



The U.S. African Consumer Segment

Commissioned by

**Martin Mohammed, The U.S. African Chamber of
Commerce**

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Dr. Bruce Corrie of Concordia University**



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Introduction

Background & Purpose

- ❖ Immigrants from East and West Africa are growing steadily in the United States. With this trend, there is an expected change in the behavioral patterns of this market which could impact their consumption of goods and services and thus, provide a myriad of marketing opportunities.
- ❖ With this in mind, The African Chamber of Commerce, New American Dimensions, The Minneapolis Foundation, Aguilar Productions and Dr. Bruce Corrie teamed up to undertake a research project to gain an in-depth understanding of East and West African immigrants in the U.S. Of particular interest in this study are the following:
 - Relocation patterns: reasons for coming to the U.S. and length of U.S. residency
 - Language proficiency: in English and their native languages
 - Values and self-identity
 - Shopping habits and brand selection criteria
 - Financial planning and investment
 - Ownership of electronic products
 - Use of English-language and African-language media
 - Demographic characteristics



Detailed Findings

Relocation Patterns

Why Come Here?



African respondents came to America in search of education or economic opportunities.

- Some came on scholarship
- A few came with their spouses
- Many came from upper class families in Africa
- Some came to the U.S. through other countries, particularly France or England
- All seek opportunity, most want to be in the U.S. for now, but many want to return to Africa eventually

Primary Reason for Coming to U.S. (By Market and African Region)

While a sizeable immigrants from L.A and Washington DC come to the U.S. for educational opportunities, a large proportion of respondents from Minneapolis immigrate because of family sponsorship.

	MARKET				REGION	
	Los Angeles	New York	Washington DC	Minneapolis	East Africa	West Africa
WEIGHTED BASE	47	141	153	51	133	254
Significance Notation	A	B	C	D	E	F
Attending U.S. school	45BD	28	35D	17	28	33
Came with parents/other relatives	16D	14D	23D	4	9	20E
Sponsored by family member	5	1	17AB	49ABC	23F	9
Opening/running a business	5	28ACD	4	1	12	13
Job offer from U.S. company	3	1	9B	3	3	6
Marrying U.S. citizen	3	4	7	2	2	6
Other	27CD	20C	1	15C	19	10

DI. What was your main reason for coming to the U.S.?

Letter: significantly above designated segment at 95% confidence

Findings are in percentages

Primary Reason for Coming to U.S. (By Age and Religion)

Educational opportunity is the top reason for immigration among all age groups, although more of the younger ones tend to come with family compared to older immigrants, who also immigrate for business opportunities.

More Christians immigrate for education while more Muslims for business.

	AGE			RELIGION	
	18-34	35-44	45-60	Christianity	Islam
WEIGHTED BASE	202	116	75	214	106
Significance Notation	A	B	C	D	E
Attending U.S. school	36	24	31	34E	18
Came with parents/other relatives	26BC	9	5	18E	8
Sponsored by family member	10	14	23	13	20
Opening/running a business	5	20A	18A	9	22D
Job offer from U.S. company	3	9A	3	6	4
Marrying U.S. citizen	5	3	7	7E	-
Other	13	16	9	9	23D

DI. What was your main reason for coming to the U.S.?

Letter: significantly above designated segment at 95% confidence

Immigrant Challenges Overcome by Work Ethic and Determination



Respondents mentioned many immigration challenges, but concluded that their work ethic and determination allowed them to overcome these obstacles, which include:

- ❖ Culture shock
- ❖ Language
- ❖ Figuring out the American system
- ❖ Homesickness and loneliness
- ❖ Lack of respect in the community
- ❖ Not being treated as equals, particularly in the workplace
- ❖ Trying to hold onto traditions
- ❖ Racism



Detailed Findings

Values & Self-Identity

Africans are United Through Cultural Pillars

Pride in being African is strong. Respondents believe being African means:



- Respect for others, particularly elders
- Strong discipline
- A happy, polite, neat bearing
- Hospitality
- Religion
- Strong work ethic
- Focus on Education
- Not exclusive: receptive to different ideas and people
- Raising children with a strong African identity
- Valuing family and your root and familial dependency
- Altruism: value giving back and helping people, especially family in Africa
- African music and food.



Maintaining African Values Requires Effort

Africans overcome difficulties by **staying connected** through African music, art, food and communication with family and friends via telephone and Internet.

Some are fortunate to have **family** here or **belong to an African community**, but hectic schedules can make spending time with other Africans difficult.

These **challenges change over time** and Africans find newer challenges--financial security, immigration issues, whether or not to marry an American, and deciding to stay in America for life or return to Africa.



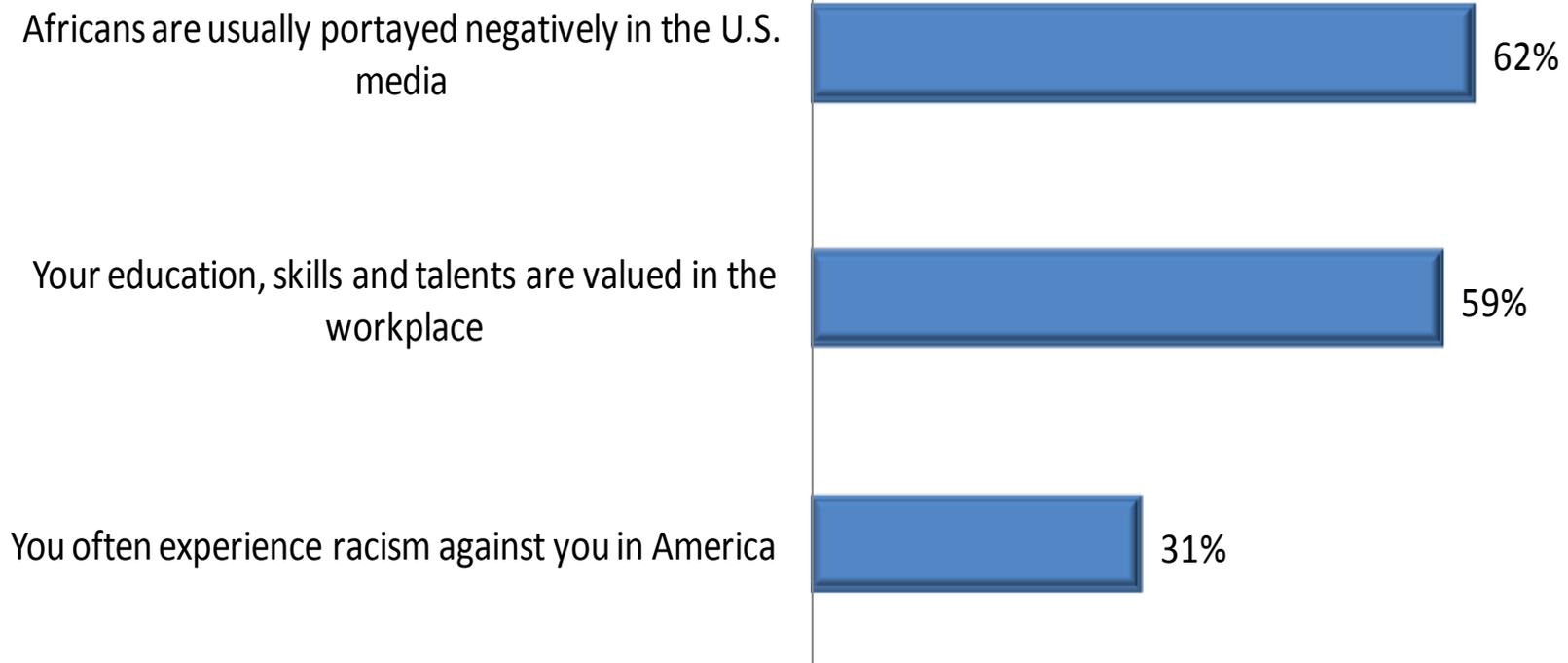
Racism: Some Feel It, Others Ignore/Avoid It

- In general, participants feel racism is alive and well in the U.S. and is not limited to Caucasians, but includes discrimination from African Americans as well.
- They also note that Africans who look African and speak with an accent are more likely to be subject to discrimination.
- Many surround themselves with diverse and primarily international friendships. Living in international, diverse cities also helps avoid some blatant discrimination.



Perceived Treatment/Depiction by Others (All Respondents)

About three-fifths of African immigrants feel that Africans are usually portrayed negatively in the U.S. media but feel that their education, skills and talents are valued in the workplace. Only a third of them often experience racism against them in America.



Percent of total sample who selected
"6" or "7" on 7-point scale (N=393)

Africans Have a Powerful Sense of Their Own Identity



Many encountered problems with the racial dynamic in the United States.

- Many expressed difficulty in fitting in with African Americans, despite a strong desire to do so initially.
- Respondents spoke of a strong perception in the African American community that programs favor Africans over African Americans.
- A common theme, and source of discomfort, was that some African Americans hold them responsible for selling their ancestors into slavery.



African or American?

Respondents were mixed when it came to thinking of themselves as Americans.

