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Immigrant Parents Perceptions on Parenting

Awahnde Ngwa Eugene

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Laurea University of Applied Sciences
Laurea Otaniemi

Immigrant parents perceptions on parenting

Awahnde N. Eugene
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Awahnde Ngwa Eugene

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The purpose of this thesis was to find out how immigrant parents in Finland view parenting and parenting practices. The aim was for them to describe what they understood as parenting and to examine if their perspective is in line with the Finnish norms on parental issues.

The method of data collection was based on qualitative research approach, which used interviewing. 6 immigrant parents were interviewed and the interview data was analyzed through the method of content analysis to obtain the answers to the questions: How would you describe parenting and parenting practices? How would you compare parenting a child in your home country and Finland?

The findings of this thesis identified twelve sub categories, which after intensive review were later categorized into three main categories. The findings showed that immigrant parents are not satisfied with the Finnish laws and norms of parenting. They were totally against disrespect for elders and the Finnish child protection role of the best interest of the child. To them, most children at a tender age do not even know what is best for them and thus need to be discipline.

The study however concluded that, though most immigrant parents dislike some core aspect of the Finnish parenting habits, there were still some good endeavors from the government in enhancing good childhood. Hence, children raised in Finland are well placed to have a stress-free and brighter future, than their counterpart in Africa and Asia.

Keywords: Parenting, Immigrant Parents.

Awahnde Ngwa Eugene

Maahanmuuttaja vanhempien käsitys vanhemmuudesta

Vuosi 2011

Sivuja 38

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli selvittää, minkälaisia käsityksiä Suomessa asuvilla maahanmuuttajavanhemmilla on vanhemmuudesta ja sen käytännön toteutuksesta. Tarkoituksena oli, että he kuvaisivat miten he ymmärtävät vanhemmuuden ja verrata näkemystään suomalaiseen vanhemmuuteen. Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytettiin haastattelua. Haastattelin kuusi maahanmuuttajavanhempaa ja analysoin haastatteluvastausten sisällön. Haastattelukysymyksenä kysyin; Miten kuvailisit vanhemmuutta ja vanhemmuuden käytäntöjä? Ja miten vertaisit vanhemmuutta kotimaassasi ja Suomessa.

Työn tulokset ovat jaettu 12 alakategoriaan, jotka voidaan jakaa kolmeen pääryhmään. Tutkimustulokset osoittivat, että maahanmuuttaja vanhemmat eivät ole tyytyväisiä Suomen lakeihin ja normeihin vanhemmuudesta. He vastustivat vanhempien epäkunnioitusta ja suomalaisen lastensuojelun asemaa lasten edun puolesta. Heidän mielestään monikaan lapsi ei herkässä iässä edes tiedä mikä heille on parasta ja tarvitsevat kurinalaisuutta.

Tutkimustulokset kuitenkin osoittivat, että vaikka suurin osa maahanmuuttaja vanhemmista eivät pidä suomalaisista vanhemmuuden tavoista, Suomen hallituksella on hyviä pyrkimyksiä turvata hyvä lapsuus. Näin ollen Suomessa lapsilla on mahdollisuus stressittömämpään ja valoisampaan tulevaisuuteen kuin muualla maailmassa.

Avainsanat: Vanhemmuus, Maahanmuuttaja Vanhempien.

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1 Introduction

The outburst of global integration has ushered a new era in the lives of mankind. Many people have been forced to abandon their homes, cultures, personal values and ways of life in search of opportunities and new experiences. In the course of this venture, most immigrants are left wondering on how to blend their new found settings, laws, and culture, to those which they have been taught and raised with. Starting a new life with a whole new log of laws and principles guiding how you should operate has never been that easy for immigrants. This has also affected the way most of them parent and raise their children. However, some have remained adamant to their values and cultural norms, and will do anything to protect them.

Parenting is a complex and intriguing process that varies from one society to another. According to Yoder Esther et al, (2010, 4), the culture you live in and the values you hold will be crucial in helping you determine what constitutes good parenting. There is simply no one model of parenting that works equally well for all children everywhere. In Finland for example, children interest and opinion are to be heard in all matters concerning them. All forms of abuse are not allowed, thus it is forbidden to beat a child (Child welfare act, 2007). Whereas in a study conducted in Kenya, physical abuse on children in the form of beating both in families and institution of learning such as schools are seen as an acceptable way of disciplining children. The study was conducted in 1994, with a large proportion of respondents (62 percent) who considered physical punishment as necessary if used for disciplinary purposes. Only 28 percent of respondents felt that physical punishment was a poor method of disciplining children (Schwartz-Kenney, Beth M.; McCauley, Michelle A.; Epstein, Michelle A. 2000, 121).

In recent years, there have been more awareness and general outcry amongst scholars, non-governmental (NGO), and child protection workers on the ratio of violence that occurred at homes against children. That is why in 2001, the United Nations General Assembly asked the UN Secretary General to conduct a global study on violence against children. The final report, released in 2007, demonstrates that violence in the home is a common and serious problem worldwide. In the United States and Canada, for example, the family is the primary setting for violence for children, and parents are most frequently its perpetrators (Covell, Katherine; Howe, Brian R, 2008, 65-80). In direct contravention of the United Nation Convention, children experience physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect in the home.

The most well-known researched parenting styles are those described by Diana Baumrind initially in 1967 and 1971 (Baumrind 1967, 1971). The three styles she described, authoritative, authorita

rian, and permissive, vary in their combination of demanding and responsive parental behaviors. These parenting styles greatly influence children behavior and outcome. The authoritative or democratic, as it has been called, is the one that is most consistent with the Convention. It is the only style of parenting that is consistent with the Convention's principle of best interest and participation.

The aim of this Bachelor thesis was to find out how immigrant parents view the concept of parenting, and how it affects the way they raise their children. This will be gotten from their description or views of the concept of parenting, and in contrast with their home country. The study also aimed at providing deeper insight into different cultural phenomena, through the interviews and questionnaires. This in turn will help social workers understand why some immigrant parents react differently with their children, and also help parents understand the law. The method for data gathering will be semi-structured interview, where room for detailed revelation of facts will be explored.

Research on this topic is limited. However, with a lot of new families moving into Finland, coupled with the birth of new born babies to immigrant parents, it is imperative that some research be conducted to examine what the future holds both for the society and the immigrant families.

