Parenting Challenges and Adaptation Strategies:
The Case of Cameroonian Immigrant Parents in Germany.

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Abstract

This pivotal research examines in-depth the experiences of Cameroonian immigrant parents raising their children in Germany, their challenges and adaptability. It also investigates the resources these parents lack or possess in effectively raising their children and make some recommendations. The study paid particular interest to the parenting skills of the participants, what skills they possess and what was lacking.

In pursuance of these goals, a qualitative research method was employed for data collection and analysis. Interviews were used to collect primary data from five Cameroonian in Germany selected through snowball and random sampling. The study stipulates the participant to have at least a child born in Germany. The interviews were conducted through face to face and on the telephone. Primary data was analysed through a thematic qualitative analysis and content analysis for published secondary data sources.

Furthermore, the author employed a theoretical framework based on the theory of acculturation and some parenting models to explore the causes of these challenges that immigrant parents from Cameroon face and their coping strategies.

The results of the study identified 12 sub-themes which were analytically grouped into 3 major themes. Deductions from the empirical data affirm that the causes of the parenting challenges are as a result of the cultural incompatibilities that exist between parenting practices in Germany and those practised in Cameroon. According to the findings migration to Germany has influenced the parenting practice of the Cameroonian immigrant parents. Then, the language barrier also poses a major challenge. The author effectively argues that, considering the length of stay of the participants, their process of acculturation and consequently integration on a practical note was lower and higher in some aspects, although in a process of continuous change to conform to the culture of the host country.

Key words: Parenting, Immigrants, Cameroon, Germany and Children
1. Introduction

The emergence of globalisation in all its facets have paved way for individuals to transcend national boundaries. This migration either voluntarily or involuntarily is influenced by a host of factors such as the socio-economic and political prevailing in the destination country known as the pull factors and those in the migrant’s country known as the push factors. According to reports from the International Migration (2015), approximately 3.2 percent of the world’s population lives in a country other than their country of origin and this number has increased dramatically compared to previous decades (UN, 2016) due to the empowering effect of migration. Germany has been the intended destination for most migrants, ranking second in position after the United States. This is due to the socio-economic and political stability it has enjoyed over the years.

This study aims to investigate and explore in depth the parenting challenges faced by Cameroonian immigrant parents in Germany and their adaptation strategies. It will also explore those resources these parents miss which will improve their parenting skills, especially in a new country. My choice of this research was motivated by the fact that, during an internship in Germany with a community-based NGO, it was noticed during one of the projects we executed that the immigrant community had a different approach to parenting. Then, as a Cameroonian and parent, I also observed that we Cameroonians are raising our children differently from our German peers. This is reflected in the child-parent relationship among other issues and deeply connected to our cultural values and beliefs. The cultural background of Cameroonian parents is likely to affect their parenting practices and child-parent relationship. Culture here is defined as “knowledge that is learned and shared and that people use to generate behaviour and interpret experience” (Saldana, 2011). In this light, culture plays a vital role in the development of children, guiding them in socializing, education and other expectations (Nsamenang, 2008).

Correspondingly, one of the greatest challenges of immigrant parents is to raise their children in the host country whose culture and laws are incompatible to those of their home country. This raises the question of how these Cameroonian immigrant parents actually rear their children in the new setting. For instance, in Cameroon where these immigrant parents were raised, there is a hierarchical structure in the family where the parents assume a monopolistic role and control all the decision making processes and even those affecting their children. Once these parents find themselves in an unfamiliar setting (Germany), where the parenting styles are incompatible with the previous, there is a high tendency for some cultural values to clash.
with those of the host country. The German system or culture in all its forms challenges immigrant parents of their patriarchal authority because it differs strictly with the culture in which these parents were raised. This leaves the parents with the negative impression that the German culture ill equips them with the necessary tools to effectively raise their children. This is so true because the German culture promotes the concept of effective parenting which encourages a better child-parent relationship, child independence and self-reliance characterised by a high degree of demandingness and responsiveness. This directly counteracts the classical Cameroonian parenting practices that the immigrant parents bring along in a modern German society. Therefore, in order to effectively raise their children, these Cameroonian immigrant parents are faced with a continuous process of change and adaptation in raising their children in a new environment or cultural setting which conflicts with their classical authoritarian style of parenting which does not align with the demands of the modern German society.

Furthermore, considering the aforementioned objectives of this study, it will also seek to explore the following research questions:

- What are the parenting challenges Cameroonian migrant parents are facing and what are their resiliencies?
- What resources do Cameroonian immigrant parents possess or lack in rendering effective parenting?
- To what extent has migration exerted influence on the parenting practices of these immigrant parents?

Notwithstanding, little or no research has been done which explores the plight of this community in Germany, thus this study will instigate the social workers to understand this segment of the population by identifying their challenges and develop a cooperative mechanism which will mitigate these challenges through better ways to intervene and support their plight. The study will also enhance understanding into the different complex problems Cameroonian immigrant parents face raising their children in a new country with cultures and laws incompatible to those in their home countries. Highlighting these challenges, which is what this study seeks to achieve, will enable the social workers to redesign policies which will ameliorate the parenting skills of Cameroonian parents to match those of their German peers.
2. Concept and Challenges of Migrant Families.

This chapter will explore the theoretical framework for this study. The author employed the acculturation model by John Berry (1997) to examine the challenges and the adaptation strategies of Cameroonian immigrant parents raising their children in a country whose culture and law are incompatible with those of their home country. The acculturation model provides the framework through which the research questions are answered and the objectives of the research attained. The author’s choice of this model is embedded in the conviction that, it better analyses the behaviour of immigrants adapting to a culture/environment different from their previous which includes these Cameroonian immigrant parents in Germany raising their children in a bicultural setting. This chapter will also explore some parenting concepts/models as a theoretical base to better understand the phenomenon under study, also, some literature to highlight the challenges of immigrants families.

2.1 Parenting

Parenting has become one of the most challenging tasks in recent times considering the emergence of the different family structures stemming from the socio-economic and cultural changes, which over time has caused a rise in the number of reconstructed or blended families, single-parent families, partnership and foster families (Dailey, Krause & Pacey, 2009). It is not “a one size fits all” due to the fact that children differ by nature and the practice of parenting differs across societies. Acknowledging to this fact has been Sanagavarapu (2010) citing Wise and Silva (2007) who define parenting as “the values, attitude, practices, discourses and interactions associated with raising children in each cultural group”. Regardless, of the nature of the family structure or cultural group in which a child is raised, Dailey et al. (2009) affirm that the core principles of parenting have been the same across societies. Basically to ensure the physical and psychological well-being of its members most especially the children. They commend that parenthood in itself is not innate, arguing that it is a continuous process of formal and informal learning to become effective at the task throughout the different stages of the child's life and parents should maintain that central role and influence on a child’s life while acting as role models. Morrison (1978) asserts that parenting is the “process of developing and utilizing the knowledge and skills appropriate to planning for, creating, giving birth to rearing and/or providing care for offspring”. From this definition, it can be deduced that parenting is a premeditated act, which is a choice in not just bringing forth a child, but also effectively raising
them and providing for their needs. Thus, it is a lifetime commitment which requires parents to act responsibly and cater for their child/children physical and psychological needs (Chan, n.d).