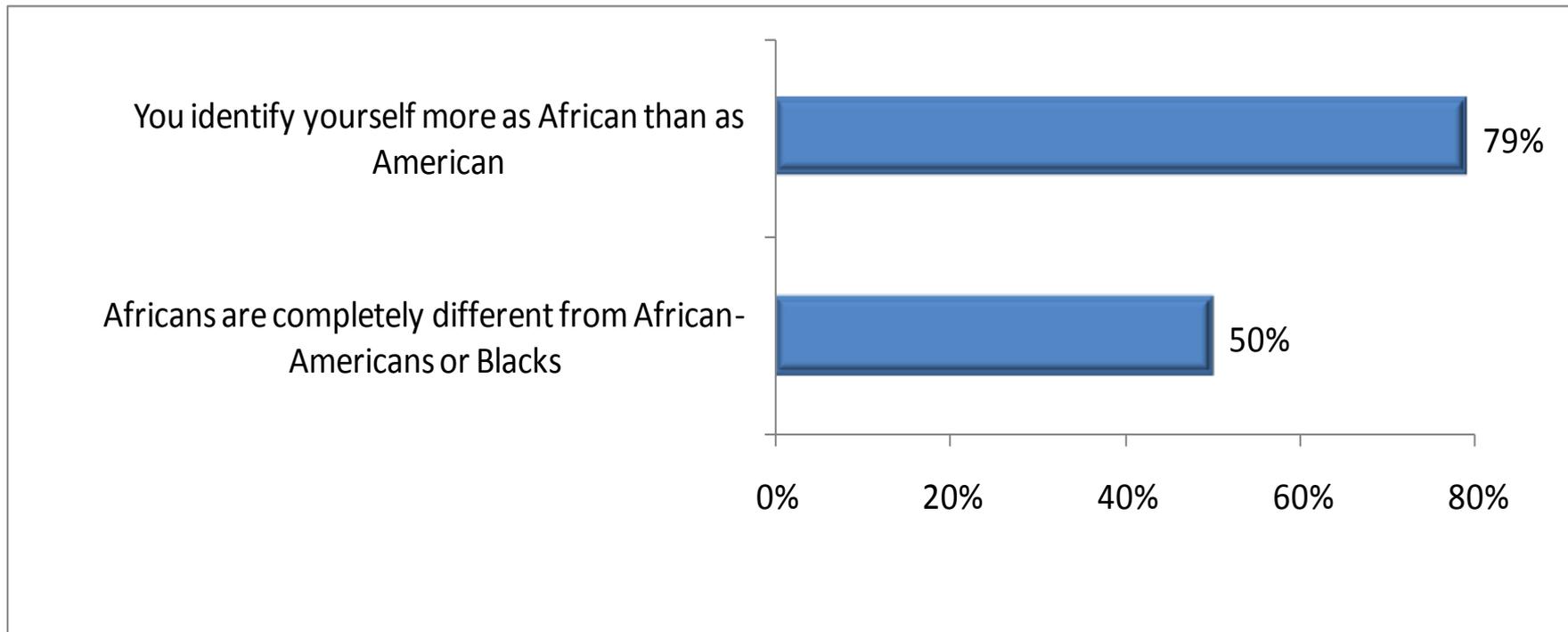
- ❖ There was great respect for the United States and the opportunities it offers
- ❖ Nevertheless, most respondents prefer to be classified as Africans.
- ❖ Feeling American is greatly influenced by context or activity, for example:
 - Communicating with Americans
 - Voting/participating in the political process
 - Being the only African in a group (makes them feel more African)
 - Returning to Africa and noticing the changes in themselves



African vs. American Self-Identity (All Respondents)

Four-fifths of respondents identify themselves more as African than as American, indicating less acculturation into American culture.

While half of the respondents strongly agree that Africans are completely different from African Americans, only 9% disagree, which indicates that most feel different and separate from Blacks to some degree.



Percent of total sample who selected "6" or "7" on a 7-point scale (N=393)

African Immigrants Relax and Enjoy Sports and Music



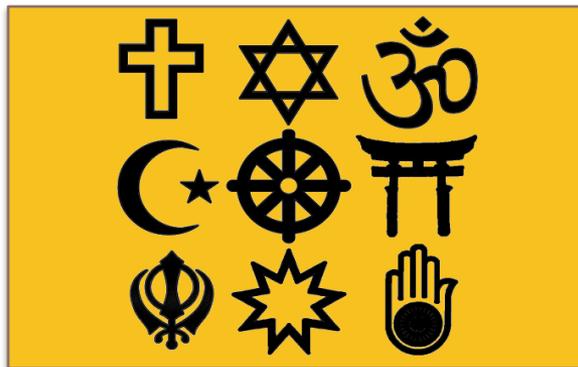
Respondents unwind and get together with friends for:

- ❖ Football
- ❖ American Football
- ❖ World Series
- ❖ Golf
- ❖ Basketball
- ❖ Soccer
- ❖ Clubbing
- ❖ Concerts
- ❖ Movies
- ❖ Theater
- ❖ Somali Music
- ❖ Reggae
- ❖ Classical Music
- ❖ Gospel and Christian Contemporary
- ❖ Artists come to the community.
- ❖ Parks, national parks
- ❖ Lakes in the summer
- ❖ Fishing
- ❖ Jogging
- ❖ Gym
- ❖ Taking walks

The Role of Religion

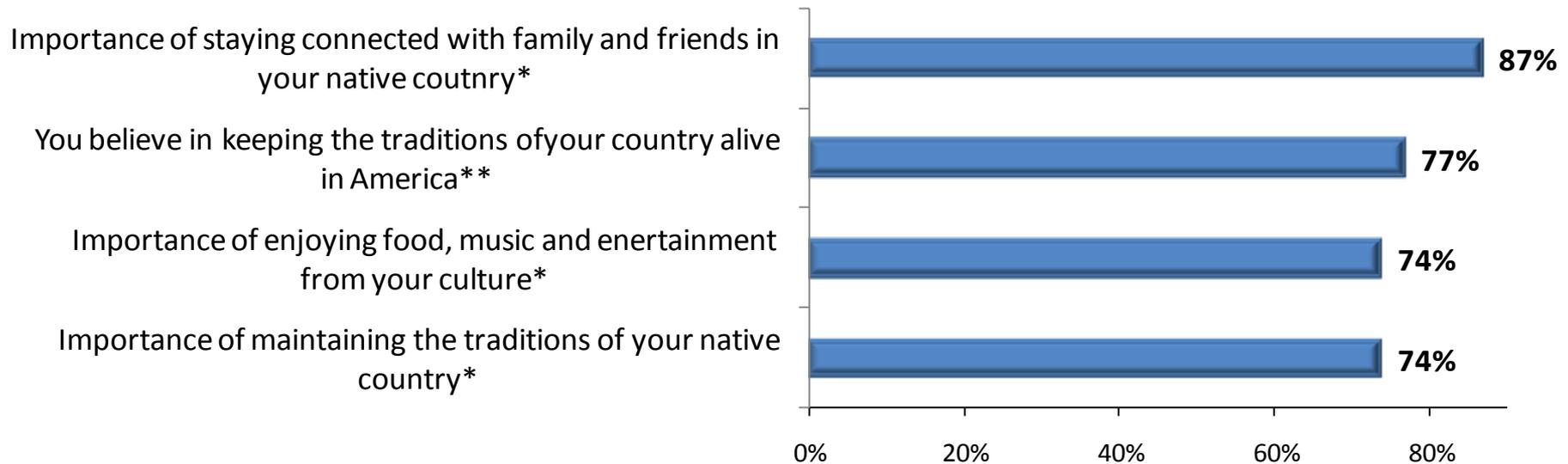
Religion is part of what it means to be African, for these respondents, but Islamic Africans seem to struggle with fitting into American culture.

- Respondents mention the importance of religion, particularly in raising children.
- For Muslim Africans, it can be difficult to pray in the U.S., and people are either uneducated about it or rude.
- The religious persuasion of the respondents reflects the religious ethos prevalent in Africa. All respondents were either Christian or Muslim. All wanted to raise their children to be spiritual, despite some of them admitting that they were sporadic attendees of church or mosque.



Maintaining Language/Traditions/Connections (All Respondents)

African immigrants have a strong belief in the importance of keeping and maintaining their native traditions. However, even more important to them is staying connected with family and friends in their native countries.



**Percent of total sample
who selected "6" or "7"
on 7-point scale (N=393)**

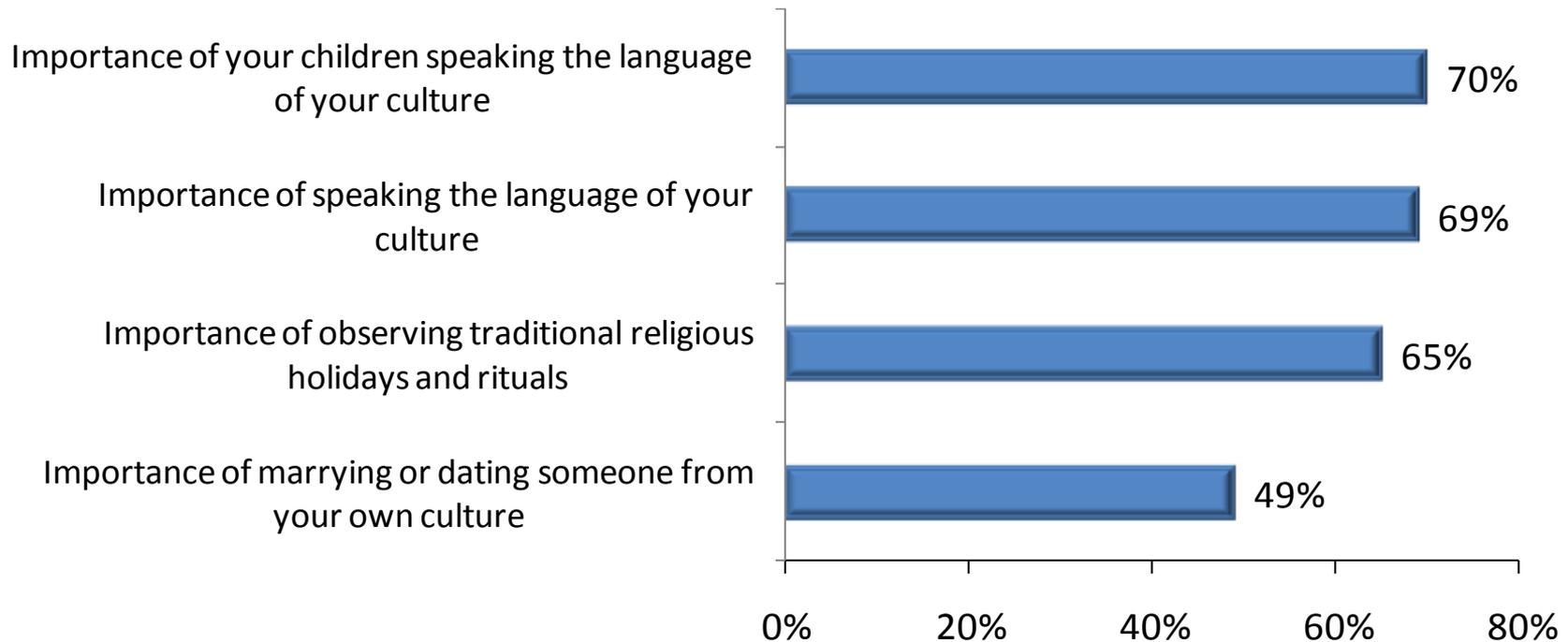
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21**

*Q1. Statement rated on 7-point scale of importance: 7= extremely important in your life, 1= not at all important

**Q2, 6. Statement rated on 7-point agree/disagree scale: 7= strongly agree, 1= strongly disagree

Maintaining African Language/Traditions (All Respondents)

Also (though less) important to African immigrants are speaking their own language and observing their own religious rituals.