In regard to confidentiality issues binding some organization and their practices, the identity of the organization and her clients helping in this research process will be withheld.

2 Parenting

Rearing children is perhaps the most exciting and challenging activity of adulthood. According to Deater-Deckard, Kirby (2004, 41-43) the transition to parenthood can be joyful, exciting, and stressful. The child arrives and is dependent on parents for survival and well-being. The infant, and later the child or adolescent, presents an ever changing bundle of demands for attention and care. These demands and their dynamic nature can result in stress for the parent. In addition, the sense of responsibility (to the child, to the family, and to the larger community) that accompanies parenthood is itself a source of stress for some. Further, Deater-Deckard noted that being a parent thrusts you into a new world of great responsibility, many challenges, and fantastic potential for personal growth. Whether or not it is true that parenthood makes us "grow up," there is no doubt that parenthood brings a mixture of rewards and difficulties that are at times extraordinary. For some, parenthood is a rocky road that involves concerns about their children,

changes in relationships with partners, and declines and improvements in physical and mental health that affect functioning at home and at work.

The challenge of parenting then is to relate to children in ways that stimulate their potentialities for growth and provide appropriate opportunities for experiences that develop these potentialities.

The relationship between parent and child is special, complex, and unique to each parent-child pair (Jane B. Brooks 2010). Yet many factors influence the ways in which this highly personal, private relationship develops. A parent brings to the relationship all his or her experiences as a child and an adult as well as hopes and expectations for satisfaction in the relationship. The child, even when only hours old bring to the relationship inborn characteristics, ways of reacting to the world, that will mold interaction with parents. The parent-child relationship is embedded in a specific family with other members of different ages, and the family lives in a social and cultural milieu that in turn exerts an influence on the family.

As noted by Yoder Esther et al (2010, 4), Parenting is a complex and intrigue process that varies from one society to another. They sighted that most parents only try to replicate what has been handed down to them by their own parents as parenting norms or styles. While others try hard to maintain societal recognition of what is consider good parenting practices. For example in a study conducted in Kenya, physical abuse on children in the form of beating both in families and institution of learning such as schools are seen as an acceptable way of disciplining children. The study was conducted in 1994, with a large proportion of respondents (62 percent) considered physical punishment as necessary if used for disciplinary purposes. Only 28 percent of respondents felt that physical punishment was a poor method of disciplining children (Schwartz-Kenney, Beth M.; McCauley, Michelle A.; Epstein, Michelle A. 2000, 121). Where as, in Finland it is forbidden to beat a child.

In Finland, physical disciplinary action on children, e.g. hitting a child or pulling by hair, is forbidden by law. The purpose of the care and custody of a child is to ensure balanced development and well-being for the child in accordance with his/her individual needs and wishes. This should ensure positive and close relationships, especially between the child and his/her parents. The child should be guaranteed good care and upbringing as well as the supervision and support that correspond to the child's age and stage of development. The child should be provided with a safe and stimulating environment and an education that suits the talents and wishes of the child. The child should be brought up with understanding, security and compassion. A child should not be physically punished or otherwise treated in an abusive manner. The child should be supported

and encouraged to reach independence, responsibility and adulthood. (Section 1, Child Custody and Right of Access Act)

Though parenting is understood and interpreted differently in different community, this study will focus on what constitutes positive parenting and negative parenting as acclaim by the united nation charter on the right of the child. The United Nation charter on the right of the child was first launch on November 20th, 1989 and was later ratify on 2nd September, 1990. It has about 194 signatories' member nations as of November 2009, with only the United States and Somalia not yet members. The aimed of the CRC amongst others is to protect all children under the age of 18 from any sort of abuse or torture. To ensure that children opinion should be heard in all matters concerning them, and it should be geared towards protecting their best interest (www.unicef.com). Finland, a signatory to this treating; have allocated resources to help protect the rights of all children living within its territory.

2.1 Positive Parenting Practices

Positive parenting comprises high levels of warmth, acceptance, and socialization through inductive reasoning and modeling of desired behaviors, and the promotion of autonomy through the systematic provision of age-appropriate choices. Positive parenting is consistent with the Convention on the right of the children and demonstrates the best interests of every child. Positive parenting has been identified as a major protective factor for children being raised in difficult circumstances such as with low-income single mothers in poor inner-city neighborhoods (Jackson et al. 2000; Koblinsky, Kovalanka and Randolph 2006; McGroder 2000). Children that have experienced parental support, warmth, and positive socialization strategies, they show greater social competence, social maturity, school performance, and, importantly, significantly fewer behavior problems than do their less positively parented peers (Jackson et al. 2000; koblinsky, kovalanka and Randolph 2006). Positive parenting has also been suggested to moderate the influence of impaired fetal brain development on the development of behavior disorders (Morrell and Murray 2003).

The above statement is vital for this research. For example in article 12 of the united nation charter of the right of the child, which seeks to protect and respect the views of the child; adults are advice to often seek the opinion of children before making decision concerning them. This does not in any way give children authority over their parents; neither does it interfere with parents' right and responsibility to express their views on matter affecting their children. The convention also did acknowledge that the level of children participation will definitely vary from one child to the other with regards to age and other developments. Whereas article 19th strongly

echo the need for protection from all forms of violence, ranging from hurt, mistreatment, physically and mentally. The convention also acknowledges that children need to be discipline whenever the goes wrong, but it should not be in any way through violent method (UNICEF). In Finland, it is the duty of the society at large and specifically the social welfare sector to support parents and children in their effort to seek the best interest of the child (www.finlex.fi).

Considerable evidence supports the existence of the three types of parenting and their link to child outcomes. Our focus here is on Authoritative or Democratic parenting, as it is the one with positive outcomes. According to Nadia Sorkhabi (2005) Authoritative or Democratic parents exercise firm control of the child's behavior but also emphasize the independence and individuality in the child. Although the parents have a clear notion of present and future standards of behavior for the child, they are rational, flexible, and attentive to the needs and preferences of the child. They are open to communications. They balance what they offered with what they demanded. They balance high control with high independence-granting, high standards for maturity with much support and nurturance. Their children are self-reliant, self-confident, and explore their worlds with excitement and pleasure.

