individual differences. The major problem is that most Thai people do not want to learn a foreign language. In addition, the rampant belief in the supernatural and the supposed appearances of ghosts in many places in Thailand have created a "natural" feeling of self-awareness and fear whenever anybody, not just black people, suddenly walks up to Thai people. Furthermore, Thais feel uncomfortable because they need their personal space. This need is part of their culture.

Among the interviewees, the men did not provide much justification. However, the women declared that they feel frightened when a black person approaches them on the street because they have not seen or related to black people on a personal basis. Another reason they gave was the misinformation perpetrated in the media and movies about black people snatching bags and stabbing people to death. This has made them feel insecure and unsafe whenever a black man approaches them. Thirdly, the normal, natural way in which black people, especially some Nigerians, talk comes off to Thais as aggressive, as though they are quarreling. This perception even bleeds over in telephone conversations.

4.6 Responses to the Statement "Most foreigners Face Price discrimination in the market and beyond."

The results indicated that 24% strongly agreed, 39% agreed, 36% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed. This shows that in 63% percent of all cases, there is price discrimination against foreigners in the market and beyond in Thailand. Price discrimination happens everywhere and every day around the globe. It often occurs without one's notice and in many occasions is even acceptable. Movie theaters, stadiums, and airlines frequently use similar policies to charge different prices for different classes, such as First Class, Business Class, and Economic Class for airlines, Platinum and Gold for theaters, and VIP and ordinary seats for stadiums.

The largest difference between the above mentioned examples and the price discrimination in Thailand can be seen in movie theaters and airlines. People pay willingly based on their financial status at movie theaters and airlines; however, in Thailand's case, higher prices may be imposed on foreigners without their knowledge or consent. This happens because the market people believe that for the foreigner to have left his or her country to come to Thailand, he or she must have plenty of money. Moreover, if the foreigner converts his or her native currency to the local currency (Thai baht), the goods and services the market person offers become cheap. In the simple, unenlightened deductions of some Thais, it is assumed to be part of the Thai culture that foreigners have to pay more than natives and citizens.

Based on observations and the interviews, many Thais believe that foreigners are wealthier than citizens. As such, they can pay more money for goods and services—sometimes even triple the actual price. Market people, stall-holders, individual sellers, and public transport providers usually insist on higher prices for their goods and services when dealing with foreigners. This is colloquially known as the "White Man Tax." From the interviews conducted,

it was revealed that this phenomenon is most common with taxi drivers. However, according to this correspondence, this problem is not solely associated with Thailand, as it does affect most countries. This has led to better taxi companies being set up to avoid price discrimination from taxi drivers.

4.7 Response to the statement "Most Thai girls feel shy about walking in public with their foreign boyfriend, especially if he is black."

Of the respondents, 15% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 51% disagreed, and 14% strongly disagreed with this statement. This proves that the majority of Thai women—65%—do not feel shy about walking out in public alongside their foreign men, including black men. Only a minority of women—35%—feel shy about walking alongside their foreign, including black, boyfriends. Based on the interviews carried out, it was discovered that some Thai girls feel shy about walking with black men, mostly Nigerians, because of the stigma from their family, their friends, and other locals and because of what these people might say or feel about their involvement with the black man. The country's culture implicitly values fair skin and devalues black skin. According to popular Thai belief, white is beautiful and dark is ugly. However, although black people tend to have darker skin than Thais, there are some black people with fairer skin than some indigenous people of Thailand. Most Thai people believe that Nigerians and other black people—except African Americans—are more violent or aggressive than other racial groups, and they often hold the view that black people invest less in education. Furthermore, the average Thai automatically associates black people with high high-school-dropout rates and low income levels, generally seeing them as poor.

It is impossible to determine how any one particular Thai parent will react to his or her daughter dating a black person. Still, based on the responses to the questionnaire, it is possible to

infer that most conservative Thai parents would not accept the relationship, while more progressive parents might. Most parents probably fall somewhere in between.

Due to the value that Thai society places on family, culture, and religion, threats may come into the already volatile mix. Most women do not like to walk with foreign men because of the negative labels they receive from conservatives, who assert that it looks weird and suspicious to see a foreign man with a woman, particularly a young woman with an older man. Most Thai people perceive such young women to be prostitutes. However, this perception is generally extended to almost all Thai women who are accompanied by foreign men.