*Q1. Statement rated on 7-point scale of importance: 7= extremely important in your life, 1= not at all important

Percent of total sample who selected "6" or "7" on 7-point scale (N=393)

Africans Achieve a Balance of Material and Personal Success



Respondents were quite ambitious, but described success in very meaningful, far reaching terms.

Financial

- Monetary wealth
- Helping others
- Giving back to your extended family
- Giving back to your church
- Having your own business

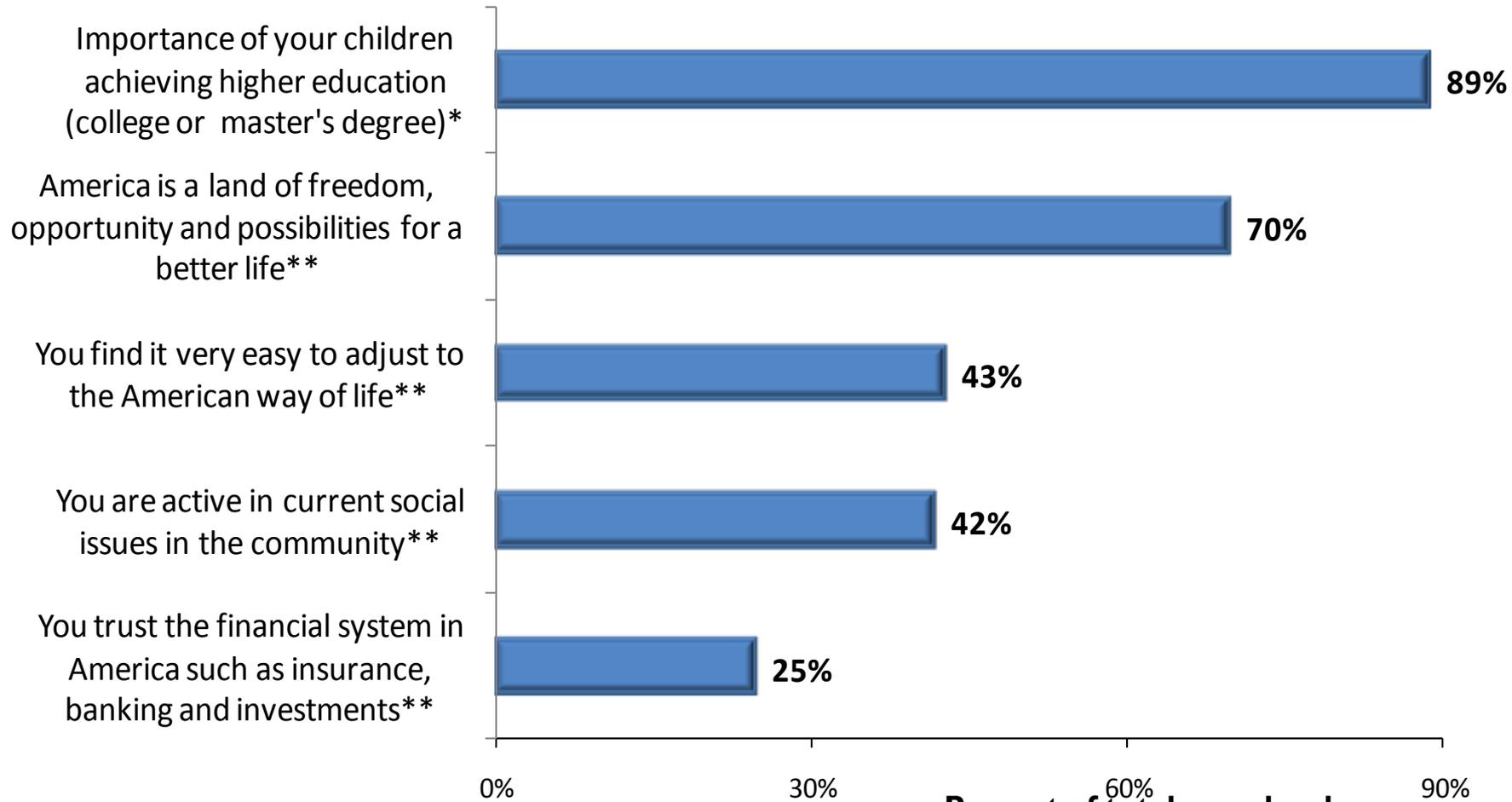
Personal

- Finding out who you are
- Not the things you have, but who you become
- Achieving confidence in what you do
- Having a good job, raising a family, and having freedom
- Enjoying life



Opportunities & Challenges

The goal of their children's educational achievement is the highest value of all among African immigrants and this is true for all the segments presented in this study..



Percent of total sample who selected "6" or "7" on 7-point scale (N=393)

*Q1. Statement rated on 7-point scale of importance: 7= extremely important in your life, 1= not at all important

**Q2, 6. Statement rated on 7-point agree/disagree scale: 7= strongly agree, 1= strongly disagree



Detailed Findings

Shopping Habits/Brand Selection Criteria

Africans Appreciate Brands that Speak to Them

Some brands can get it right, connect with Africans, and spark their interest.

- Participants mention ads that they like that include multicultural actors and appreciate the inclusivity.
- They also appreciate seeing real looking people, not just skinny models. Specifically, an ad showing a woman with a C-section scar.
- Some reflect that their children are quite influenced by advertising, any advertising aimed at their age group.

Brands that work



Word of Mouth Drives Decision Making

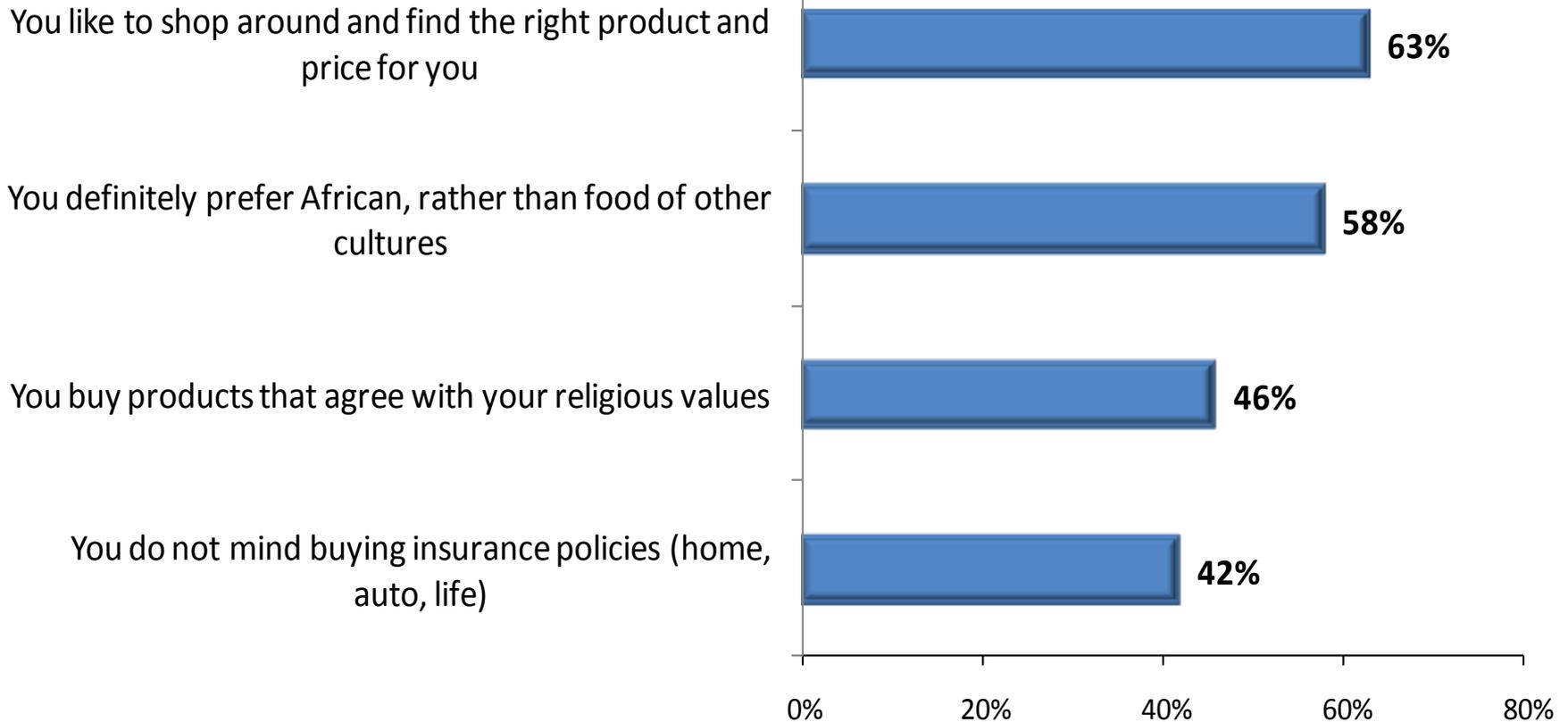


Most respondents cite word of mouth as a favorite influence in purchasing, demonstrating strong trust in friends and family. Other influencers include:

- Advertising (mainly TV and Print)
- Pricing (they would buy store brands in some instances for pricing reasons)
- The best for their money
- Brands loyalty, gained through performance and quality.
- Most like to purchase in person, instead of online, so they can see, touch, examine what they're buying.

Shopping Habits (All Respondents)

African immigrants prove to be sensible shoppers, shopping around for the right products and price. Rightness would mean African products as well as products that agree with their religious values.