This view was supported by Stanley Coopersmith study on the development of self-esteem. Coopersmith describe families with high self-esteem as vigorous, active, and contentious than families with low self-esteem. Rather than being a paradigm of tranquility, harmony and open mindedness, we find that the high self-esteem family is notable for the high level of activity of individual members, strong-minded parents dealing with independent, assertive children, stricter enforcement of more stringent demands, and greater possibilities for open dissent and disagreement. Furthermore, studies of families rearing competent children have found that members care about each other; they reach out to each other, and reach out with the expectation that interaction will be positive. They love and respect each other, but they all are individuals and are free to be open and honest. Parents respect each other as individuals and present models of leadership to children. Powers structure is clear, but parents negotiate problems when they arise. (Jane B. Brooks 2010).

Positive Parenting is achieved when parents have as their primary tasks to create an atmosphere of psychological safety. When this is done, children can then build trust which will usher a relax environment for positive growth. Children must be able to rely on their parents to meet their needs and to be open and honest with them. Parents have as their responsibility to cherish and accepting their kids for whom they really are, by appreciating their special qualities. Parents cherish children when they respect them as individuals, when they focus on the child's assets

rather than on shortcomings. Democratic family living provides an encouraging atmosphere in which the needs of children and parents are given equal respect and consideration. Everyone, however, has responsibilities as well. Parents provide food, shelter, clothes, and recreation for children. Children, in turn, most contribute to family functioning by doing chores and errands (Jane B. Brooks 2010). In Finland, the child is entitled to a secure and stimulating growing environment and to a harmonious and balance development, which by definition is a model for positive parenting and it is in line with the united nation charter norms on the right of the child (Child Welfare act, section 1).

In adolescence, compared with those raised by authoritarian or permissive parents, children of democratic parents show more prosocial peer group selection, greater self-control, less risk-taking, good conflict resolution abilities, and very low levels of interpersonal conflict or violence (Covell and Howe 2001a).

2.2 Negative Parenting Practices

It is firmly believes that the outcome of most adults is rooted in their upbringing and societies. Poor parenting practices consistently have been identified as a risk factor for the development of aggressive antisocial behavior (Arthur 2005; Bosmans et al. 2006; Casas et al. 2006; Roelofs et al. 2006). Poor parenting practices are not only seen in abuse and neglect. They are seen also in parental hostility and rejection, inconsistency and lack of involvement, and in the use of excess control and discipline. There is a large body of data demonstrating that children who experience poor parenting, who feel rejected, have punitive parents, experience corporal punishment, and are under-socialized, are children at risk for early onset life-course persistent behavior problems (e.g. Farrington 1994, 1995; Loeber and Hay 1997; Maccoby 2000; Scott 1998).

Permissive and authoritarian parenting styles, in contrast, consistently have been associated with behavior problems, especially physical aggression, from early childhood to adolescence (McKee et al. 2004). Parents who fail to adequately socialize their children may be unwittingly teaching their children that any behavior is acceptable. When permissive parents ignore the natural tendency of the toddler to be aggressive, when they neither correct the child nor teach him the importance of non-aggressive interactions, they are reinforcing the child's aggressive behaviors and increasing the likelihood that they will continue. Further reinforcement in toddlerhood is provided by the consequences of aggression, which at that age is usually instrumental. Through aggression, the child obtains the toy or treat she wanted. Aggressive interactions then become part of the child's social interactive repertoire. As Casas et al. (2006) cited, studies have found maternal permissiveness to be a major predictor of childhood physical aggression. Nonetheless, au-

thoritarian parenting is the most strongly linked parenting style to early onset life-course persistent behavior problems, and to adult criminal behaviors (Huesmann et al. 2002).

In their study of relational and physical aggression, Juan Casas and his colleagues (Casas et al. 2006) explain the links between parenting style and childhood aggression. Relational and physical aggressions are distinguished by the type of harm they incur. Physical aggression does harm through actual or threatened physical harm; it includes pushing, hitting, or threatening to beat up another child. Relational aggression does harm by damaging a relationship; it includes social exclusion and rumor-spreading. Typically, physical aggression is seen more often in boys, and relational aggression is seen more often in girls. However, both are seen most frequently among children with authoritarian parents.

Authoritarian parents, through their use of power-assertive discipline techniques are teaching the acceptability of aggression, especially as an effective means of resolving interpersonal conflict. In addition, the hostility and psychological control that are part of authoritarian parenting are teaching relational aggression. Essentially, Casas and his colleagues (2006) are suggesting that children are generalizing to other relationships what they have learned from their parents— power assertion and psychological control are appropriate and effective interpersonal strategies. Their own study of preschoolers confirms their suggestion. Two dimensions of authoritarian parenting seem to be particularly associated with aggression in children: parental rejection and parental hostility. Underlying authoritarian parenting, with its lack of warmth and support, and its demands for the child to adhere to some absolute standard, is a fundamental rejection of the individual child. Parental rejection is a major predictor not only of aggressive behaviors, but also of their severity (Roelofs et al. 2006; Rohner and Britner 2002).

In contrast, parental acceptance is associated with prosocial behavior and positive peer relationships (Rohner and Britner 2002). The power of parental rejection has been demonstrated very clearly in the work of Ronald Rohner and his colleagues at the Center for the Study of Parental Acceptance and Rejection at the University of Connecticut. Their work indicates that parental rejection plays a major role in the development of various behavior problems including clinically significant conduct disorder and juvenile offending. Their review of studies in various countries implicates parental rejection as the key precursor to behavior problems such as non-compliance, hostility, aggression, and cruelty, across a range of cultures. They cite empirical evidence from the following countries: Bahrain, China, Croatia, England, Finland, India, Japan, Norway, Pakistan, and the United States. And within the United States, evidence for a link between parental

rejection and behavior problems is provided for various ethnocultural subgroups including African-Americans, Chinese Americans, European Americans, and Hispanic Americans.

The robustness of findings is reinforced by the consistency of psychological control that are part of authoritarian parenting are teaching relational aggression. And within the United States, evidence for a link between parental rejection and behavior problems is provided for various ethnocultural subgroups including African-Americans, Chinese Americans, European Americans, and Hispanic Americans. The robustness of findings is reinforced by the consistency of an unmet need for parental acceptances are hostility, aggression, low self-esteem, and a negative world-view (Khaleque and Rohner 2002).