Halpenny, Nixon and Watson (2010) citing Daly (2007) advocates that parenting though a private affair occurring within the framework of a particular family context, some parenting activities requires support since some families possess additional needs in rearing their children amidst certain adversities. These adversities could be but not limited to premature birth, neonatal distress, physical or mental disabilities which together pose some challenge to the child-parent relationship considering the fact that the child is a key player in this relationship (Moro, 2014). Halpenny et al (2010) further argue that there is no unique model for effective parenting that can be generalized in all societies, but they endorsed a pluralistic approach considering the increasing diversity in modern family structures and experiences. However, the success or failure of any parenting style is embedded in the conviction that it revolves around the mutually reinforcing nature of the child-parent relationship in which benefits of positive parenting operates to the mutual advantage of both.

Petrakis and Barberis (2013) argue that irrespective of the parenting style involved, its practice revolves around the characteristics of demandingness and responsiveness. Demandingness here implies a combination of structure, responsibility and obedience and the responsiveness correspondingly embodies parental involvement, support and warmth such as caring for a child in times of distress. They further assert that authoritative parenting styles which are characterised by a high degree of demandingness and responsiveness and considered to be the most recommended parenting style with positive results. The authoritarian style is associated with high degree of demandingness and low responsiveness. The permissive style of parenting is characterized by low demandingness and high responsiveness and finally, the neglectful style is remarkable for its low degree of demandingness and responsiveness. According to these authors citing Baumrind, (1991), these parenting styles can be generally grouped into positive and negative parenting.

2.1.1 Positive Parenting

Positive parenting practice is embedded in the use of the authoritative parenting style because it creates an atmosphere of a better child-parent relationship through the use of explanation and reasoning with the child. This creates a sense of mutuality and parental involvement and on the other hand also complements the positive behavioural outcome of the child (Petrakis &
Barberis, 2013). They further posit that for positive parenting to be effective, certain factors must come into play such as Parental involvement which is the extent to which parents are interested in, knowledgeable about and willing to take an active role in the lives of their children. Children raised in this kind of setting are deemed to have a high level of pro-social behaviour and less prone to become delinquents (Petrakis & Barberis, 2013, citing Wong, 2008). Endorsing the involvement of parents in the life of the child has been Hartas (2008) who argues that parental involvement has a direct impact on the child’s pro-social, pro-learning, self-esteem and high academic attainment. Hartas claims that parents’ roles and responsibilities regardless of their social or educational status have an immense effect in shaping the child. Similarly, another component of positive parenting is the high rate of parental support and clear expectations. Children raised in this setting possess a high degree of social interacting skills and easily stick to rules set by their parents when lower levels of punitive and inconsistent discipline are used (Petrakis & Barberis, 2013, citing Kresner, Dishion, Poulin & Postone, 2009). Moreover, another element of positive parenting is the issue consistency, immediacy and discipline which when combined can yield effective child outcomes such as high self-esteem, good grades at school and pro-social behaviours. This is only possible with the use of non-violent methods of discipline. Correspondingly, the mental health of the parents to considerable degree affects the outcomes. For instance, parental stress, mood disorder will adversely affect the child-parent relationship and its possible outcomes. Parents with lower levels of stress and other disorders turn to employ positive parenting practices and vice versa. Affirming to this fact has been Dailey, Tahlia, Krause & Pacey (2009) who posit that the physical and psychological well-being of children is totally linked with their parents physical, psychological and social conditions espoused with their parenting practices. Effective or positive parenting basically requires of parents to be involved in the child’s life, be consistent with their disciplinary rule implementation and above all, should focus on the child-parent relationship. This creates an atmosphere of openness where children see the parents as their role models.

2.1.2 Negative Parenting

In contrast, negative parenting, on the other hand, is closely associated with the other parenting styles such as authoritarian, permissive and neglectful which is reflected in the degree of warmth or control expressed on the child (Petrakis & Barberis, 2013). All these parenting styles have negative outcomes such as the negative psychological consequences in child development
and can cause the child to develop other coping strategies such as internalise and externalise disorders (Petrakis & Barberis, 2013). Likewise, excessive parental control and rejection fuels negative parenting. It instigates the feeling of low self-esteem in the children and makes them susceptible to depression, anxiety, behavioural inconsistencies and other psychological problems. Again, inconsistent parenting which is a combination of authoritarian and permissive parenting yields a distant child-parent relationship and other psychological problems. This phenomenon is composed of 3 types: Temporal inconsistency occurs, when for the same situation parents’ reaction varies irregularly. Situational inconsistency occurs when parents’ reaction varies from one circumstance to the other. Finally, father-mother inconsistency develops when the parents’ reaction to the same situation is not homogeneous. Inconsistencies are easily reflected in disciplinary strategies bound to hinder the proper development of the child. Apart from these, corporal punishment is the most ineffective of all negative parenting components. Both verbal or physical punishment increase aggression in children and a higher rate of externalizing behaviour. This affects their psychological development even at later stages in their lives. Children who are a victim of corporal punishment are inclined to become abusive spouses, likelihood to spank children and susceptible to crime and the use of substances (Petrakis & Barberis, 2013, citing Flaskerud, 2011). Corporal punishment weakens child-parent relationship because it stimulates the feeling of resentment in children against their parents and all these leads to negative child outcomes psychologically.

2.2 Acculturation

Acculturation is a concept that underscores cultural transition or change as a result of migration. The concept explores the adaptability of individuals who have developed in one cultural environment and how they manage to accommodate themselves into a new cultural context as a result of migration (Berry, 1997). Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) cited by Berry (1997) argues that acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural pattern of either or both groups. Some individuals or groups get into the process of acculturation voluntarily such as immigrants and refugees as a result of migration to a new destination, while it is brought unto others by a new culture such as indigenous people and national minorities. Lastly, to others, the process is a temporary due to their status such as international students and guest workers (Berry, 1997). Irrespective of the group or individual undergoing the process of acculturation, Berry citing Berry and Saman, (1996)
argues that the process of adapting is common for all individuals and groups. The only variation is the level of difficulty involved and the outcome of the acculturation. Since acculturation in itself involves the adaptability into a new cultural context which differs from the previous, the adaptation process has given birth to other coping strategies which according to Berry (1997) serves as an alternative to the different stakeholders. One of the coping strategy is assimilation which occurs when individuals or group do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures. Again, separation is employed as another strategy when individuals or groups stay steadfast to their original culture and at the same chose to avoid interaction with the culture of the host country. Correspondingly, integration is explored as an adaptation strategy when the individual or group maintains interest in both their original culture while seeking daily encounter with the host culture or being an integral part of the larger social network. Similarly, marginalization is employed as a strategy when the individual lost interest in their cultural identity as well as little or no interest in participating with others or with the larger social network of the host country. Individuals often resort to such alternative as a result of forced assimilation.