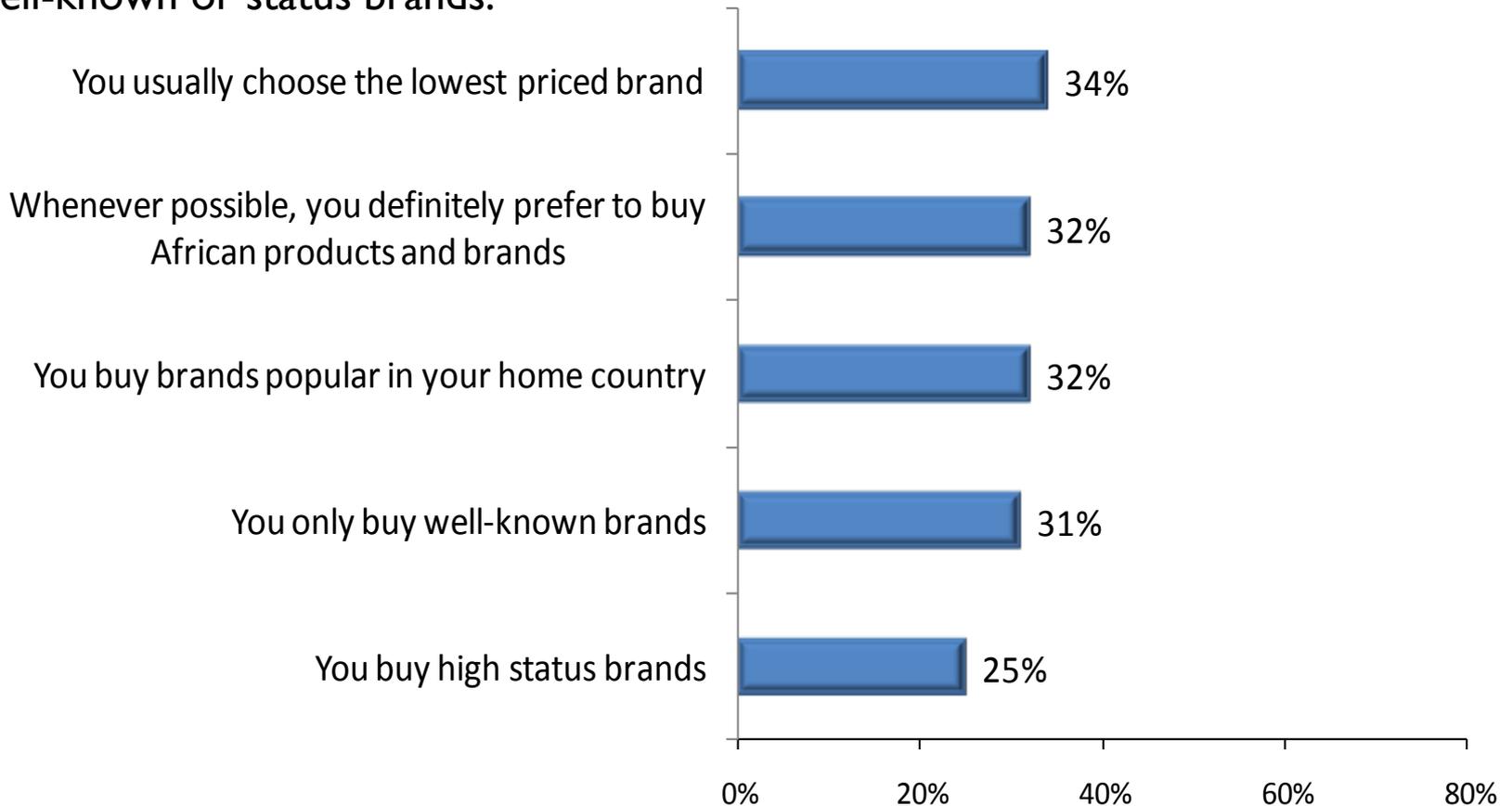


Percent of total sample who selected "6" or "7" on 7-point scale (N=393)

(Continued)

Brand Selection Criteria (All Respondents)

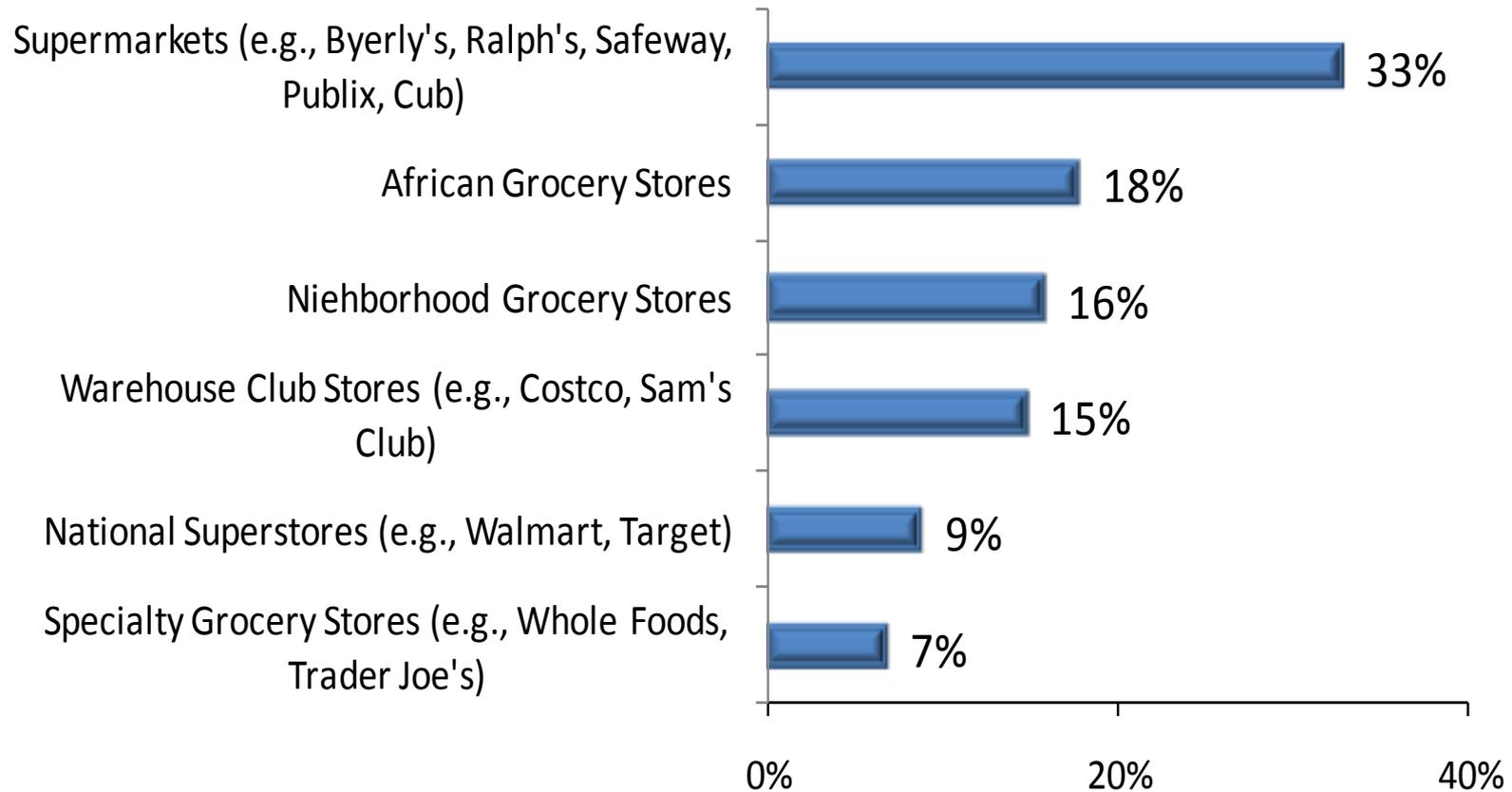
Only a third of respondents claim to be exclusive shoppers, who choose brands based only on low price, or African brands only, or brands popular in one's country or well-known or status brands.



Percent of total sample who selected
“6” or “7” on 7-point scale (N=393)

Stores Shopped for Food and Groceries (All Respondents)

Supermarkets lead the list of stores patronized by African immigrants.

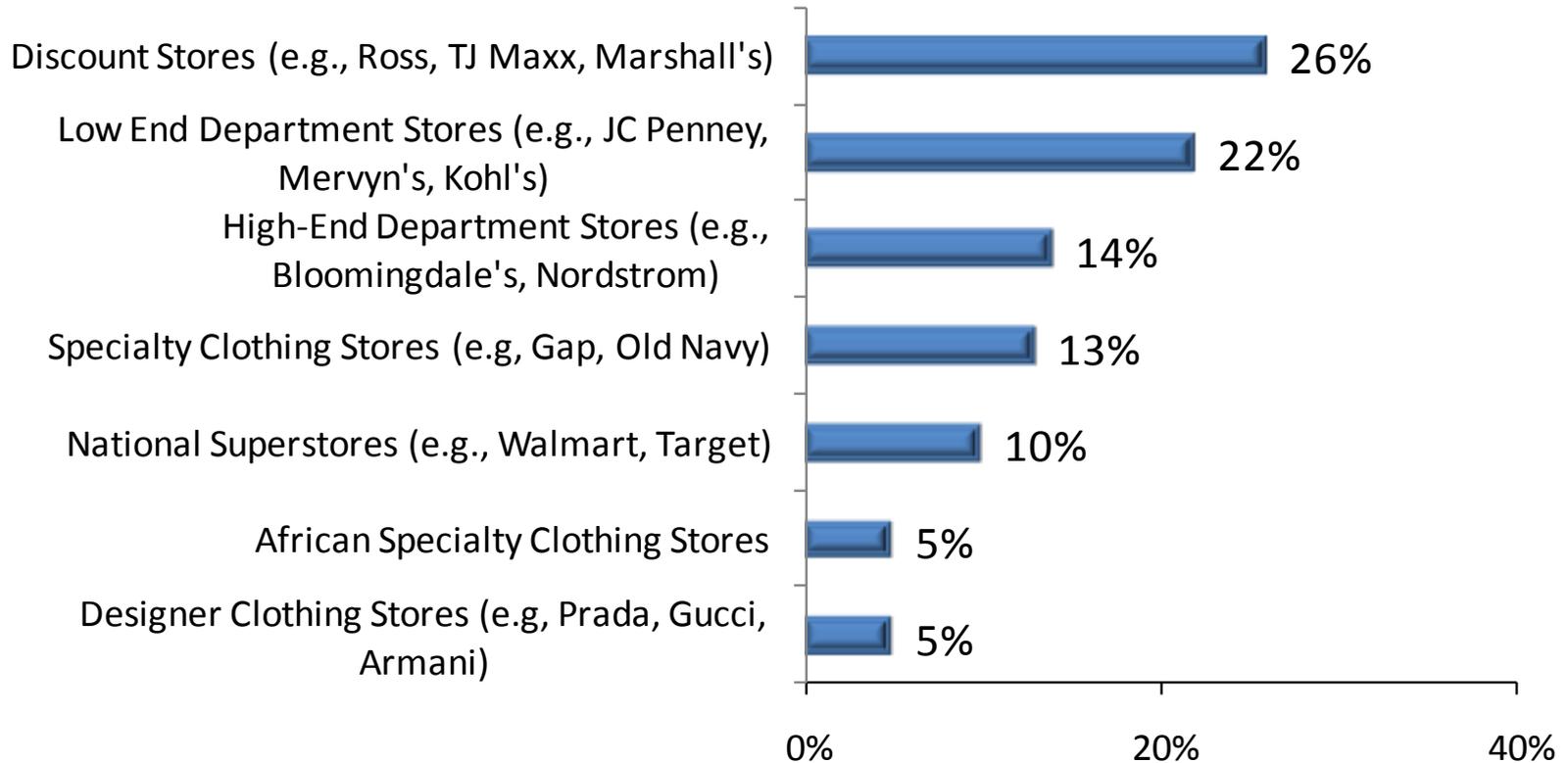


Q4. At which of the following types of stores does your household most often shop for food and groceries?