3 Immigrant Parent

The term immigrant refers to refugees, migrants, repatriates and other foreigners living in Finland. Immigrants are entitled to services and social benefits that help them cope in a new environment. The obligations and rights differ depending on whether the immigrant comes from the EU, European Economic Area or some other country. The aim of these services is to familiarize immigrants with life in Finland and give them the knowledge and skills they need in order to cope. The employment offices provide help in issues related to work and the workplace. The employment offices also provide employer services at www.mol.fi. www.suomi.fi. The equal opportunities of immigrants in Finnish society have been promoted by the introduction of the Integration Act, which entered force as of 1 May 1999. Immigrants can draw up an integration plan together with the municipality and employment office. The integration plan is drafted for three years at most. The plan includes, for example, how the immigrant is to acquire knowledge of Finnish or Swedish or gather basic information on Finnish society. The integration plan aims to facilitate the immigrant's integration into Finland (www.mol.fi).

Immigrants are entitled to residence-based social security immediately following their entry if their purpose is to establish a permanent residence in Finland, and if, in addition, they have a residence permit for one year. Moving to Finland is considered permanent if a person moves to Finland as a returning migrant, refugee or an asylum seeker who has been granted a residence permit valid for at least 12 months. Permanent residence status is also granted if a person comes to Finland for family reasons or has a regular job in Finland that lasts at least two years. The requirement is that the immigrant actually lives in Finland. Those who visit Finland for a short period of time are not considered as permanently residing in Finland. Students who study in Finland are not regarded as residents, which mean they are not entitled to social security benefits from the Finnish Social Insurance Institution (KELA).

The settling of immigrants in Finnish society is facilitated and assisted in many ways. There are 446 municipalities in Finland. Everyone who moves to Finland with the purpose of establishing a permanent residence becomes a resident of some municipality. A municipality is an area comprising one or more villages, which are in charge of public issues. Towns are also municipalities. All residents in the municipality have approximately the same rights and obligations. In many towns there is an international meeting place where the immigrants and Finns can meet each other, share their experiences and take up some hobby.

The past twenty years have seen great influx in the Finnish population. Her memberships into organizations like the European Union and Schengen, couple with globalization has paved the way for increase mobility. Finland is now more of a receiving country than a departing point. According to a report from statistic Finland, the number of people who moved from Finland last year 2009 stand at 12 151 as to 26 699 who moved into the country. Thereby giving a net immigration at 14 548. As the number of immigrants' increases, so to is the number of children born to the families (www.thl.fi). See table 1, p. 15 below on immigrant and emigrant trend for the past 5 years.

Years	Immigration	Emigration	Net Immigration
2005	21 355	12 369	8 986
2006	22 451	12 107	10 344
2007	26 029	12 443	13 586
2008	29 114	13 657	15 457
2009	26 699	12 151	14 548

Table 1. Immigration and Emigration Data (www.thl.fi)

Most often when people migrate, they also go with their values, cultures and ways of life. These norms might be extremely contrasting to that of the receiving countries. This in turn might slow their integration and put them in conflict with authorities. In a recent report release by YLE news agency, the number of children from foreign families that were taken into protective custody last year rose from 174 to 199. Arguments between the parent and children are a typical reason behind most placements. The report obtained from Helsinki city social workers claimed that parents often feel that their child's adoption of Finnish norms is a rejection of their own values (www.yle.fi).

As mentioned earlier, Finland is a member of the united nation charter of the right of the child. The government through the ministry of social and health affair and other agencies try to enforce the treaty of the convention through its practices. For example, through it child welfare act which first came up in 1983 (863/1983); and was amended in 2007, the social welfare authorities are required to take a child into care and provide substitute care for him if the following three conditions are all fulfilled (www.hel.fi/SOSV):

- 1) If the child's health or development is seriously endangered by lack of care or other conditions at home, or if the child seriously endangers his health or development by abuse of intoxicants, by committing an illegal act other than a minor offence, or by any other comparable behavior.

2) If open care measures are not appropriate or have proved to be inadequate.

3) If substitute care is considered to be the best interests of the child.

4 The purpose of the thesis and research questions

The aim of this Bachelor thesis was to describe how immigrants parents view the concept of parenting, and how does it affect the way the raise their children. The study also aimed at providing deeper insight into different cultural phenomenon, through the interviews and questionnaires.

1) How would immigrant parents describe parenting and parenting practices?

2) How would they compare parenting a child in their home country and Finland?

5 The implementation of the study

5.1 Methodological Approach

In conducting this study, qualitative method was use. This method was vital in that it gives the participants enough room through it broad research questions, for them to air out important information about their social situation, cultural pattern and life experiences. Hence, there is going to be opportunity for detail revelation. (James Spradley, 1980). The crucial feature of qualitative research, then, is to 'work up' one's research materials, to search for hidden meanings, non-obvious features, multiple interpretations, implied connotations, unheard voices. While quantitative research is focused on summary characterizations and statistical explanations, qualitative research offers complex descriptions and tries to explicate webs of meaning (Ten Have, Paul. 2004, 5).

While quantitative methods seem to be part of one unitary model of doing research, including standard criteria of adequacy, qualitative research offers a wide variety of methods, aims, approaches; in short, styles (Ten Have, Paul. 2004, 5). Qualitative research is also carry out in a natural settings with informants identify, and hence makes the work lively and enjoyable. Hence, the social and cultural situation can be identify and explore through their stories and not yours (Max Van 1990).

Interview was used as the main tool for this research, as whereas questionnaire for background checks. Interviewing is without doubt the most popular style of doing qualitative research (Ten Have, Paul. 2004, 5). An interview is a flexible research method which offers a lot of freedom to the interviewee to bring up the issues they consider as most meaningful (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 34-35). All research purposes are geared toward receiving information, which often rest on the interviewee hands. Hence, mutual trust is a vital component to interviewing (Eskola and Suoranta, 1998, 93-94). Nevertheless, researcher should always bear in mind that not all the information they get from the interviewer are factual, and at the same time try as much as possible not to put their sentiment into the research (Parahoo 1997).