It is also commonly believed that women who publicly walk alongside foreigners only do so because they are involved in a sexual relationship with them simply for their money. On the other hand, one of the Thai professors in the research sample responded that some women avoid walking in public with black men because they already have a Thai boyfriend in the neighborhood and keep the foreigner around for financial safety and satisfaction.

4.8 Response to the statement "Most Thais support other Thais over foreigners, even when they know the Thai is wrong."

The results show that 15% strongly agree that Thais support their compatriots, regardless of whether they are right or wrong. Additionally, 34% agreed, 33% disagreed, and 18% strongly disagreed. This demonstrates that approximately 49% of Thai citizens support the Thai whenever a Thai person has a misunderstanding with a foreigner, while 51% base their opinion on the truth, regardless of race or nationality. Further information was obtained from the interviews.

The problem was revealed to be that the majority of Thais do not like confrontation. The average Thai naturally tries to be polite in all situations. However, most of their polite approaches can turn impolite, and at times these are simply ways of trying to save face to adhere

to their belief of "Thais love Thais." This attitude hinders the establishment of a close relationship between Thais and foreigners.

According to the interviewees, Thais try to avoid conflict anyway, but this raises a new question: How can one avoid conflicts without hearing from both sides? If one is partial to one side of the argument, the conflict can never be resolved. Instead, it will be escalated. According to the non-Thai respondents, this partiality to one's compatriots can be so brash that most Thais do not want to hear the foreigner out because they only want to accept what their fellow countryman has expressed. Furthermore, they are often unwilling to listen to the foreigner's perspective, since most of them cannot speak or understand a foreign language. This may be an insidious and surreptitious way of protecting the national interests of Thailand's citizens.

4.9 Response to the statement "Most Thais always smile even when they are not happy"

The respondents' answers indicated that 28% strongly agreed, 48% agreed, 18% disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed. This shows that 76% of Thais always smile, even when they are unhappy, while only 24% do not smile when they are unhappy. It was discovered in the interviews that it is a traditional Thai belief to be friendly, fair, and always smiling because Thailand is regarded by its citizens as the "Land of Smiles." Hence, Thais believe that they should smile in all situations, whether they are happy or not.

Responses show that in Thai culture, a smile has many meanings. It can be used to express politeness, embarrassment, happiness, indifference, frustration, nervousness, condescension, or real feelings. For the average Thai, a smile is a good way to push away the problems of one's stressful and hectic life in all situations. This is why one is always surrounded by beautiful smiles, genuine friendliness, and people who are mostly happy, easy-going, and

sweet by nature, no matter where one is in Thailand. For example, if a tourist sees a Thai person on the street and the person flashes the tourist a beautiful smile, it does not mean the person likes the tourist. It simply means the person is being polite and friendly.

If the tourist talks to the Thai person, the Thai may smile. This may be because he or she did not understand what the foreigner said; the smile might be used to cover up the fact he or she does not understand, as Thais prefer to not tell foreigners that they did not understand them. At times, they smile to avoid confrontation or to save face.

4.10 Response to the statement "Some Thai Police Officers always look furious when they see black men."

The results of the questionnaire revealed that 15% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 57% disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed. This means that 65% disagreed that some Thai police officers are always infuriated at the sight of black men, while 35% of the sample size believes that some Thai police officers in Bangkok truly are always infuriated by the sight of black men, mostly Nigerians.

The interviews revealed that due to past experiences with Africans who resisted arrest, some Thai police officers do everything in their power to see that such incidents never reoccur. Most of the officers believe that all black men's characters, reasoning, and actions are the same and are therefore suspicious. This has caused the mistreatment of a US citizen by the Thai police simply because the police thought he was a Nigerian. It was discovered that because of the high incidences of black people, mostly Nigerians, escaping from custody, the police do not hesitate to put handcuffs on a suspect even if the suspect has not been confirmed as guilty. However, this act is not practiced nation-wide—it is mostly localized within in Bangkok. Moreover, some Bangkok police officers have embraced this disposition wholeheartedly. The interviewees claimed that the cause of this furiousness is that some Africans are involved in significant

amounts of shady and incriminating business. As such, all Africans, especially Nigerians, are viewed in a negative light.