According to Berry (1997) most individuals undergoing the process of acculturation often than not resort to integration. Integration is feasible in a multicultural setting where there is a mutual accommodation of diverse cultures to meet the needs of all groups living together. It can be effectively argued that national policies from the dominant group (host country) are most likely to affect acculturation strategies such that individuals may seek to follow such policy by choosing the integration strategy. However, as a result of acculturation, immigrants change due to living with two sets of cultures that interact simultaneously and having to participate in both of them to a different extent. This interaction may pose some complex challenges on the individual which can serve as a springboard to greater heights while unto others it may pose challenges that can hardly be subverted. These changes range from biological, economic social and cultural. These changes revolve around issues such as what is eaten or worn, language shifts and other alteration to the value system (Berry, 1997).

2.2.1 Relating the theory to the study

The main objective of this work is to explore the parenting challenges Cameroonian parents in Germany encounter and their resiliencies. The acculturation model by Berry perfectly relates to this phenomenon under study because we cannot discuss parenting in the context of immigration without making use of Berry’s acculturation model.
Likewise, these Cameroonian parents are immigrants who moved to Germany for various reasons. Eventually, they fall under the migrant category according to Berry's classification, implying their choice to undergo the process of acculturation was voluntary as a result of the fact they migrated to Germany. Therefore, they are faced with the complexities of interacting with two cultures simultaneously and the inevitable challenges that accompanies it which cannot be undermined. Thus, in this process of acculturation, these Cameroonian parents may devise adaptation strategies such as separation, assimilation, integration and marginalisation as suggested by Berry (1997) to gain a mastery of their new cultural context.

The results of this study will highlight what strategy was employed by these Cameroonian migrant parents to deal with their parenting challenges and how they adapt to with the environment. However, there is a generalization principle by Berry (1997) that a majority of the immigrant resort to integration. This tendency will be explored throughout this work shading light into the bi-cultural attitude of the parents and how they thrive for their children to fit in the two cultural context.

2.3 Migrant families’ challenges.

It is rather unfortunate that research on Cameroonian immigrants in particular is scarce thus, poses a challenge incorporating a theoretical framework based exclusively on this population. Hence, this section will be on the challenges immigrant families in general encounter in their destination country which can as well be generalised to our case in point, the parenting challenges of Cameroonian immigrants in Germany.

Renzaho and Vignjevic (2011) exploring the parenting challenges of African migrants who recently resettled in Australia, argues that parenting poses enormous challenges because family values are interpreted differently across cultures and parenting practices are used as a means to achieve culture sanctioned goals. They advocate that most of these migrants come from a collectivist culture. Culture here is defined by the “set of distinctive pattern of beliefs and behaviour that are shared by a group of people and that regulates their daily living” Bornstein, (2012). This also applies to the extent to which the concept of parenting is perceived across such a culture. Therefore in a collectivist culture, the needs of a group or community surpass individual needs. Apart from the interdependency in such a culture, indisputable obedience, respect for authority most especially family hierarchy are prioritised. The parenting style practised are mostly authoritarian characterised by exercising control through power,
intimidation and punishments, strict family rules are set by parents the ultimate decision makers and children are bound to succumb (Renzaho, Dhingra & Georgeou, 2017).

As a result of migration and in the process of acculturation, these African migrants in Australia are faced with a new environment, culturally incompatible to their collectivist approaches to parenting. This implies in Australia as in most of the western world including Germany, child rearing is an individual issue which strictly opposes to the collectivist view with much emphasis on promoting children autonomy, independence and personal freedom (Renzaho & Vignjevic, 2011 citing Brew, Hesketh & Taylor, 2011; Zervides & Knowles, 2007).

In this new individualistic cultural context, the classical notion of father being the primary wage earners and women as home makers or typical house wives ceases to be the norm. The parents cannot shift responsibility for the young children to care for their siblings, corporal punishment constitutes neglect and abuses and above all authoritarian parenting practices are compromised. This is further aggravated by time demands, work stress, creating social networks, learning a new language, finding housing, taking care of their health and the children knowledge of the legal system. This is worsened by the pervasive threat of state intervention in family matters for socially unappealing practices such as corporal punishment which in all immensely affects the functioning of the family and child-parent relationship (Renzaho, Dhingra & Georgeou, 2017). In spite, the length of stay in the host country migrants still experience issues of cultural identity, social belonging and cultural attachment to varying degrees. What Renzaho et al. (2017) summarise as “living with a difference” which denotes most multicultural societies.

Accordingly, Behnke, Taylor and Parra-Cardona (n.d) systematically examining the circumstances of Latino fathers in the United States (US), argues that recent studies have proven Latino fathers to accept a more egalitarian arrangement in the home such as domestic chores, child-raising practices and their spouses entering the labour market. This directly opposes to their patriarchal beliefs where the men identify themselves as the sole provider for their families. In this regard, the experiences stemming from migration and acculturation such as coming into constant contact with cultural images, models of egalitarian family roles in the US and above all less criticisms from peers for their egalitarian gender union, eases the process of an egalitarian relationship between spouses and children (Behnke et al..citing Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, Pessar, 2003). Migration contributes tremendously to the liberation of women especially those from the non-western cultural setting such as Cameroon. This inevitably
changes the parenting interaction of the women in the host country and the relationship within their family (Sanagavarapu, 2010). This obligues the men to assume more egalitarian role with their wives including the rearing of the child, something which is rare or impossible in the non-western culture.

Correspondingly, exploring the plight of newly settled immigrants in Canada, Brown, Kumar, Puente-Duran, Georgiades, Leckie and Jenkins (2017) assert that the expected link between income and education are not visible among immigrants. They argue that newly arrived immigrants in Canada had difficulties finding a job that suit their educational acquisition. Thus, these recently arrived Canadian immigrants surprisingly have low incomes despite their high educational achievement (Browne et al. 2017, citing Schellenberg, 2004). In the same vein, apart from the usual stressors of immigration and resettlement in a host country, some groups of migrants such as refugees are prone to mental health issues as a result of the trauma they suffered in their home countries. The study revealed that the parents in such category had a higher probability of mental health problems and parental stress. Therefore raising children under such conditions poses an immense challenge on the parents (Browne et al. 2017 citing Beisen, 2009).
3. Research Design and Methodology

Research methodology in its simplest form refers to a systematic way of collecting data to resolve a phenomenon under research. For this pivotal research, the author adopted a qualitative research method. Qualitative research according to Saldana (2011) refers to a broad range of research methods for the study of a natural social phenomenon whose data is collected and analysed through non-quantitative means. According to Saldana, this is composed primarily of textual materials such as interview transcripts, field notes, visual materials such as artefacts, photographs, video recordings, documented human experiences and just to name a few. Basically, it is a research whose findings are derived from real world events.