Since qualitative approach seek to explore how people feels, behave, life experiences, and their cultural values, it was a vital tool to study how immigrant cultural and life experiences can affect the way the raise their child/children.

5.2 Informants

In planning on how to get the informants of this study, emphasis was put on the research questions, methods and the purpose of the study. I initially planned using about 10 immigrant parents. With 6 being couples, while 4 single parents. The reason for this was to find out if the results will be influence by their status or partners presence during the interviews. There were immigrants coming from different countries, and must have lived in Finland for over 5 years. However, when I set out to conduct the interview, I was only able to get 6 respondents, which to me was a good number to go ahead with. They were 4 female and 2 male respondents. The informants' ages range from 33-47. They have all lived in Finland for at least 5 years, and are originally from Nigeria, Sierra Leon, Cameroon, Zambia, Kenya and the Philippines. Hence, they will be recognized in this study by the initials of their countries as N, S, C, Z, K and P. N has a child with age 17. S have three children ages 13, 9, and 6. C has a child age 9. Z has a child age 9. K have two children ages 8 and 6. And P has a child age 7.

During the first stage of the thesis (plan), only the authorities of the institution had been contacted officially to seek their approval to conduct this research. However, there was an official announcement from the authorities to the members giving the researcher the right to interview her members. As such, there was some trusted relationship building between the participants and the researcher during these periods, which help to make the work easier. Nevertheless, I officially sign the inform consent letter with each of them before the interview, so as to be in line with ethical norms of a good research.

5.3 Data Gathering

The choice for data gathering in qualitative research is one of the critical and complicated tasks in research work. As Silverman (2004:64) noted, that it is not to accumulate all data you can, but to “can” (get rid of) most of the data that you accumulate.

Intensive in-depth interview was an instrumental tool for this work. This was done with the aid of a tape recorder, which was then transcript and then analyst. The choice for this method was to give the participants more freedom to air out more information, while at the same time render more time and space for the researcher to examine the informants complex feelings, perceptions, and uncover unanticipated data (Silverman, 2005). Hence, the informant is seen as the experts and teacher, while the researcher the student or learner.

Another reason for chosen this mode of data gathering was because in qualitative interviews, emphasis are on comprehensive rather than on selective listening (Silverman, 2005). Here the focus was to allow the interviewee enough time to tell the whole story in their own language without any interruption or direction from the researcher. To get respondents to voice out their own experiences, interview was seen as the appropriate measure to collect the data in this study. Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant’s experiences. With this technique, the interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic of investigation and this seeks to bring out both factual and meaningful levels of the informants’ experiences (McNamara, 1999). The interviews in this study were based on semi-structured procedure. However, the questions were open-ended thereby giving a flexible pattern of questioning according to how the discussion circulated. By using semi-structured interviews participants were given the possibility to make comments when they needed, and also helped the interviewer to gain more as new questions emerged and further clarification sought from the respondents. Also, the use of semi-structured interview technique gave a good opportunity to the interviewer to respond immediately to what participants say by tailoring subsequent questions to information the participant has provided (Brayton 1997).

Before the interviews, the interviewer had coffee with the interviewee and talked about other issues not so related to our topic, so as to create calm and relax atmosphere good for discussion. With the echo of this off-topic discussion in participants’ mind, they willingly talked about their experiences and what they feel should be done in Finland, during the interviews. Consent letters were given to the informants and that marked the beginning of the interview session. The location for the interview was the church coffee hall. The participants and the researcher unanimously choose and accepted this venue. This was so because we were all familiar with this hall and

moreover wanted a neutral ground which will be conducive for dialogue. A letter of consent is very important because it justifies the purpose of the study to the participants, explains the ethicality and confidentiality of the interviews, and also gives the participants a possibility of deciding as to whether or not to be part of the study (Merton and Kendall, 1990). The participants signed the consent letters and the interviews were conducted. I spend approximately an hour with each interviewee.

5.4 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the context of their use (Krippendorp 2004). Weber (1990) also defines content analysis as a process by which many words of texts are classified into much fewer categories. From the above definition, we can say with certainty that content analysis is a process of summarizing and reporting written data in a more understandable method.

In this study, informants' responses to the interview questions formed the data of this study. Irrespective of the number of informants, the amount of information obtained through focused group interview is usually abundant and although this abundant data does not require complicated statistical techniques of quantitative analysis, it is nonetheless difficult to handle the usually large amounts of data in a thorough, systematic and relevant manner. Data analysis is seen as the suitable way of making a meaning out of texts, especially unstructured information. Analysis of data in this study was aimed to interpret, classify and combine the information gathered during the focus group interviews. Logical interpretation and conclusion has been followed in breaking the research data into smaller themes. Searching for theoretical hypothesis or proving theory is not the focus of data analysis in this study, but rather finding a way to illustrate data to reflect participants' experiences (Marshall and Rossman, 2006).

In this thesis, the interviews were recorded in an audio. Verbal language was also observed and noted down on a diary. After all the interviews were through, the audio was listened several times and transfer into writings. During the process of transferring the data from audio to written form, the exact words of the participants were preserved. When that was done, the next step was to categorize the data. According to Ludico et al. (2006), categorization is a process of identifying different segments of data that describe related phenomena and labeled them using broad category names. In other words, it entails analyzing data and examining many small pieces of information and abstracting a connection between them. This was done and it the researcher came up with three broad categories and two smaller categories, which were then analyze.

6 Findings

The major categories and sub-categories of the findings

The findings of this thesis were achieved through qualitative content analysis based on the immigrant parents' responses and feedback from questionnaires. During the analysis of the data, twelve smaller categories were identified which include, respect for elders, choosing a career, social interaction, dressing, attitude towards violence, money management, school lessons, attitude toward education, sciences and arts, religion, concern for others and discipline. These categories were further integrated into three bigger categories such as culture, education, and beliefs.

CULTURE	EDUCATION	BELIEFS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect for elders - Choosing a career - Social interaction - Dressing - Attitude towards violence - Money management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School lessons - Attitude towards education - Science and Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religion - Concern for others - Discipline

Table 2: Description of the main and sub categories of the findings.