The Nigerians in the sample asserted that, in most cases, the officers indulging in discriminatory acts do not shoulder the blame for their actions. Most of the time, it is the impatient Africans, especially Nigerians, who lead illegal lifestyles, who are to blame for the incriminations and implications that other black people face. These corrupt officers see Nigerians as a means of earning their living. As such, they extort money from them because of their impatience, which allows the Nigerians to buy their way out of police custody, even when it is not necessary. In terms of illegal residence, which is a criminal offense, the system has made it difficult for most Nigerians to extend their stays in Thailand.

4.11 Response to the statement "Most Thais see black people as a threat."

The responses indicated that 12% strongly agreed, 22% agreed, 46% disagreed, and 20% strongly disagreed. This means that about 66% of Thais do not see black people as a threat, while about 34% do. Most of the interviewees confirmed that Thai people never saw the black people as threat but due to the aggressive conversational tone of most Africans, the media labelled stigma and most Thais inability to speak English have created the distance gap which appears as isolation or threat between Thais and black people, especially the Nigerians.

4.12 Summary of chapter four

In Thai culture, a smile denotes an emotional expression of politeness, embarrassment, happiness, indifference, or frustration or is a way of easing burden or tension. This is reflected in the broadly accepted idea that Thai women are friendlier, more open-minded, and more willing to socialize than their male counterparts. Similarly, it is believed that most Thai men prefer to

keep to themselves and do not want to be bothered. They believe that living a discreet life will preserve their integrity and guarantee their privacy.

It was also discovered in an in-depth analysis that some Thai girls always feel uncomfortable walking with black men, particularly Nigerians, because of stigmatization and prejudicial attitudes inculcated in them by their family and friends. They opined that walking around with black people "placed them in a bad light" and jeopardized their family's reputation. Indeed, it is believed that women who publicly walk alongside with foreigners only do so for sex and other personal gains, which is not always true.

In its literature review, this research also confirmed that language barriers also hamper the positive synergy between foreigners and Thais. Conversely, experience has shown that Thais pay little to no attention to foreign languages because of the high value they place on the Thai language.

This study has also demonstrated that there is price discrimination in Thailand, one type for foreigners and another for Thais. This aligns with Thais' common belief that foreigners who come to Thailand spend a lot of money. Of course, this is most pronounced among taxi drivers, who, in most cases, stop using meters when their clients are foreigners. In fact, the concept of "Thais love Thais" seems to be the propensity and major determinant of Thai behavior toward foreigners, and this has significantly affected understanding and peaceful coexistence. The forthcoming chapter showcases the research conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The major barriers to the assimilation of Nigerians into the Thai culture are the language barrier, the culture, and socialization. This leads to inferiority complexes and the fulfilling of self-interests due to a lack of communication.

Most of the respondents claim that there is no racism against Nigerians. Nevertheless, because of the drug-related crime and scams that many Africans, Nigerians in particular, are involved in, there is discrimination between Thais and Africans (Patin, 2012). However, the highest percentage of drug dealers in Thailand are Iranian, while the largest percentage of scam perpetrators are from England. The question is why these cases are not constantly being presented in the media or why they are not treated the way the African issues are being treated. Consequently, it has become a routine for American authorities to scout out newly assimilated black immigrants and treat them like criminals (Nakagawa, 2013). This clearly explains why many reach the conclusion that black people are criminals, a notion that is televised nationally and internationally and reinforced by politicians, movies, and popular music, thereby expanding racism all across the globe.

It is true that some Nigerians engage in obnoxious or criminal acts in Thailand (Patin, 2012); however, the researcher implores people to not generalize that all Africans, specifically Nigerians, are drug dealers or involved in other forms of crimes. There are some Nigerians in Thailand who violate the law, but in the same manner, there are many law-abiding Nigerians residing in Thailand. Therefore, there is no sense in categorizing Nigerians or other Africans as

drug dealers simply because of their skin color. In the case of visa extensions, the efforts of the present Thai government, which is working assiduously improve the situation for Nigerians, are commendable. As a result, many discriminatory acts have been reduced. The researcher has lived and attended school in Thailand for almost five (5) years, and he has had the privilege of, by and large, experiencing the rich culture of the Thai people. The researcher has found Thais to be polite and very friendly—a disposition, incidentally, for many cultures of the world to emulate.

5.2 Recommendation

It is recommended that for smooth assimilation, Nigerians in Thailand need to learn the Thai culture, language, and traditions so that there is a clear and mutual understanding between the two groups. If Nigerians and other foreigners can speak Thai, there will be a reduction in discrimination and an increase in mutually respectful relationships. Schools, governments, market people, taxi drivers, and foreigners all play major roles in making this type of relationship a reality.