Base: Total Sample (N=393)

Stores Shopped for Clothes and Accessories (All Respondents)

Discount stores and low-end department stores are the top shopping venues for clothes and accessories, while African and designer clothing stores are at the bottom of the list.



Base: Total Sample (N=393)

Q5. At which of the following types of stores does your household most often for clothes and accessories?



Detailed Findings

Financial Planning & Investment

Respondents Seek Clear, Comprehensive Financial Information

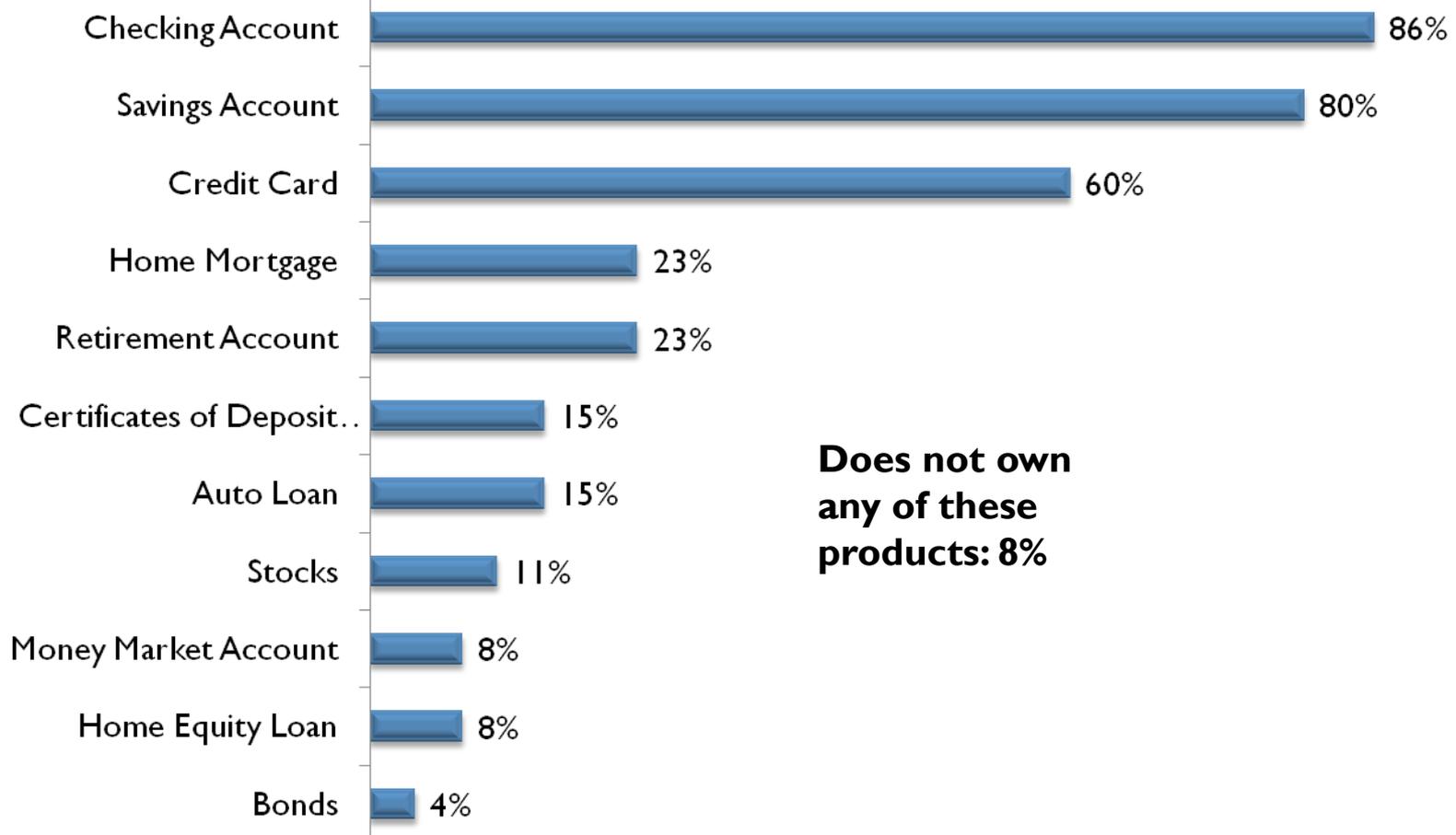
When it comes to financial planning, most feel behind the game compared to Americans, but they are learning and constantly trying to improve.

- ❖ Financial information is mainly obtained by doing personal research on the internet (yahoo finance, Wall Street journal etc) as well as word of mouth.
- ❖ Some find community pools as sources for extra money and put in monthly amounts.
- ❖ They find the stock market confusing and would want to know more about it. They would also like to better understand personal investing and credit – ideally via direct mail or the internet.
- ❖ Muslim participants talk about the Islamic lending system and highly rate its practices.
- ❖ Most are working multiple jobs. They use banks but most of their investments are geared toward saving for retirement in Africa or helping relatives there.



Financial Products Owned (All Respondents)

Most own checking and savings accounts and about two-thirds have credit cards. About a fourth of respondents own home mortgage and retirements accounts while fewer own CDS, auto loans and stocks.

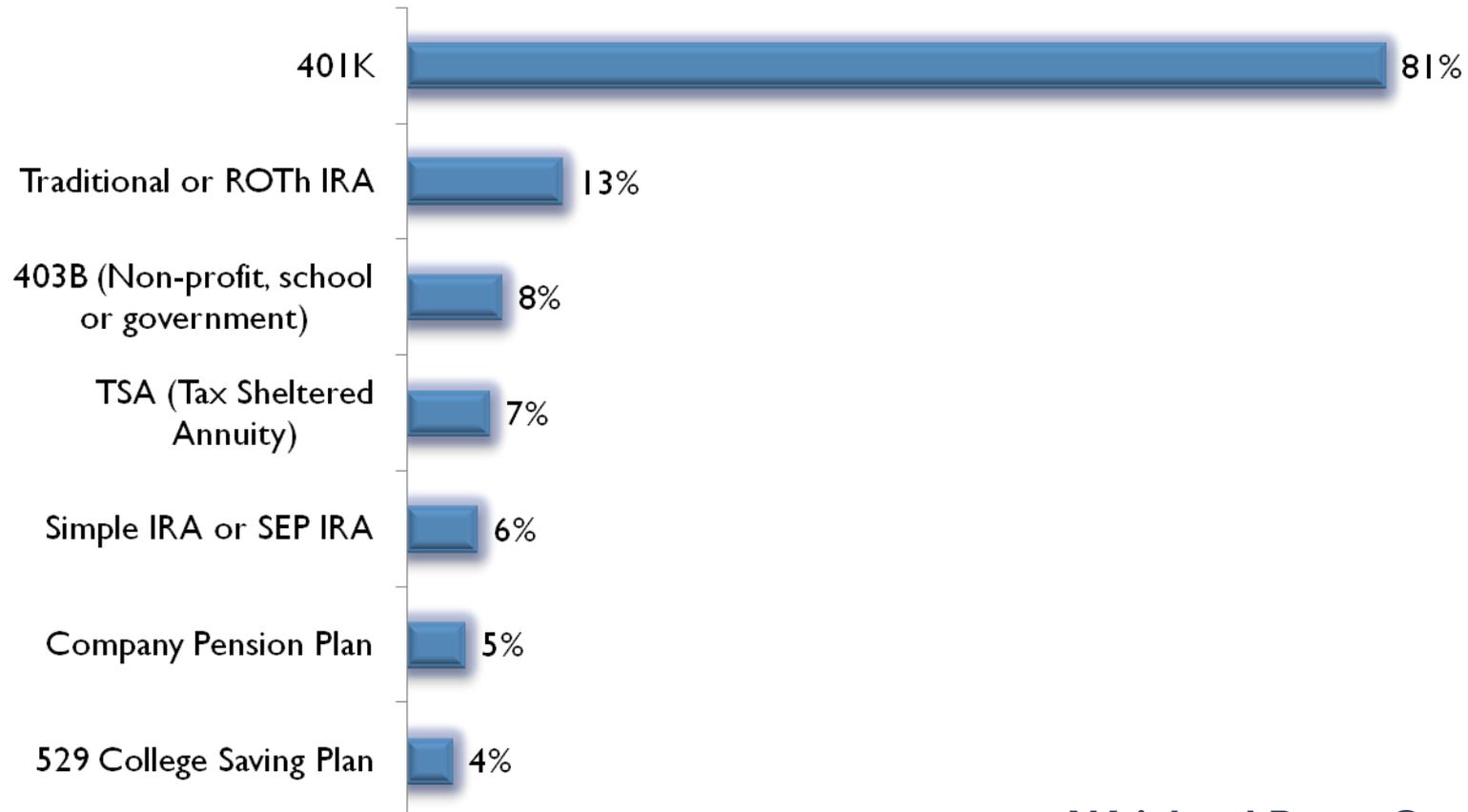


Q7. Which of the following financial products do you or anyone in your household currently have or own?

Base: Total Sample (N=393)

Retirement Products Owned (All Respondents)

Most own employer-sponsored 401K while all other retirement programs are not as popular.