6.1 Culture

6.1.1 Respect for Elders

Three of the respondents were of the opinion that children raised in Finland generally do not have any respect for elderly persons. They feel that in their home countries, respect is a vital component of their cultural heritage, and children are raised with that notion in mind. As such, a child knows that they have to respect any one older than them. Some respondents feel that children raised in Finland are giving much information than they can handle. They think that letting a

child know of their child support is wrong as it makes them become more stubborn, since they know that they are entitled to some allowance every month. As such, the respect for elders is gone, because the kid can demand for his or her allowance at any time.

“Back home if I tell my child something, he listens to me because he knows that I love him and will not talk back at me”(Respondent C).

“I was raised to respect and called all elder persons by putting aunty and uncles before their names... but here, it is different”(Respondent K).

“My kid does not have any respect for me. She said the money I receive from kela is meant for her and I do not need to keep it” (Respondent Z).

“I even remember when I was in Nigeria, working and earning salaries. I was providing to my mother and little ones, but I still could not freely smoke in the present of my mother... all because of respect” (Respondent N).

6.1.2 Career Choice

Most participants said that they are totally against the fact that children in Finland are allowed to make choices on what career part to follow. They believed that children are not supposed to decide on what they want to study or do, since they do not have a broad knowledge and experiences of life. Moreover, some culture demands that girls stay at home and learn cooking and other household chores so as to become good wife in the future.

“How can a child be let to decide what he or she wants to do? What do they know?” (Respondent P).

“Children are not supposed to choose before their parent told them what to do. Girls need to be more at home so as to learn how to prepare food and wash clothes for their children and husband” (Respondent N).

6.1.3 Social Interaction

Some participants said that in Finland, children are raised in very isolated units with very little interaction with other family members. The child is only looked after by the parents, which

makes it harder for the parents especially in the case of a single mother. Sometimes the child is often left much of the time alone of in kindergarten, while the parents go to work. Whereas in their home countries, there are numerous family members and neighbors ready to help with raising the child.

“We do it all by our self because we don’t have family who can help us” (Respondent C).

“In my country we got a lot of help from family member while here in Finland you are all by yourself” (Respondent S).

“In my country, there is much room for interaction” (Respondent K).

“Parents are often very busy and have less time to impact on children upbringing” (Respondent P).

6.1.4 Dressing

Dressing was another sub category that came up from the respondents. They felt that it was wrong for children to be allow to dressed the way the want and do make ups. According to most of them, all dressing have a meaning behind it and when children dress the way they want, they will be expose to a lots of bad things. Moreover, they complained that when children spend much time in doing their make ups, their concentration at school reduces.

“In Finland, children are independence in their choice for what form of dressing they want to have...whereas in my society, there is meaning to everything you put on” (Respondent Z)

“Our value for cultural costume is so special for us and we need to maintain it” (Respondent N)

6.1.5 Attitudes towards Violence

Environment is a key factor to the welfare of children. When children are raised in an environment expose to violence crimes, resentment and hostility, there are great risks that most of those children can grow to become violence and resentment themselves in the future. Most respondents said their children have been exposed to violence, resentment and psychological abuse

in school by their peers which have in turn changed the way their children now behave. Some said that their teen even goes as far as smoking and drinking alcohol with friends.

“When we first move here, my child was so calm and cooperative, but right now he is insulting, violent and even smoke cigarettes still at 12 years” (Respondent P).

“I swear, this environment spoil children a lot. My child is different now our days and she does not listen to anyone. Her companies of friends are too bad” (Respondent S)

6.1.6 Money Management

Different societies have different ideology on how finances should be managed. In many societies, the parents are the sole provided of income and thus make all the decision on what kind of activities their children should get involve with and when. They decide when a child gets what and how. Many parents said that child rearing in their home countries is so difficult if you do not have a job or a good salary. They appreciate the Finnish system where there is some support from the social offices and Kela.

“Finland gives child support to children up to the age of 17year while in my country we don’t have any child support from the government” (Respondent C).

“I really like the Finnish child support system, because it aids me and my family during times of hardship” (Respondent K).

6.2 Education

6.2.1 School Lessons

Some respondents said they like the Finnish educational lessons. They said that it is concise and focus on practicalities. Moreover, it is planned in a way that children, parents and teachers all play active role in the process. In their home countries, there is no cooperation between the schools and teachers. Parents do not care about what goes on in school nor help kids with home assignment.

“In Finland, the system ensuring that the child can learn, communicate and play with all peers excellently” (Respondent C).

“The lessons are so concise and easy for the children to understand” (Respondent P)

6.2.2 Attitude towards Education

Again many interviewees said that after living in Finland for many years, like Finns attitude towards education. They said in their home countries, education is still not giving priority as going to farms and doing agriculture. Many parents will prefer to take their kids to farms with them, rather for them to be educated. Some even believed that going to school is a waste of time, especially for girls.

“I really admired Finns attitude towards education” (Respondent C).

“In Finland, every parent wants their kids to be educated, whereas in my country, many parents still do not want their kids to go to school. They preferred to take them along to cultivate their farms”.

“Different arrangements in day care and health services, which are all excellence” (Respondent K).

6.2.3 Sciences and Arts

Some respondents said Finland is so scientifically ahead as compared to their own countries. According to them, this put children in Finland into a better position in terms of what they learn, through scientific tools like computers, iPods, etc. But at the same time expose them to other delicate issues online like pedophiles. They also said that Finnish kids are better off in term of art works than children from their countries. This is so because most kids start leaning arts and painting from home through their own parents who have been taught about it in school. Then when the kids start going to school, they are also being taught arts and painting, which make them better place than kids from their countries.

“Finns are so good in drawing...you need to see what my child draw” (Respondent S).

“I like the fact that Finnish kids start using computer at an earlier age. This helps them do their school work effectively” (Respondent K).

*“Too much science here has done much harm than good....many kids stay behind computers and start computer dating which makes them so expose to pedophiles”
(Respondent N).*

6.3 Beliefs

6.3.1 Religion

During the interviews, participants said their religious beliefs are so vital in the way they raised their children. Some said that if children are raised with the notion that God should be their number one priority in life, then they will be disciplined and have respect for others. They think that knowing God should be as important in children's upbringing as eating and clothing. Children need to have that at the back of their mind and it should be on that principle that they operate. And if that is properly accomplished, then there will be lots of love in the family, community and the world as a whole.