3.1 Data Collection

Data collection is an integral step in the process of any research and when done accurately, it increases the validity and reliability of the findings. The data collection for this study was based on secondary and primary sources. The secondary sources were collected through desk research and the author made proper use of those sources which were of substance to the study and helped answered the research question. This involved a systematic review of the secondary data sources.

Secondary data sources were collected through reference books, academic journals, libraries and scholar reference databases such as Nelliportal, Ebscohost, Ebary and just to name a few. This enabled the author to access recent articles and e-books which were of substance to the study. Publications from some research institutions relevant to the study were also exploited. The World Wide Web (www) was also a good starting point during the data collection phase of this study, for gaining some vital information before exploring in detail through other sources. The websites of some organisations such as the United Nations (UN) were also indispensable for this study. This included the use of keywords in context of the study such as parenting, immigrants and culture. The inclusion criteria for the secondary data sources stipulates that a published material should date from the year 2010 and above. However, this does not imply the study did not make use of some data sources published before this year. But it can be effectively argued that the majority of the secondary sources used for this study dates from the year 2010 and above.
3.2 Qualitative interviews

Interviews were also part of the study and provided a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under research. Endorsing interviews as a useful tool in any research, Edwards and Holland (2013) argues that qualitative interviews offers a gateway to explore people’s understanding of their lives and how they share their story and experiences. This generates material (data) which is regarded as a report on a reality of a phenomenon understudy that is independent of the participant (Edwards & Holland, 2013). The prime focus here is how participants interpreted and share their experiences which construct reality.

The interviews were conducted based on a sample group designed by the author. This group consisted of only those Cameroonian parents aged 18 years and above with at least a child born in Germany. The interviews were conducted through semi-structured open-ended questions in a relaxed environment which gave participants the feeling that they were in a normal conversation, unlike in a formal interview which is a question and answer session bound to put some participants under some sort of pressure. However, the open-ended questions were strictly followed and notes of some important points taken down in the course especially when the participant made strong positive or negative statement about somebody or something (Edward and Holland, 2013). The author’s choice of the interview in this study is deeply embedded in the belief that it will explore individual parent needs and challenges and their adaptation strategies. It will enable them to be elaborate as much as they can on their parenting experience/challenges and the strategies to overcome them that were effective in their case.

Then, participatory observation was used in complement with the interviews to explore the non-verbal communication or take into consideration some of those insights that participants were reluctant to pronounce due to certain parameters such as culture, beliefs and adverse feelings such as shame or those not socially appealing. This method also enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of the socioeconomic, cultural and physical context in which the respondents lives and uncovers anything that can be misleading or ambiguous to the study (Family Health International, n.d).

3.3 Transcription

Then, the interview data after collection were later transcribed with the use of an audio recorder and Microsoft word with codes assigned. An intelligent verbatim technique was employed by the author. This is a technique that represents recorded speech into text while editing out the
fillers and repetition that may distract from getting the content of the interview (Issac, 2015). It filters portion of the interview that were not of substance to the study considering the basic idea that participants do not speak in a consistent manner. Thus, this method is used to transcribe what was said during the interview while filtering repeated words, expressions such “ah”, “um”, pauses and other ambient noises. However, it does not correct grammatical errors and slang words are represented with standard ones (Issac, 2015). It is worth noting that the researcher approached the interview without any preconceptions. Assumptions were out of question because points that were not clear the author ask the participant for clarification.

3.4 Qualitative Data Analysis

Articulating on the concept of analysis in research, Blaxter et al. (1996) cited in Carey (2012) argues that by analysing, “the researcher is essentially attempting to better explain and understanding their findings and also extract meaning”. Correspondingly, Flick (2013) argues that data analysis goes through 3 different stages. They include data reduction, data reorganization and data representation. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (1994, 2013) cited in Flick (2013) comments that data analysis may also apart from the three stages mentioned above, includes data display, conclusion drawing and verification. They lay emphasis on the use of visual display units to interpret and represent data such as charts, graphs and tables. Similarly, Willis, (2015) citing Adam, Khan, Raeside and White, (2007), posits that “Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe”. However, Willis argues that analysis is the series of steps that occur between data collection and the communication of what we have found. Whatever the steps or sequence involved in analyzing the data, the unit of data for analysis should be defined, procedures for processing the data into the summary of results and finally interpretation of the results and how much substance they can contribute to the phenomenon understudy (Willis, 2015). For this study, the unit of data for analysis were the expressions/reflections of the participants in the interviews which were transcribed and the notes the author took down in the process of observation which together was further processed. Endorsing this technique has been Willis (2007) who argues that, the most comprehensive way to rely on the participant’s own words, is to work from a written transcription of the audio recording.

For this study, a thematic analysis was employed to evaluate the interviews. Carey (2013), endorsed this technique as the most appealing in the field of social work because analysis of this nature is inductive as themes emerged from the data collected and not imposed upon it.
This technique might at times be employed simultaneously with data collection and analysis whereby the researcher identifies themes during and after the interview (Carey, 2013). However, the following stages were strictly followed by the author during the thematic analysis process as proposed by Carey, (2013) citing Aronson, (1994).

The first stage consisted of conducting the interview and audio recording of the responses of participants.

The second stage was transcribing the interview data. An intelligent verbatim transcription was employed to clearly present the experiences and stories of participants.

Then thirdly, the identification of themes/sub-themes from the transcriptions. This was made possible by the salient statement made by participants.

Finally, the fourth stage was to use the theme to develop a valid argument. This entails integrating the themes into text.

The following themes emerged from the study: culture, religion, education and other sub-themes emerged from these main themes. The themes were supported by some salient expression/reflections made by participants. Similarities and differences in the expressions were sorted out systematically and those with similar ideas were grouped together according to the themes and subcategories with codes assigned. Appendix 3 contains a sample of how the main themes/sub-themes emerged.

Content analysis was used to analyse secondary data sources. Content analysis refers to a technique which according to Krippendorff, (2004) citing Dunphy, Smith and Ogilvie (1996) posit is a “research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics with a text”. This technique deepens the understanding of the phenomenon under study and highlights practical actions.

For this study, the data analysis is not aimed at proving the theoretical framework either for approval or refute, but it thrives on portraying respondent's experiences through the data collected and how it constructs reality. Thus, the secondary data sources were analysed using content analysis. The steps involved for analyzing secondary data sources for this study were as follows:

Data sources were searched from scholarly data bases with the frequency of some keywords in the context of the study such as parenting, immigrants, children, Germany and Cameroon. Only
those articles published in English from the year 2010 and above were used for the study. The author searched for those elements of text that reduces the volume of the data. Again, secondary data sources were reviewed and grouped together according to similarities and differences into main categories. Then, themes were identified from the text in context to the study. Furthermore, a cross verification technique was employed aimed at reviewing each article in comparison to those from other categories. Those with similarities were grouped together under the same category and theme. This technique is termed triangulation which according to Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) argues that it eases the validation of data through cross verification from various sources which increases the credibility and validity of the findings or to arrive at an inference.