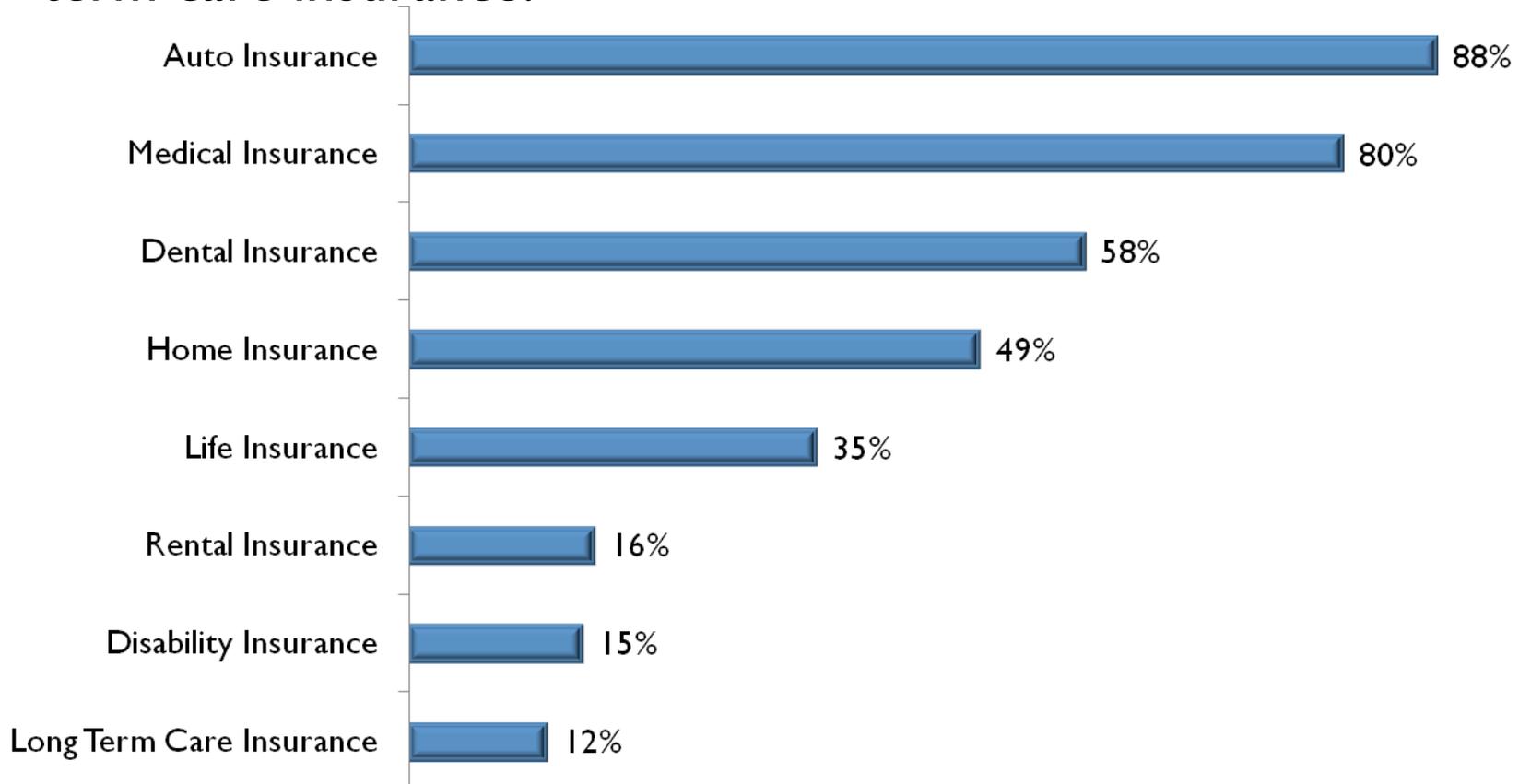


Weighted Base: Owned Retirement Products (N=91)

Q8. Which, if any, of the following retirement do you or anyone in your household currently have or own?

Insurance Products Owned (All Qualified Respondents)

Most own auto and medical insurance, while a few has long term care insurance.



**Weighted Base: Owned
Insurance Products
(N=182)**

Q9. Which, if any, of the following insurance do you or anyone in your household currently have or own?

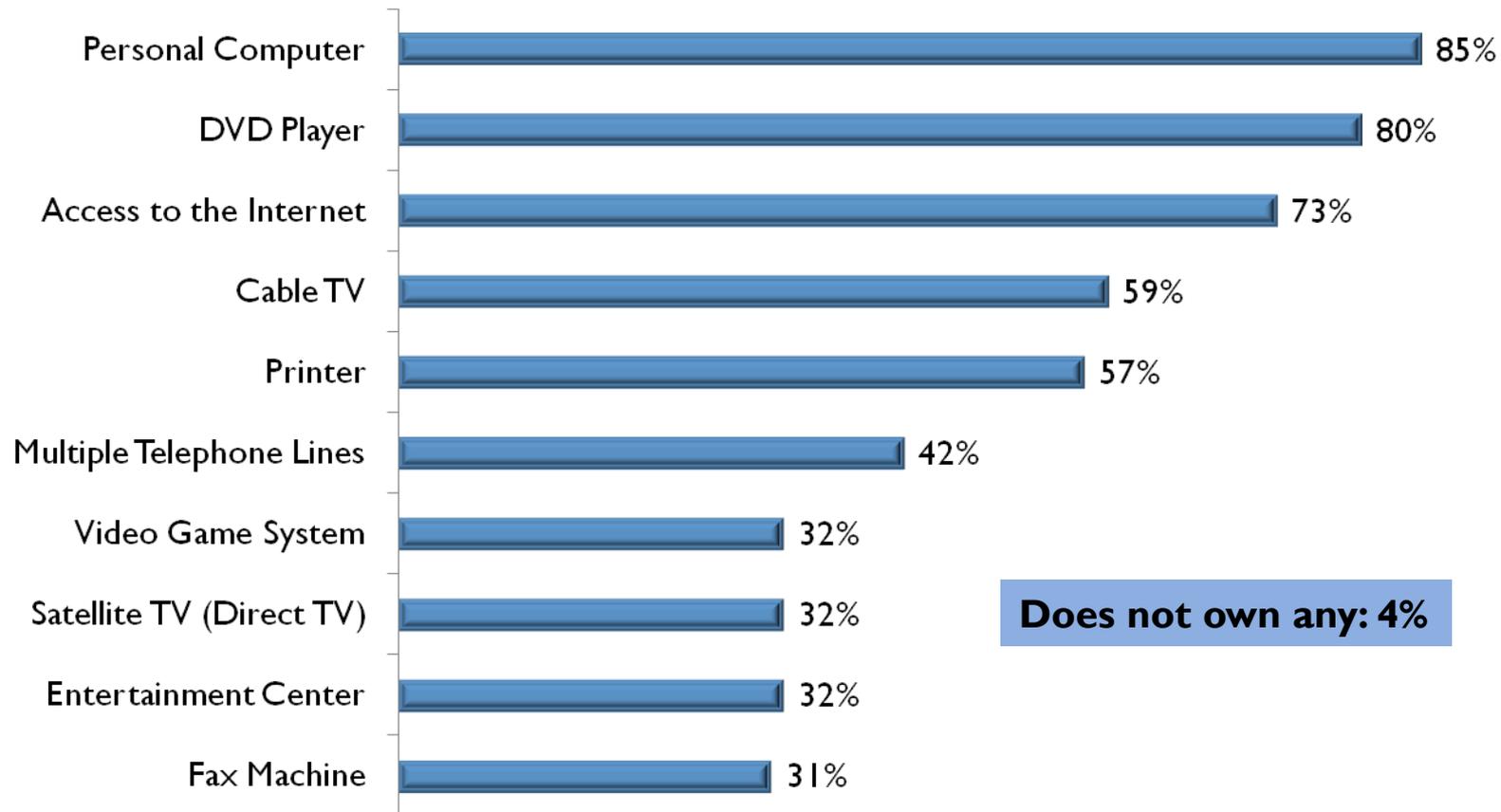


Detailed Findings

Ownership of Electronic Products

Electronics Owned by Household (All Respondents)

Most African immigrants own a personal computer and a DVD player. A few own video game system, satellite TV, and entertainment center and a fax machine.

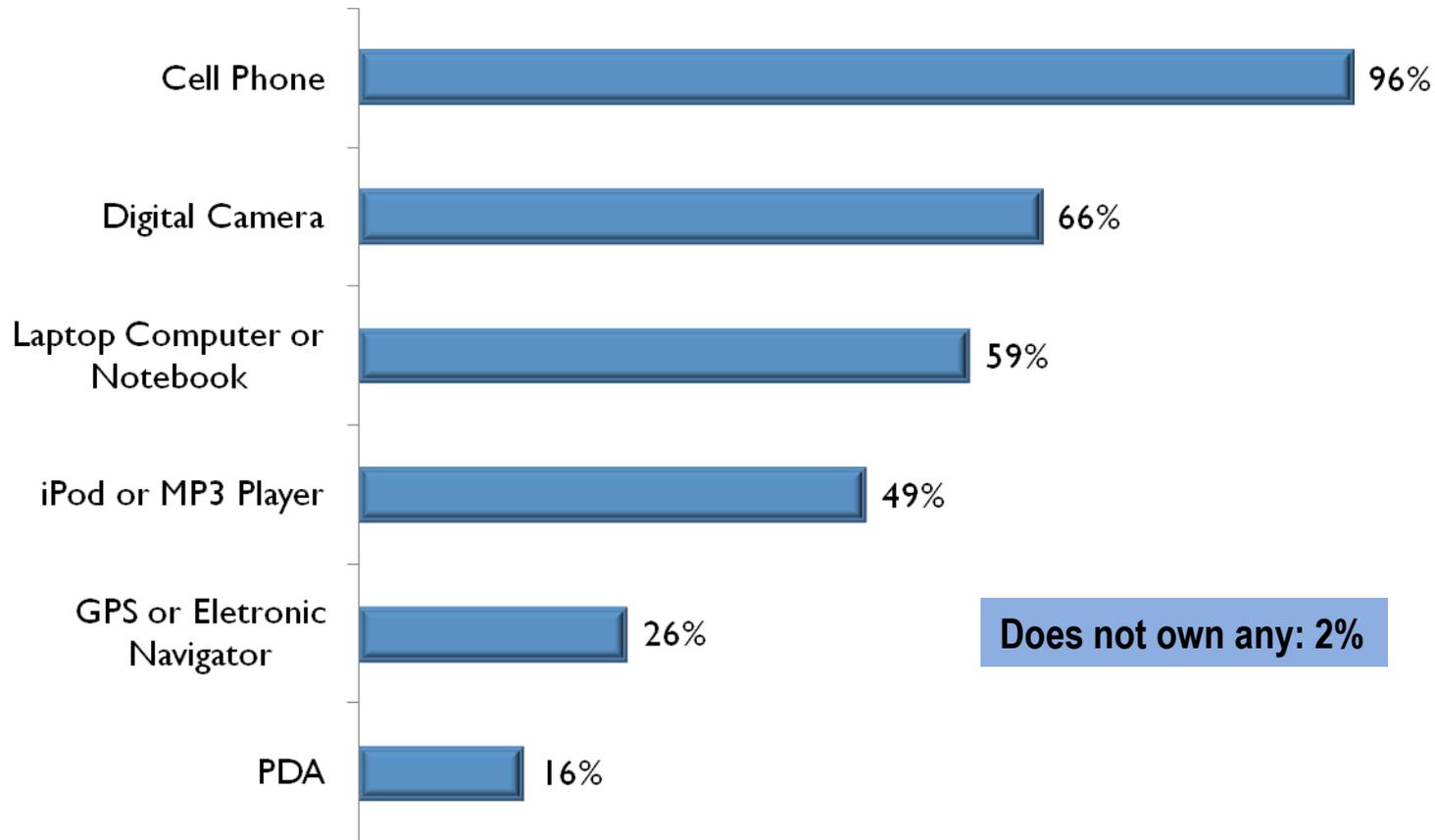


Q10. Which, if any, of the following does your household currently have or own?