“Children need to be raised with the fear of God in their mind” (Respondent Z).

“If we all guide our children towards God and the church, then we are sure of a better and safer world to live in” (Respondent P).

6.3.2 Concern for Others

Most respondents said that concern for others is one of those areas that make them feel at times of crying. That in their countries of origin, there is love and concern for others. Some even said that some time they can go for days without their parents, but are sure of good care and food coming from neighbors. Their belief and concern for one another is rooted from their values for family. They think that parenting is very tedious if left alone for a single hand, or person.

*“A child is considered in my home as yours only when the child is in the womb”
(Respondent N).*

“We were taught to live together as a family; so that when a problem comes we fight together as family” (Respondent Z).

“I even remember when I was 7 years old and my parents travel out for two weeks. I was clothed, fed and taken to school by some of our neighbors” (Respondent C).

6.3.3 Discipline

Many immigrant parents felt that it is their duty to bring up their child to be good citizen. And emphasizes that this goal can only be achieved if the child is properly discipline. Then he or she can understand the gravity of what they did wrong. They do not belief in 5 minutes time out as a good solution, because some kids will sit the time out but will fail to get the message. Some even said that their kids when send on time out even takes it as a provocation to them carefully relaxing during time out. Hence, they do not feel it is a good way to discipline a child. Some even feel that the system, laws and authorities are to be blame for their children deliberate stubbornness.

“Very different methods of maintaining order and discipline...what is 5 minutes time out for a stubborn kid” (Respondent N).

“Children in Finland try to always test their parents’ ability. They are deliberately stubborn and will rush to the authorities should in case you try to discipline them” (Respondent C).

“Charity begins at home. In my view, children have to be discipline from when they are born. I was brought up that way. The things you will teach them at this age is what they will know when they are grown up” (Respondent P).

“We should be left to bring up our children the way we feel best. I was discipline and taught how to prepare breakfast for myself and my little sister when I was just 8 years. But my son is 9 and he can not do anything” (Respondent Z).

7 Discussion

7.1 Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues are vital aspect to consider when conducting a research. Researchers need to recognize and appreciate their own reality, basic attributes, ideological assumptions, position of power, and be subjective as much as possible (Zina O’Leary’s, 2004). That is to say, we have to take into account how our position as researchers and our views of the world can influence the outcome of the research. With this knowledge in mine, this research was planned, conducted and implemented with no bias of any sort. I accomplished the ethical principles of beneficence, autonomy and justice by doing no harm to the participants. The researcher maximized the benefits

of this study to the participants. Justice principle of this research is ensured as the researcher maintained privacy and used fair procedures in the selection of informants for this study.

Ethical consideration is part and parcel to the research topic and to the process of research planning. Ethics of research is about creating mutual respect between the interviewer and the interviewees. Kumar (2005) states that, there are many stakeholders involved in a research activity. These include the researcher, the subject, participants and the funding body. Each of these stakeholders might have different interests, purposes, perspectives and motivations that could affect the outcome of the research. As a result of this, it will be of the best interest of all if the research does not harm any party nor the results influenced by any of those parties. According to Kumar (2005), it is unethical to share information about a respondent with others for purposes other than research. It is in the same vein also unethical to identify an individual respondent.

Furthermore, informed consent has already been put in place in this work. The participants are all intellectually capable and psychologically mature to understand the nature of the research and their role of involvement (Zina O'Leary's, 2004). In view of this, they are all educated adults and parents, with full autonomy of self-determination and self-directedness in what they will be giving as information to this work. Thus, they have the legal rights to discontinue at any time that they feel uncomfortable with the process.

7.2 Trustworthiness

While carrying out the interviews, the participants were informed about the aims of the study that is for research purposes and not for general public use. It was therefore important for the researcher to understand the importance of keeping any information he gathered from them and using it for the intended use.

Confidentiality is an important aspect in maintaining trustworthiness between the researcher and the informant. This is observed by protecting the anonymity of the participants if they do not wish to be identified by the public. (Cohen et al, 2007) states that subjects of research are considered anonymous if the other person cannot identify or recognize the subject in the information given.

Credibility refers to the confidence in the truth of the data. The researcher has to engage in the culture of study for a prolonged time, to make it more likely that the data will be credible and valid (Polit et al. 1995). Transferability refers to the generalization of the data, but since qualitative data is bedded in describing a phenomenon rather than generalizing data to another setting

or group. I met this criterion by providing a detail description. Dependability enables someone else to logically follow the process and procedures that the researcher has used in the study. Hence, I can tell with certainty that this study is truthful and trustworthy.

7.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study showed that immigrant parents are not that please with parenting practices and child welfare laws in Finland. Though there were some aspects of the Finnish parenting practices that they all admired, they will still choose their home country methods in bringing up children. This thesis showed that immigrant parents are in deep crisis trying to integrate what their culture and system approve as good parenting practices, from what is legally accepted in Finland. Disciplining of children was one of those area they differ with the Finnish system on when, how and methods of administering it. They feel that there are inconsistencies with the rules. They also earmark on the need for proper discipline such as sparking without any marks being set, so as help correct difficult children and lead them to better adult full of love and respect.

If the united nation charter on the right of the child was to be applied in this study, then I will say that this immigrant parents have every reason to their claim for harder discipline without hurting the child. This is so because article 9 of the convention also acknowledges that children need to be discipline when ever the goes wrong, but it should not be in any way through violent method (UNICEF).

As saw in the study, in some culture parents are entirely responsible for their children day to day wellbeing. They pay for everything that the child gets for survival. From food, shelter, clothes, education etc without any assistance from anyone neither local authorities. Whereas in Finland, there is child support from Kela from the day the child is born until he or she turn 18 years. Moreover, in Finland household without enough income to support the family is being subsidized to ease their day to day running of the family, thereby making it almost stress free to the family. Hence, children born here in Finland are better financially, which in turn usher them better environment for studies.

In the interview, the informants disclosed that those in authorities are to be blame for most children poor behavior. They said that children in Finland have been spoiled by the authorities with the issue of rights. That trying to correct your child for doing something wrong, means inviting the authorities. To them it is wrong for a child to call the police or any other authorities to

complain about their parents. Further, it is even wrong for the school teachers to often interrogate their children on what is going on at home between them and their parents. That this only go to create friction and create a very horrify impression on the mine of the child, who always seek to know what might happen next if he or her say this or that. These parents' feels that the best interest of the child can only be achieved if there is better communication between the teachers, police, social welfare agents and the parents and not with the kids.