One problem is that Thai language is used in all fields of work. To improve the relationship between Thais and Nigerians, it is advisable that public primary and high schools introduce English as a major course and make learning English compulsory in schools, offices, and homes. Thais should be willing to always try to speak English in order to enhance the situation for foreigners. In schools, improvement is needed from Thai students, who should be assigned to work and interact with foreign students on projects to boost their spoken English skills. Tremendous improvements are needed from students despite the government creating an atmosphere of or an avenue for English competitions and providing scholarships for the participants who prevail.

Consequently, skin color has become a stumbling block for many people in Thailand because they prefer to associate with white men. It is awful that discrimination and racism run rampant in the world, and it is unbelievable that some people refuse to look past skin color and see that all humans are one irrespective of color. Human beings, whether fair- or dark-skinned, are the same: what needs to change is perspective and view, and this process begins with exercising the muscle between the ears and the brain. This trend has disfavored black people and has forced many beautiful "dark-skinned" individuals to bleach their skin to look white, thereby forsaking their natural beauty. The researcher seeks to discover how Nigerians and other black individuals can fit into the beautiful country of Thailand, especially regarding relationships with Thais. In regard to such relationships, the best advice for a prospective Thai–Nigerian couple is for the Nigerian to not indulge the Thai's family members or for the Nigerian to have a serious discussion with his or her partner on whether the partner would be willing to work out things even in the face of familial disapproval. The black partner in question should determine whether he or she is willing to tolerate possible insults and maltreatment from outsiders during the relationship.

Furthermore, the problem in the assimilation of these two different people can be traced back to Thailand and Nigeria. Both countries need to adjust their beliefs to enhance smooth assimilation between their citizens. Some Nigerians have been conditioned to believe that they cannot own a house in Thailand; thus, the average Nigerian believes that it is difficult to settle down in Thailand. Furthermore, a Thai must be the major shareholder of a Thai company, with at least a 51% share, while a foreigner can own up to 49%. Moreover, the average Thai sees every African as a criminal based on public Thai opinion and media reports. This opinion has resulted in a significant divide in the assimilation sphere. Thus, belief adjustment is needed on both sides.

The keen system of admission into Thai universities is another recommended method of assimilation because the educational system in Thailand has created an atmosphere of assimilation. Due to the Nigerian weak admission system, the limited number of schools and the large number of potential students in Nigeria, it is difficult to be admitted into Nigerian universities. For example, more than 80,000 candidates may take part in an institution's Post-UTME and all be qualified for admission, but because of limited space, only about 3,700 slots are available, or, in another example, 2,000 candidates may score above the cutoff mark for an academic department and are thus qualified for admission but only 100 people can be approved and admitted. The annual difficulties of being admitted into institutions of higher learning in Nigeria are troublesome, and this trend has grave consequences for those who are still seeking admission: every year, they are confronted with increasing numbers of both new and old competitors. The number of candidates who register for JAMB increases every year, but admission spaces are scarce. In most cases, admission is given based on political background, even though admission to universities should be based on merit, not politics. The system has forced many people to abandon their educational ambitions and visions and thereby become frustrated with their lives (The Authority, 2015). It is advisable that Nigerian Government should build more schools, abolish admission based on political background and ascertain admission by merit.

Normally, when students graduate from secondary school in Nigeria, they gain admission into the university—a similar practice is in place in Thailand. The system in Thailand has paved the way for many Nigerians to leave their country and travel to Thailand to study, and most Nigerian students graduate from Thai universities with good grades. The education system in Thailand has made admission very easy for students who are willing to study. However, in

Nigeria, the reverse is the case: Nigeria has many willing students who want to study but who are denied admission due to the flawed education system. Many Nigerians flock to Ghana, Ukraine, Cyprus, United Arab Emirates, Benin, Niger, and Thailand to study because of these countries' exceptional educational systems, which are significantly different from the one in Nigeria, where one can find himself spending as much as five to six years unsuccessfully seeking admission. This has caused many willing people to become fed up with school or give up furthering their education (The Authority, 2015). Hence, education is the easiest way Nigerians can assimilate into the Thai culture. The Thai government should improve the ease of visa extension for Nigerians living in Thailand, while the criminal Nigerians residing in Thailand should be deported to enhance assimilation.

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