3.5 Sampling

The study employed a random sampling. Participants for the study consisted of both gender and were chosen through a random availability and participants appropriate for the research through whatever access route available to the author (Edward and Holland, 2013). Participants were chosen across the state of Germany some of whom were those familiar to the researcher. However, the criteria to be part of the study stipulates a participant should be at least 18 years and above. Must be a Cameroonian who migrated to Germany and has at least a child born in the country. It is worth mentioning that most Cameroonians are predominantly Christians’ because the country is approximately 80% Christians’ and 20% Muslims. The participants for this study were all Christians. The study excluded those parents who were born in Germany and those Cameroonian parents who migrated to the country but do not have at least a child born in Germany.
4. Analysis of Results, Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion.

This study aims to explore in depth the parenting challenges of Cameroonian immigrant parents in Germany and the resources these parents possess or lack in rendering effective parenting. The study also explored the inevitable cultural incompatibilities which exist between the parenting practices in Cameroon and those practice in Germany. The table below gives a summary of the background information of the respondents. From the table, a total of five Cameroonian participants in the study. Three of them were women and two were men. The three women are coded as W1, W2, and W3 and the men as M1 and M2. The ages of the women range between 43 and 33, while for the men their ages range between 40 and 39. It can be argued effectively that the experiences of the participants vary due to issues such as length of stay in Germany and how the process of acculturation is unfolding or unfolded. The total number of children of the participants was 12 with an age range from 1 – 18 years. The female respondents have lived in Germany for a longer period of time because their period of stay range between 14 – 25 years unlike the men 3 and 9 years respectively.

Table 1. Background information of the participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code of respondents</th>
<th>Number of years in Germany</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Number of child/children</th>
<th>Ages of the children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18, 14, 9 &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15, 10 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8 &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 &amp; 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After thoroughly listening to the narratives of the different respondents and transcribing the interview data, some themes were developed to match their different experiences to the study. The results were explored through a qualitative research with interviews as a source for primary data. When analysing the data, the following major and sub-themes were developed:
Table 2. Table of major and sub-themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career path</td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General perspective about</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Respect for the elderly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal/informal parenting training</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mode of dressing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol consumption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender roles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Theme Culture

4.1.1 Respect for the elderly

All 5 respondents reiterated the respect for the elderly by children is an integral part of the Cameroonian culture. A majority of the respondents agree that they are raising their children to know that respect for the elderly is indisputable. They insist on bringing up their children the same way they were raised back home in Cameroon. All respondents agree that they have taught their children to engage the use of prefixes before the names of any elderly person introduced to them. Respondent W3:

“in my village if someone is older than you, you are obliged to use the prefix “Ndi” before the name of that person when referring to him or her”.

Respondent W1:

“I teach my children to add to the name of any friend of mine or any elderly person the prefix “uncle” or “aunty” and they must greet them as such each time they meet them”.

Two of the respondents argue that in Germany, most children feel they are mates with their seniors. This explains the reason why you see most children refer to an elderly person even relatives by their names.
4.1.2 Discipline

Four of the respondents iterated that unlike here in Germany, in Cameroon physical punishment was the most effective form of discipline for children. Participant MI highlighted the idea that African parents believe in the common adage that “do not spare the rod and spoil the child”. According to the respondent, this implies that the best way to raise a child into being obedient must involve the use of physical punishment. However, he claims that while here in Germany he is employing alternative methods of discipline although at sometimes tempted to resort to physical punishment. Respondent W1 gave a contrasting view to the whole notion of physical punishment and the way she was raised back home in Cameroon. She stated that:

“growing up with a single mother, my mother has never raised her hand to me while in Cameroon. But when I joined my father in Germany, he has on several occasion inflicted physical punishment on me while with him in Germany”.

Other respondent admitted being tempted to employ physical punishment as a form of discipline, but for fear of the law and its obvious consequences they are forced to restrain from such practices. Respondent W3 admitted that

“I deprive my children of their favourite television programs and ask them to remain in their room”.

As a result of migration and the process of acculturation, a majority of the respondent still hold strong to their cultural heritage and even tempted to employ other forms of discipline which are considered archaic here in Germany.

4.1.3 Mode of dressing

All respondents insisted on teaching their children to dress decently taking into consideration the different weather conditions and should cover their body properly. Participant W2 said:

“I have no preferences as to what my children have to wear. They put on African wears but those wild and crazy dressings, I do not accept it”.

Respondent W3 added that:

“I do not allow my children to dress exposing themselves, but at times during summer with the heat, I will reluctantly allow them to put on their shorts. This will expose their body but I have no choice”.
It can be realised that most of the parents have assimilated into the western standard of dressing but they still maintain some restraint on the issue of decency in the way their children dress themselves up.

4.1.4 Alcohol Consumption

All of the respondents dwell on the fact that alcohol consumption and cigarette were strictly forbidden among their children. They insisted they were raised back home never to dare smoke cigarette or consume alcohol. This has always been reserved for the elderly and even when the child grows up and resolved to smoke, he can barely do that in the presence of their parents. Most of the respondent reiterated that here in Germany a majority of the population smokes starting from a very tender age and even the girl child. In Cameroon, such practice is not common among youth and will be a taboo for a girl child to dare any of these. Respondent W2 condemned in strong terms that,

"I am raising my children to know that alcohol consumption and smoking of cigarette are a no-go zone. They might do that when they become adults but my 18 years old daughter is not interested in that".

It can be noticed that in the process of acculturation the immigrant parents will choose to dwell on what they believe is best for their children and stick with it. Those parents who do not smoke insisted that it was a taboo for any of their children to consume alcohol or smoke cigarette. Respondent M2 stated,

"I am worried at times due to the influence the society can have on my children, I always teach them with pictures about the dangers of alcohol consumption and cigarette smoking”.

4.1.5 Gender roles

As a result of migration and the process of acculturation, most Cameroonian immigrant families are not big in size as compared to back home in Cameroon where there are families with ten children and above. Back home domestic chores are clearly spelt out among the children. There are some chores that only the male child is allowed to do and vice versa. For instance, the male child maybe is in charge of cleaning the house and its surroundings while the females prepare food for the family.
Now in the host country and considering the smaller sizes of immigrant families, there is no differentiation in domestic and other roles for children on the basis of their gender. Four respondents hamper on the fact that they share domestic chores among their children without considering their gender. Respondent W2 added that

“I teach my children to make up their bed every morning and be active in other domestic activities such as cooking and cleaning without any regards for their gender”.