Base: Total Sample (N=393)

Electronics Personally Owned (All Respondents)

Almost all respondents own cell phones. A few own PDAs.



Q11. Which, if any, of the following do you, yourself currently have or own?

Base: Total Sample (N=393)



Detailed Findings

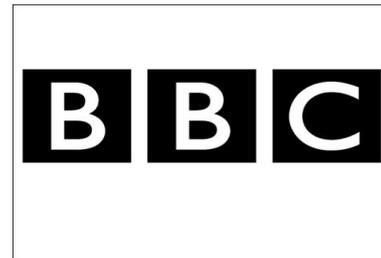
Media Usage

From Reality TV to International News Sources



African media usage in the U.S. is characterized by little time yet big variety

- Most watch the news, including world news from CNN, BBC, and NPR either on TV or online.
- Respondents listen to a wide variety of music, including African, religious, and American popular music.
- Some believe that television programming is too adult in the U.S. and has become even more adult in the last eight years.
- Respondents acknowledge the importance of texting and cell phones, which are more relevant with younger Africans than are landlines.
- All are tired of the way Africans are portrayed in the media, and perceived by (even educated) Americans.



Unsatisfied With Africa's Portrayal in Media

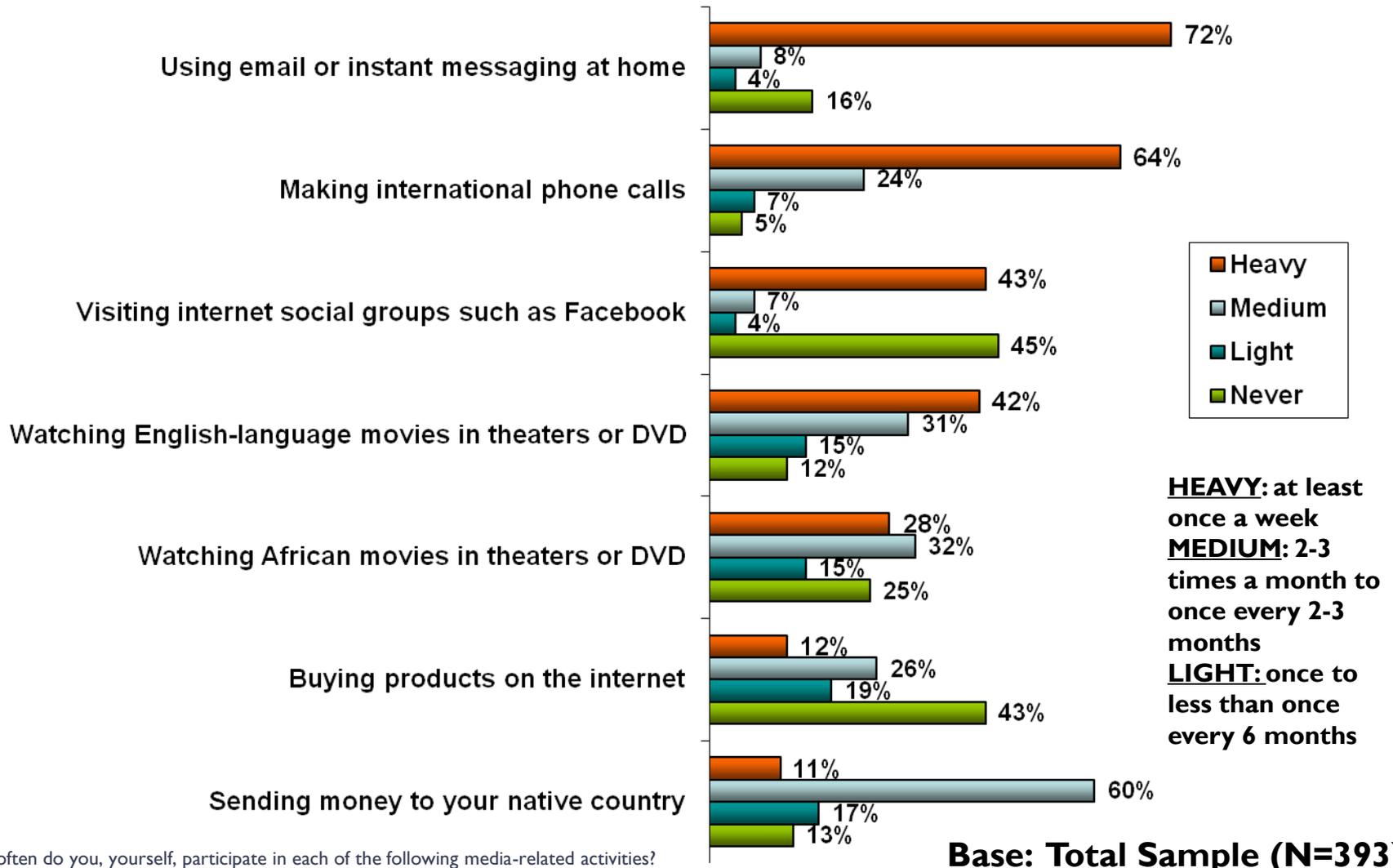


Respondents want to see positive images and stories about their home countries. Many point out that poverty, AIDS, and fighting monopolize press and fictional depictions of African countries.

- Show real people who are happy and content.
- Don't focus on the jungles or tribal activity.
- Avoid *Coming to America*-type stereotypes.
- Nothing in mainstream media highlights what these respondents know as normal life in Africa.

Participation in Media-Related Activities (All Respondents)

Email and international calls are most heavily used; while money remittance has the highest medium usage. More than two-fifths have never visited internet social groups or bought products on the internet.



English-language and African-language Media Usage

(All Respondents)

African immigrants spend more hours watching English-language media than African-language media.

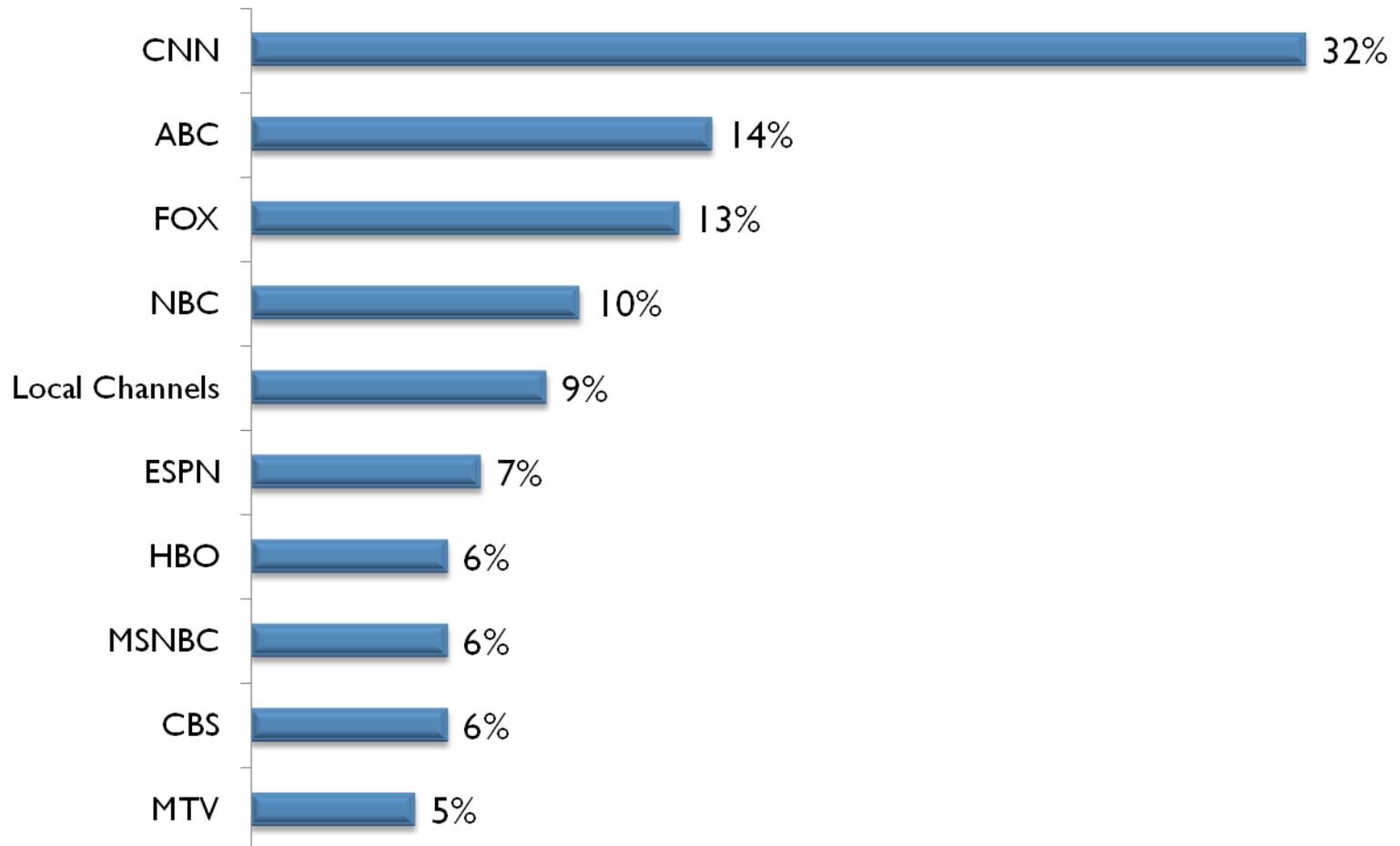
Media	English-language Media Mean Weekly Hour Usage	African-language Media Mean Weekly Hour Usage
Significance Notation	A	B
TV	9.35B	1.75
Websites (at home)	6.52B	1.72
Radio	6.08B	1.05
Newspapers/Magazines	4.07B	Media 0.90
TOTAL AVERAGE HOURS	26.02B	5.42B