Respect for an elder was one of the numerous issues that came up. We all need to show respect to those persons that are some years older than us in every sector of life. This is a very common problem in Finland that has eaten up almost every child today. Children today do not have respect for their parents, let alone their teachers or others. That is why most of the seats reserved for the elderly, handicaps and pregnant women in our buses are often full and fewer younger persons will even care to wake up and offer that seat when an elderly person get in. There question that we should all be concern about and asking ourselves is, what kind of future are will preparing for this children in some years to come. And are they going to be able to maintain our society or destroy it completely. Let's take into account the recent trend of school shootings and with the advert of modern technology.

The outcome of this work though was not all that negative, as there were some positive aspects of Finnish parenting practices which were very much love by many respondents. That shows some amount of maturity within the participants, in trying to appreciate and copy some good aspect of the Finnish culture and practices in term of raising a child. Most of the informants were in love with the idea that in Finland education is a priority to everyone. It was so amazing to them to see a system where every parent wants their children to go to school. Where parents do assist kids in the evening with their school works, instead of keeping them home or taking them to farm as it is the case in their homes of origin. They were also in admiration of the rate of computer literacy in Finland. It is so surprising to them to see children of 7 years old operate computer and even using it safely without destroying it.

This study also highlighted difficulties in getting appropriate knowledge on what is define as the best interest of the child. Most parents complain that Finnish language is so difficult for them and as such they do not really understand what the system and culture permits as good parenting practices. They would have like to see more materials on family and children in English so that they can easily find them and know where the limit to their action is. Some parents will even love to visits family and children counselors, but have difficulties locating them. This can probably explain why there were some miss understanding of facts about Finnish laws concerning pa-

renting. For example, some parents did complaint about their kids requesting a full explanation of the child support benefits pay to them by Kela. According to these parents, they feel that the system has led them down by telling these kids to get this money; whereas it's not the case. As parents, they are supposed to control the usage of this money for the benefits of the household.

Since there were no definite methods lay down as a model on how to raise a child, this study did focuses on positive parenting practices as acclaim by the united nation charter of the right of the child; which many nations are believed to be a signatory to, as the back drop to this work. According to Jane B. Brooks (2010), Positive Parenting is achieved when parents have as their primary tasks to create an atmosphere of psychological safety. Parents have as their responsibility to cherish and accepting their kids for whom they really are, by appreciating their special qualities. Parents cherish children when they respect them as individuals, when they focus on the child's assets rather than on shortcomings. Democratic family living provides an encouraging atmosphere in which the needs of children and parents are given equal respect and consideration. Everyone, however, has responsibilities as well. Parents provide food, shelter, clothes, and recreation for children. Children, in turn, must contribute to family functioning by doing chores and errands. This type of cooperation between parents and children is what is described as the best interest of the child.

The aim of this study to get information about immigrant parents' perception on parenting has been achieved. It was a perfect idea to go for interviews rather than questionnaires, because many respondents hate to write. Further, I never had the opportunity to interview any couple as it was my planned. Maybe I could have gotten a slight different response from couples, being interview at the same time.

7.4 Future Suggestion

Because of the findings of this study, and due to recent influx of immigrants to Finland with children, I will recommend change in curriculum that encompass studies of Finnish parental practices and a placement in at least one immigrant center. This will help enrich future students with vital knowledge that can be past down to immigrant families.

Another student or group of students can also study immigrants' children perspectives of parenting with goals gear toward finding out if all at home is equal to their counterpart who are Finns. And if their parents have actually properly integrated into the Finnish society or still need some resources. They should interview immigrant children that are already over 20 years and should be

vest with the subject matter. This immigrants need to feel inclusive before they could understand the culture.

Further, Europeans immigrants could also be targeted groups in the next studies. Their experiences and believe about parenting might be different from those of the African nations and Asian that were studied. This can also be compare to the findings of this studies and the child welfare legislation in Finland.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Background Questionnaire.

AGE: _____

Nationality: _____

Years spend in Finland _____

Status: Married _____ Single _____ Divorce _____ Cohabiting _____

Status: Working _____ Studying _____ Unemployed _____ Retired _____

If working, occupation: _____

Self evaluation of the level of integration: High _____ Average _____ Low _____

Number of child/children: _____

Where was he/she born? _____

Ages and sex of Children: _____

What are some of the challenges you faced raising your child/children in Finland?

How does raising your child/children here differ from that of your home country?

Appendix 2 Consent Form

15th.02.2011

Consent Form

The Purpose and aim of this study is to find out and describe immigrant parents' perception on parenting. This study is a thesis work, and as such I am depending on your co-operation for it successful outcome.

I hereby wish to solicit your help in the form of an interview. In this process, I will use an audio recorded to record all our conversation which I will then listen to it several time before analyzing it. This data will be stored and use only for this thesis work, and will be destroyed immediately after my work is finish.

As part of the procedure, your identity before and after the interview will be kept confidential, as whereas everything that you will say during the interview. Furthermore, you are free to withdraw and terminate your participation at anytime.

Thank you for your participation;
Awahnde Ngwa Eugene
Ngwa.awahnde@laurea.fi

Tel: 0468908280

Participant's name:

Signature:

Appendix 3: Examples of how the categories were identify.

Original Quotes	Pattern of conversation	Main category	Sub categories
<p><i>“I was raised to respect and called all elder persons by putting aunty and uncles before their names... but here, it is different” (Respondent K.)</i></p> <p><i>“My kid does not have any respect for me. She said the money I receive from kela is meant for her and I do not need to keep it” (Respondent Z).</i></p>	<p>...raised to respect and called all elder persons by putting...</p> <p>...my kid does not have any respect for me...</p>	<p>Culture</p>	<p>Respect for elders</p>
<p><i>“I even remember when I was in Nigeria, working and earning salaries. I was providing to my mother and little ones, but I still could not freely smoke in the present of my mother... all because of respect” (Respondent N).</i></p>	<p>...all because of respect.</p>	<p>Culture</p>	<p>Respect for elders</p>