4.1.6 Sexuality

It can be deduced that the issue of sexuality has gained a lot of scrutiny on the socio-economic and political discourse of many western countries including Germany, with the recent landmark law legalizing same-sex marriage. A majority of these immigrant parents do not compromise with the issue of LGBTs (Lesbians, Gays, Bi-sexual and Transgenders). In Cameroon, these issues are still considered a taboo or an abomination punishable by law. Due to migration and the process of acculturation in the host country, immigrant parents are bound to deal with these issues because it directly or indirectly affects their children in a multicultural or bi-cultural setting. All the respondents considered this a taboo and unpalatable. Participant W2 stated that,

“being a gay or lesbian is a god forbid issue and my children know it is a taboo. In fact it is not even something to comment about because it does not exist in our culture and family”.

Some respondents reiterated that their children are exposed to this new craze and they must devise a means to deal with it because, denial, dismissal and saying it is a taboo is not the solution. They claim their children are being taught about this in school. Respondent W1 argues that sex education in schools and at home is a rare practice in the Cameroonian culture and it is considered as that,

“giant scary thing that cannot be spoken about”.

Whereas in Germany, children are being taught sex education in school. She added that,

“irrespective of what is taught in school I teach my children about sex, STDs (Sexually transmittable diseases), contraceptives through books with images because if I do not the society will teach them in its own way”.

Respondent W3 added that the issue of sexuality in all its form is everywhere on the TV. She said:
“I was in the living room with my elder daughter watching the news and suddenly in the news, it was announced the German parliament has legalised same-sex marriage and later you find these couples on the news embracing the news happily and kissing each other. This passes a strong message to my child and as a mother, my duty is not denial but to explain to them that these other sexes are not of God”.

She added that,

_I will rather prefer my daughter to come home with a boyfriend at a tender age than to bring home another girl as her spouse_.

Similarly, respondent W1 whose children are 11 and 8 years old posit that,

_“I am willing to teach my children about sex education. We cannot deny these things exist but I will prefer to wait for the appropriate age to teach it to my children at least for them to know more about their body and how the body reacts at different stages in life”._

### 4.2 Theme Education

#### 4.2.1 Career path

All five respondents insisted that they allow their children to choose their career path. Some of the respondent claim guidance can be offered based on the school performance of the children but the final decision rest on the child. Participant W3 added that,

_“a career is something that is derived from passion, so I try my best to respect their passion”._

However, the German education system does not leave parents with the rights to choose their children career path neither do the students themselves. The whole process is swayed by the primary school teachers who recommend the child into a particular secondary school based on their performance. This process to some extent establishes the child’s career path and orientation and only those who are recommended into the gymnasium as their secondary school can make it to the university while those recommended for the other secondary schools such as the realschule, hauptschule and gesamtschule are oriented towards some vocations. This is unlike in Cameroon where the parents monopolise the career path for their child and the educational system has very little influence over the whole process of career orientation.
4.2.2 General perspective about education

All respondents endorsed the fact that education is the best means to a brighter future. They see education as a means to a pleasant end. All of them were grateful to have migrated to a country where education is considered a basic human right for all. This opposes to back home in Cameroon where in some instances such as financial constraints, the male child is prioritised over the females when it comes to education. However, the respondents showed so much interest in the education of their children but they lamented the language barrier is a major obstruction, which hinders them from helping their children with some school assignments. But some of them are devising different strategies to help their children with their education. Respondent W2 said

“I have looked for a private evening teacher to help my children at home with their studies”.

Respondent M2 said:

“I have enrolled my children into the "ganztag" (whole day) so that they can remain in school after the normal school hours and a teacher will help them with their assignment”.

All of these indicates that immigrants’ parents are interested in knowing how their children are responding to studies irrespective of the different obstacles and challenges.

4.2.3 Any formal/informal parenting education/advice

Three of the respondents insisted they have never participated in any sort of parenting education either formal or informal from the German state or local authorities or at level of the local community. However, two respondents admitted having undergone some sort of parenting education.

Respondent W3 stated,

"I had some parenting training during an internship at a kindergarten and during the PTA (parents teachers association) meetings at the school”.

She explained she was taught to understand that every child is unique and not to expose her children weaknesses or criticize them in public. This may lead to mockery among peers, tantamount to low self-esteem and poor school performance. Respondent M2 admitted he had attended a seminar with the local authorities where he was taught some good parenting tactics.
4.3 Religious beliefs

Four respondents acknowledge raising their children in total recognition of the fact that there is a supernatural being known as God. Cameroon in itself is a predominantly Christian country with approximately 80 percent of the total population Christians and 20 percent Muslims. So these immigrant Cameroonian parents were raised in a culture where religion plays a vital role in the lives of the children. All the respondents accepted teaching their children how to pray especially before meals and bedtime. However, some of the respondents reiterated that their children always question this because their German peers hardly pray or attend any church. Respondent W1 stated that

“at first it was difficult to take my children to church. They were hesitating because their German peers do not go to church except on Christmas day. But I have taught them to know that their German peers have their own culture while we have ours”.

Some respondents had a contrasting view which they claimed emerged as a result of their migration. Respondent M2 stated

“ I do not attend any church but I have taught my children how to pray”.

The bicultural setting has an effect on the children because at some point they are influenced by the attitude of their peers from the other culture and this pushes the child to question certain practices and can even develop resistance.

All respondents reiterated how much they admire some the German parenting practices. However, there were some of their practices that most of them were not in compliance with. The table below summarises the views of the respondents which can as well to considerable extent serves as a barometer for measuring the degree of acculturation of these immigrant parents from Cameroon:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Dislikes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W2</td>
<td>“I admire the way the Germans raised their children to trust them and can always confine in them without fear”.</td>
<td>“I dislike the non-interference attitude they give their children. I dislike the idea they give lump sum of money to children as pocket money. Impoliteness on the part of their children’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>“The way they are loving and caring towards their children and I like patience they exercise on their children’’</td>
<td>“I dislike the way they train their children not to assume domestic chores”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>“I enjoy the interactions between parent and child. No taboos and everything can be discussed”.</td>
<td>“Children do not have responsibilities in the home”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>“They treat their children as if they were mates”.</td>
<td>“Due to their tight work schedule they abandon their children to the care system and the children turn to trust the care givers more than their parents”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Children from divorced parents are spoiled because of the competition between the parents. The parents turn to buy the love of their children which can only be short-lived and detrimental to the child-parent relation in the future”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Discussion

5.1 Discussion of Results

It can be deduced from the study that Cameroonian parents are struggling to cope with their cultural practices while respecting the German welfare laws. This creates some sort of dissatisfaction in the way these parents raise their children. They feel the system is preventing them from doing what they deem is right for their children. This endorses the thoughts of Goldman (1993), and Roer-Strier and Rosenthal (2001) cited in Sanagavarapu, (2010) who argue that there is a high tendency for immigrants to resist or oppose cultural change at first instance due to its diverse nature of parenting. Notwithstanding, they will be compelled due to the cultural dilemmas in parenting to enforce changes in their traditional cultural values.