Q13. On average, about how many hours a week do you, yourself, spend on the following...
Letter: significantly above designated segment at 95% confidence

Top 10 Favorite English-language TV Channels

(All Respondents)

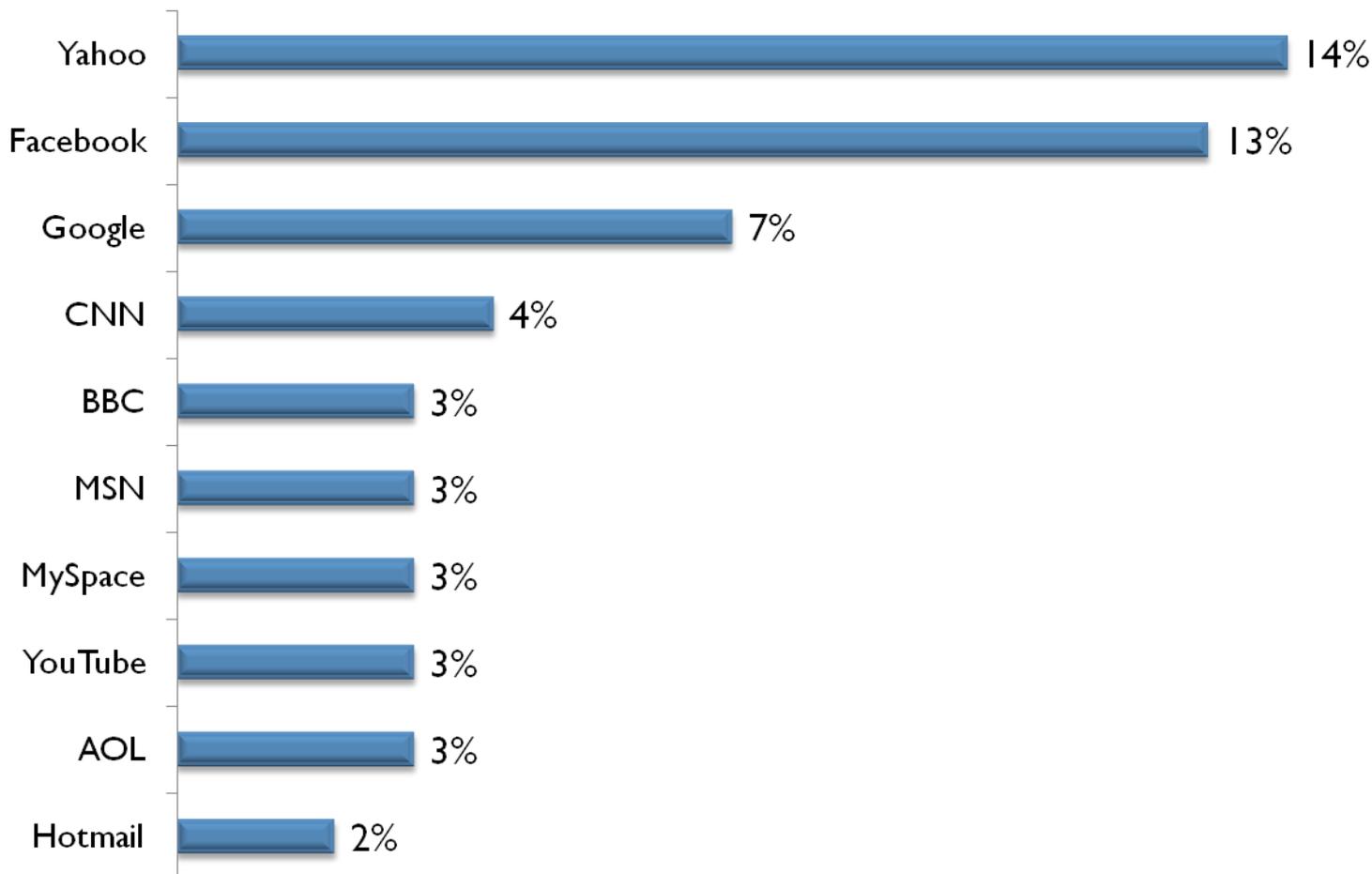
Overall, CNN (a news channel) tops the list of favorite English-language TV channels.



Top 10 Favorite English-language Websites

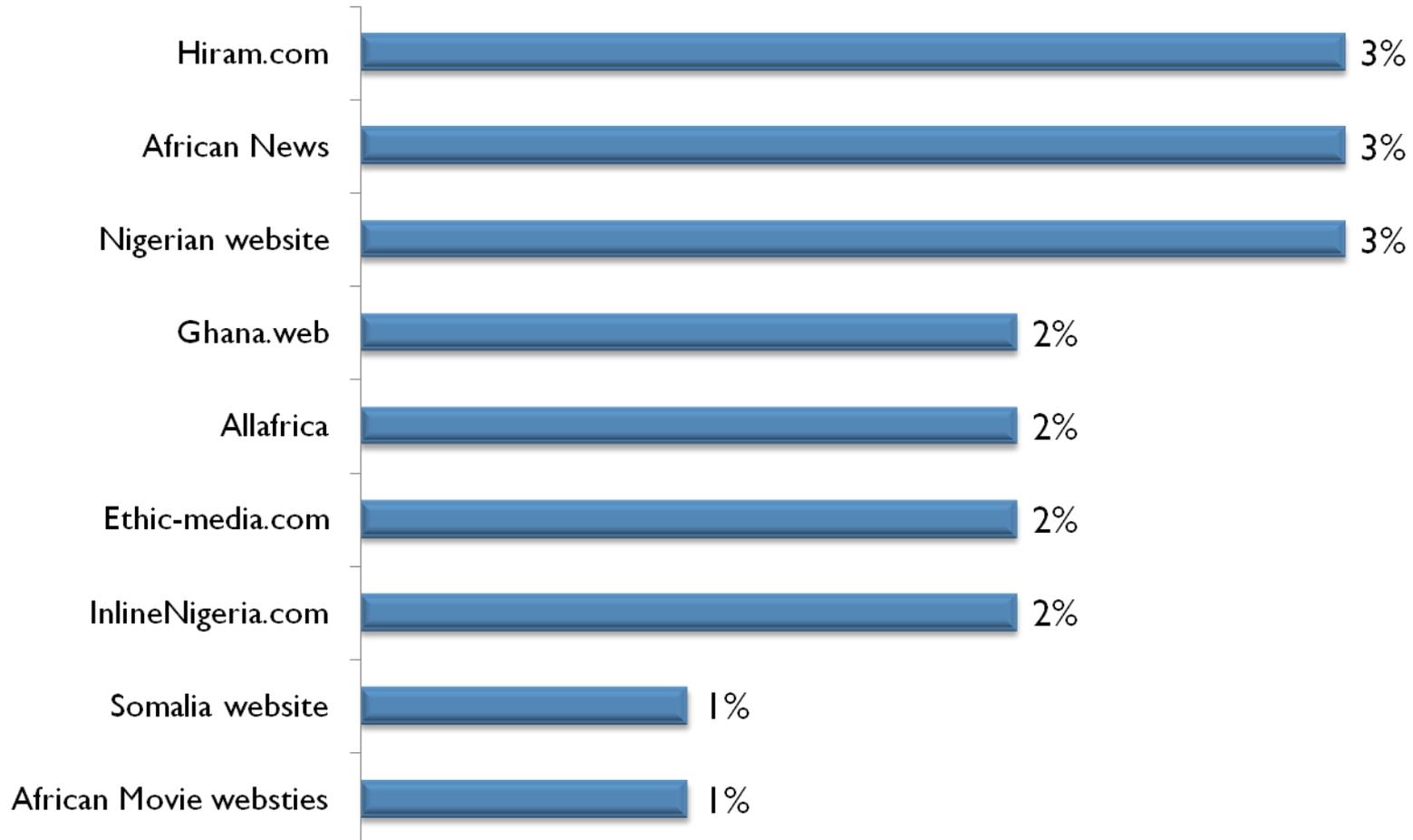
(All Respondents)

As well as their favorite English-language websites. Yahoo and Facebook top the list.



Top Favorite African-language Websites (All Respondents)

...and favorite African-language websites.





Key Learnings

Priorities

- **African Immigrants are ambitious and hard working**
 - Overcame extreme challenges
 - Two jobs to get ahead
 - Focus on owning a home
- **Family is a key priority**
 - Keeping families together
 - Some fault American and African American families for losing this value
 - Respect for parents and elders
- **Education is another top priority**
 - Many immigrated for educational opportunities
 - Commitment for all family members

Priorities

- **Education leads to workplace success**
 - Belief that their education, skills and talent are valued at work
- **Focus on Community**
 - Need to send money to relatives at home
 - Need to give back also on a larger scale
 - Helping the community equates to success

Values & Identity

- **African Immigrants consider themselves African**
 - Not American, not African American
 - Although when they return to Africa, many realize how American they have become
- **Stay in touch with their culture**
 - Maintain connections to family and friends in native country
 - Maintain native traditions, including food, music and entertainment
- **Africans are a unique demographic segment in the U.S.**
 - Half agree they are separate and uniquely different from African Americans

Shopping Behavior

- **Some look for brand names, all look for advice**
 - Research and recommendations influence purchases
 - However, many also indicated that they shop around for the right products at the right price points
- **Religion plays a role in decision-making**
 - Approximately half the respondents prefer African food and products that agree with their religious values
- **Type of shop visited varies by market**
 - Supermarkets are the preferred venues for food shopping while discount stores lead the way for clothing purchases
 - However, D.C. shoppers are the discount shoppers while those from Minneapolis prefer low-end department stores and L.A. shoppers prefer high-end department stores

Lifestyle

- **Africans are interested in learning about financial planning and investing**
 - They feel they are behind and need to catch up
 - The preferred way to learn is to research it online and via word of mouth
 - Key topics to brush up on include personal investing and credit
- **Africans tend to own many electronic gadgets**
 - Most own a personal computer, DVD player and cell phone

Media Consumption

- **African immigrant media consumption tends to focus on international content in English**
 - International news – CNN, BBC, NPR Al Jazeera and others
 - Considerable amount of time spent on English-media partially due to availability of in-language media
- **Africans are disappointed with the representation of themselves in the U.S. media**
 - Looking for depictions of real people not tribesmen, AIDs sufferers, militants, or those starving or poor
 - Focus on the “other” story of their homelands



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