Integration seems the norm in many societies across the globe especially in this 21st century with significant consequences for immigrant families and their parenting in a multicultural setting (Sanagavarapu, 2010 citing Kuran & Sandholm, 2003). In order to survive immigrants are bound to go through what Hall (1992), Walters (1995) and Carrigton (2002) terms “cultural translation”. This refers to accepting or embracing into their parenting practices new cultures and develop new forms of culture in order to effectively fit into the host country. This is due to the fact that often than not the classical parenting practice of the migrants are considered archaic and repugnant in the host country. Integration is feasible in a multicultural setting where there is a mutual accommodation of diverse cultures to meet the needs of all groups living together. It can be effectively argued that national policies from the dominant group are most likely to affect acculturation strategies such that individuals may seek to follow such policies by choosing the integration strategy.

Nevertheless, the participants applauded some German parenting practices which were not biased of their part although they condemned some of their parenting practices. They hailed the idea that their German peers consider their children as their mates and this creates an atmosphere of openness, where children can freely discuss anything with their parents without them being judgmental. They appreciated the fact that the German parents promote child independence and autonomy at a very tender age. These are some of the practices that these immigrants’ parents are thriving to emulate because, in a typical Cameroonian culture, the parents are the ultimate and will barely seek the opinion of the child on any issue concerning them. Cameroonian parents by default lay so much emphasis on parental authority which is a
natural practice within the Cameroonian culture based on its patriarchal nature. But as a result of migration and acculturation, this practice fuels conflicts because it infringes the rights of the child and the parents are bound to devise other appealing strategies or faces fierce restraints from their children.

Correspondingly, the respondents acclaimed the German education system whereby education is considered a basic human right and free to all. This also gave them the satisfaction that if well guided the children can further their education to whatever level they wish. The immigrant parents also complained about their low German language proficiency skills which impede them from effectively assisting their children with their studies or to communicate with the teachers to understand the progress of their child/children in school. This technically handicaps the parents from clearly understanding the laws of the German welfare system and causes them to incorrectly assume what is good parenting in Germany on the one hand and what it is not on the other hand. Since the German language plays an instrumental role, many immigrant parents find it hard to communicate effectively with some authorities of the welfare system. Deductively, it can be observed that the acculturation process and consequently integration of these immigrants’ parents is low practically in some aspects. Thus, it will be imperative for some vital information to be displayed on brochures in the English language and other languages of the minority groups so that it can be assumed that the message has effectively reached the targeted group.

Similarly, most of the respondents acknowledge they have never been to any form of parental education training. In this light, it will be imperative for the authorities to seek a grass root solution through the cooperation of some organizations in the third sector such as churches through which these immigrants’ parents can be easily reached. From observations, before now most of the solutions have been a top-bottom approach involving the organization of seminars, conferences and some fora where these immigrants’ parents will be invited to share their experiences. Unfortunately, the turnout at such seminars or fora has remained relatively low.

Nonetheless, corporal punishment was also investigated by asking respondents what they feel about it. Most of the respondents claim physical punishment was archaic although they were raised in a culture that endorses such practices. But as a result of living in Germany, these parents have realised that physical punishment is abusive and have resorted to other techniques of disciplining their children. This was made possible by their migration to Germany and grace
to their introduction to the German culture. For example, some parents now advocate for timeouts and other non-punitive disciplinary measures. Whatever the case, positive parenting techniques do not endorse the implementation of physical punishment.

Moreover, a majority of the participants deemed sexuality only in the direction of the different gender orientation such as the LGBTs. However, these are very glaring issues in our society today that denial or holding strong allegations against it due to a parent’s cultural orientation only make the child more susceptible. Therefore, it will be indispensable for the parents to educate their children on these issues irrespective of how despicable most of them perceive it. Notwithstanding, the teachers at the school are doing a great job to educate the children on these issues and the parents too need to commit themselves to their own percentage of the task. Failure to do so will allow the society to teach the children in its own way.

Similarly, it can be observed from all the participants that religious beliefs play a vital role in the parenting practices of these immigrant parents. Although some respondent admitted not attending any church but their children have been taught how to pray and practice at least some sort of religion. Religious beliefs are used by these immigrant parents as a base to measure the moral standards of their children because an adage goes thus “the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom”.

5.2 Ethical Considerations

The interview questions were designed to last approximately 45 minutes and structured into two sections and the ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity was fully respected. Section one covered information pertaining to the personal background of the respondent such as age, gender, the number of children and their ages. While the second section tackled questions, which were more peculiar to the research such as the challenges these parents face raising their children in Germany, their adaptation strategies, resources at their disposal and the parenting skills they possess or lack. The participants were provided with an informed consent form which according to Gubruim and Jaber (2012), informs them about the dynamics of the research, ensuring their confidentiality and anonymity prior to the interview and a statement that they willfully chose to be part of the study and can as well withdraw their participation at any stage without any consequences (See appendix 1&2 for the informed consent form and the interview questions).
5.3 Reliability

Addressing the concept of reliability in research, Golafshani, (2003) citing Joppe (2000) refers to reliability as the “extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered reliable”.

Basically, it underscores the fact that the data generated for analytical purposes are void of pollutants such as selection bias and should mean the same to everyone that uses them (Krippendorf, 2004). It lays emphasis on the trustworthiness of the data, consistency and for the results to be the same should an independent researcher uses the same methodology.

All the sources for analysis for this study gave at least an account of the phenomenon understudy. The quality of the information for this study is measured by the similarities of data and how they fit into the main and sub-themes that emerged. It is worth noting that two data sources that give an account of a similar idea of the phenomenon under study was trustworthy than one source that proposed for a differentiating view. This does not mean that some single sources were not utilised for this research nor is the author thoroughly undermining them. Nonetheless, the investigation made a more prominent use of those information sources which could be found in more than one source. Again, the data gotten from the interviews were transcript through an intelligent verbatim transcription, meaning it will produce the same text should another researcher uses the same technique.

5.4 Validity

“A research is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure and does so cleanly without accidentally including other factors” (Thanasegaran, n.d). Correspondingly, Krippendorf (2004) argues that the quality of any research results that leads it to be accepted as true needs to be measured by an instrument of validity.

Since some aspects of this study relied on secondary sources for data, the measurement of the data is based on the interpretations of the different authors. However, it will be imperative to argue that, those authors might have intentionally or unintentionally focused on some aspects of the phenomenon under study while excluding others. Similarly, the researcher cannot as well guarantee that participants in the interview were totally truthful with their responses. These are
the possible sources of bias for this study, even though the issues of bias in research can only be minimized and not eradicated. Therefore, the validity of this study is based on the measurement of the data (primary and secondary sources) available to the researcher at the allocated period for this study.

5.5 Limitation to the Study

The small nature of the sample size makes the findings attained in this study difficult to make generalisations to the whole Cameroonian immigrants’ parents in Germany but it can be effectively argued that this work significantly illustrates the challenges many Cameroonian parents in Germany faced raising their children in a new country with cultural and social incompatibilities. There is also a high probability for respondents to tailor their responses to fit socially acceptable norms and the author cannot in any way guarantee that the respondents were totally truthful with their responses. There is also a high tendency for some participants to have forgotten their experiences of parenting especially those whose children were already adults. The study might have yield a different or better result if the author explored other qualitative research methods such as the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). However, this was not possible due to the constraints of assembling participants for a discussion due to the discrepancies in their work schedule and distance. Some participants who were send the informed consent form ended up not participating in the study. Although they never gave any excuse, I strongly believe they were basically not interested or had some doubts about the study which they could not reveal.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

So far, the study examined the experiences of parenting among Cameroonian immigrant parents in Germany. The participants shared their parenting experiences in comparison with those practised in Cameroon and Germany. The findings revealed Cameroonian immigrant parents in Germany, encounter challenges in the parenting practices due to the cultural incompatibilities. This is so common because the immigrant parents have a general tendency of employing their classical Cameroonian culture in the parenting of their children in a typical western Germany culture. This continuously causes cultural conflict and places the parents in a position of constant adjustment and integration to comply with the culture of the home country. The average number of years spent in Germany by each participant is approximately
13.5 years but their level of acculturation and integration is low in certain aspects and high in some, though in a process of continuous change. This is can be traced in some of the sub-themes such as discipline, education and mode of dressing. It can be noticed that the immigrant's parents level of acculturation and integration in these aspects is higher relatively to other sub-themes such as sexuality which is considered a taboo and low levels of acculturation and integration. Most of the immigrant parents parenting practices have been influenced as a result of migration. A majority of the parents, do not support the idea of physical punishment even though it was a recommended practised during their childhood days in Cameroon. They now implement other non-punitive measures as a form of discipline such as timeouts and deprivation of privileges. The language barrier also poses a huge challenge to these immigrant parents and hinders effective communication at all levels. It has also been observed that culture plays an integral role in the child-parent relationship and should be taken into consideration in some aspects.

Again, as a result of migration and the process of acculturation, most of the immigrants’ parents still find it hard to come to terms with such a system of education that neither the parents nor the children play little or no role in their career orientation. Most of them consider this as some sort of a structural discriminatory practice meant to covertly deviate the children of immigrant parents from achieving higher education because obviously, these children cannot compete with their German peers considering the fact that their proficiency in the German language cannot be compared.

Additionally, the practice of parenting varies across cultures and what is considered good parenting in one cultural setting does not absolutely imply the same in another culture. Considering this dilemma, the study laid emphasis on the model of positive parenting as a base for effective parenting practice which is reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children. This study recommends positive parenting styles because of its emphasis on child autonomy, independence and self-reliance with a high degree of demandingness and responsiveness.

### 6.2 Recommendations

A partnership between the school and the parents should be established on the premises that these Cameroonian immigrant parents should be engaged in some of the school activities of their children. This will transform their passive perceptions and will raise their standards of
parenting, instil in them that feeling of commitment and increase their adaptability to the modern German culture.

The authorities should organize some grassroots activities where they go to these immigrants’ parents to understand their plight rather than the opposite. Talking to them directly and listening to their stories which constructs reality. Experts too can be invited to give discussions on positive parenting techniques. This falls within the framework of empowerment workshops where parents will be taught how to set their priorities and be active in the lives of their children so as to be able to understand the child’s strength and weaknesses and communicate with them.
References


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https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/Population.html

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx
Appendix 1: Informed Consent

Hello,

I am Kingsly Kungaba, Bachelor’s student of the program Social Work at the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (DIAK) Helsinki, Finland.

I am conducting a research on the parenting challenges and adaptation strategies of Cameroonian immigrant parents in Germany. The study aims to explore and investigate in-depth those challenges Cameroonian parents encounter in raising their children in a new country with cultures and laws incompatible with those of their home country.

I wish to seek your collaboration in the form on an interview which will last approximately 45 minutes. The respondents will have to answer some questions through a face to face or phone interview on the challenges they face and the resources they lack or possess in effectively raising their children in Germany. The questions will be based on your experiences of raising your child/children in Germany. There are no wrong or right answers but I plead with you to honestly respond to the questions. The interview will be recorded and transcribe subsequently.

Any information provided will be used specifically for this research and your confidentiality and anonymity will be duly respected. All the data will be stored and use purposely for this research and will be destroyed once the research is done.

The respondent reserves the right to withdraw or terminate his/her participation at any point without any consequences. The results of this research can be obtained from the Library of DIAK after December 2017.

This is to certify that I read the above and agreed to it.

Insert your name here and sign -------------------------------

Date-----------------------------------------------------

Contact: Kingsly Kungaba

E-mail: kingsly.kungaba@student.diak.fi

Tel:+358466225000
Appendix 2: Question for Interview

Background information

1. How old are you?
2. What is your gender?
3. How many child/children have you?
4. Age of the child/children and their sex?

Questions about the research

1. How long have you been living in Germany?
2. What are some of the cultural values from your native country that you deem are important for the effecting raising of your child/children? Why are they important? How do you teach them the culture? For example: mode of dressing, respect for the elderly, religious beliefs, alcohol consumption, sexuality (how do you feel about sexuality in Germany?) Alcohol (how do you react if there is a problem of alcohol).
3. How involved are you as a parent in your child/children education? For Example: selecting a career path, assistance with home assignments and general perspective about education, kindergarten
4. As a child what parenting skills did your parents used on you? Do you find them effective today?
5. As a parent, what characteristics should you possess raising your child/children? For example: Loving, disciplinarian, patient, authoritative etc. Which has been most effective? How do you feel about physical punishment?
6. What parenting resources are you exposed to in Germany? Have you ever engaged in any form of parenting education or advice from the state/local authorities?
7. Do your German peers affect your ideas of parenting? What are the German parenting roles that you admire/accept? What are those that you do not like?
8. Tell me about the challenges you face raising your child/children in Germany?
9. As an immigrant how has your parenting role been influenced?
10. Is there anything more about your parenting experience that we have left out and you will wish to share?
### Appendix 3: Sample of how themes and sub-theme emerged in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Line of Conversation</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“being a gay or lesbian is a God forbid issue and my children know it is a taboo. In fact it is not even something to comment about because it does not exist in our culture and family” (Participant W2).</td>
<td>…being gay or lesbian is a taboo…</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am willing to teach my children about sex education. We cannot deny these things exist but I will prefer to wait for the appropriate age to teach it to my children at least for them to know more about their body and how the body reacts at different stages in life” (Participant M2).</td>
<td>…am willing to teach my children…</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"I had some parenting training during an internship at a kindergarten and during the PTA (parents teachers association) meetings at the school" (Participant W3).

…yes I had some….

| Education | Any formal/informal parenting education/advice. |