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**CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES IN SWEDEN: EXPERIENCES OF
NIGERIAN PARENTS IN SWEDEN.**

MFAMILY. European Master in Social Work with Families and Children
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ABSTRACT

Research Topic: Child Protection Services in Sweden: Experiences of Nigerian Parents in Sweden.

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Keywords: Child, Child Protection, Enhance, Child Protection Professionals, Intervention Process, Corporal Punishment and Social Work.

The global issue of child protection is of paramount importance in the social work profession. Child protection, parenting styles, corporal punishments and child abuse are interconnected issues which confronts daily family life relationships. Thus, adapting pre-emptive measures for altered patterns of abuse against a child. The existence of child abuse and the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline led to the development of global and national laws of protecting a child which are being monitored by child protection practitioners. Based on this, how the practitioners and social actors involved in protecting a child intervenes in the family, remains the driving focus of this research. Also, the research aims to ascertain the experiences of Nigerian parents on Swedish child protection service, and to evaluate the challenges and possibilities that can arise while working with the professionals. To achieve this, three research questions; 1) How do interviewed Nigerian parents perceive the intervention process of the child protection service in Sweden according to their experiences?, 2) What are the challenges interviewed Nigerian parents encounter while working with the child protection professionals?, 3) How can the intervention process of child protection in Sweden be enhanced? Formed the fulcrum upon which this study stands, while the exploratory instrumental case study was adopted as the research design used to develop an understanding of five specific cases of parents encounter with social workers in Sweden. Hence, this research presents an explanation of the different frameworks to child protection in Nigeria and Sweden. It further explores literatures on parenting, emergence of the Swedish ban on corporal punishment and the social work intervention process with principles that can guide social workers in their activities with families and children. The research takes the qualitative method with the use of semi-structured interviews which are analysed using the thematic analysis. There are seven (7) themes that were coded and analysed from the findings with focus on the experiences of the interviewed parents which presents a substantial discussion to theoretical approaches and previous research. The research findings reveal a strong link between social work educations, social work research and field practice in working with families and children in a multicultural context, communication gap between expatriate parents and relevant agencies responsible for child protection as obtainable in Sweden, and parents detest as being seen as defaulters of the law on child protection due to the negative image that accompanies it among others.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CP	Child Protection
CPL	Child Protection Law
CPP	Child Protection Practitioners
CPS	Child Protection Service
CPW	Child Protection Work
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
IFSW	International Federation of Social Work
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
NASW	National Association of Social Work
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
US	United States of America
WHO	World health Organisation
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The process of intervention in child protection services has raised increased concerns among families, professionals, communities, government and the general society. Reynaert, Bouverne-de-Bie and Vandeveldel (2009) mentioned that the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, led to the significant study of child protection service across the world. Therefore, variations in intervention process evolved as a result of the permissiveness of the UNCRC given to States leadership and legislative policies in amending the convention (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010).

In the field of child protection work, it is undoubtedly evident, that there are many social actors involved and the centre focus is on the child's needs and protection from risk. Some researchers argued that the parents should be seen as the primary advocate (Howe, 2001; Sund, 2006; Woodhouse, 2002) in terms of catering for the child's needs and protection from any risk situation, as ascribed to the best interest of their child. This was accompanied as a rationale for (Howe, 2001) who stated that the government should ensure that adequate supports are being given to parents to meet up with their primary duty of protecting their child. On a different thought, in accordance to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereafter, UNCRC), the government of a country has its duty in ensuring every child within her borders are protected (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010). Reynaert, et al., (2009), extensively pointed out the important roles of the government in child protection. The need for supporting families was not disagreed with; however, when the best interest of the child is perceived to be in danger and threatened by the child's primary family environment, then, the role of the government would not be compromised in terms of intervention in child protection as a political priority (Hearn, 2004).

Intervention process in Sweden on Child Protection Service seems to take a particular strategy that has been controversial in social research. Young, and her co-authors (2014) observed the strategy to be more investigatory rather than being supportive. The question of "at what point is the best interest of the child not promoted?" Are parents being supported with services and skills on how to uphold the child's best interest? were the rationales behind their observations. This has resulted into Parents' expectations and satisfaction with the process becoming subjective to the level to which the services have fulfilled their family needs.

It is difficult to predict situations that pose a great challenge to real application of knowledge and skills learnt to the practice of intervention in child protection work. Therefore, there could be side effects from intervention that are hard to detect (Munro, 2008). The Presumptions that exist while working with families like the Nigerian families who have their cultural values for family life different from that of the Swedish system; conflicts between the applied skills of the different professional backgrounds like the Social Work, Child Development Studies, Psychologist, Health care, Family Intervention Specialists amongst others. This has led to a significant importance of handling all the matters arising in child protection work, towards enhancing the process of intervention to improve practice judgements and decisions in terms of working with families and children.

1.2 Statement of Problem:

Child protection and child right is like a two sided coin. The issue of protection comes in the moment the rights of the child are not at the centre focus of the child's life. According to the statement of the Inter-Agency group (2012), the purpose of child protection is to guarantee children's right to a life free from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation at any given time and environment. The statement further mentioned that there are numerous social actors and roles in the child protection work. The actors include children and youths, parents, families, communities, government, private organisations and the civil society (Inter-Agency group, 2012). By inference from the above explanations, it could be said that effective child protection depends on the collaborative role play by the many actors involved in catering for the welfare of a child.

In a bid to harmoniously work together, Sharrock, (2013), noted that conflicts arises with the social service when the role of the immediate and natural environment of the child which is the family, is seen to be unsafe for the child. The issues of intervention comes in as the government takes it role from the point where it is perceived to be, that the family lacks sufficiency in carrying out its primary responsibility in ensuring the safety and care of the child and has acted unlawfully. Hence, there has been considerable displeasure and attention raised in research and among foreign families living in Sweden, concerning the process of intervention and how the decisions made by the workers has been dissatisfactory to parents and families (Edvardsson, 2010).

As mandated by the National Association of Social Workers (2005) in their child welfare practice standards, the intervention process in child welfare service should collaboratively engage families and child protection professionals as partners. This should inculcate the parents' perspective from the initial stage of assessment to the decision making stage. The NASW, further mentioned that the parents be involved in the defining the problem and suggest considerable solutions. This is to promote the best interest of the child as enacted by the UNCRC as regards to child's right. This can also foster a service mutuality in social work with families and children.

In addition, Harris, (2012) categorically noted that there has been a huge discrepancy in understanding the intervention process and skills of workers in combating conflicts and harm in the family. Parents particularly, expressed their dissatisfaction with the CPS as they perceive that their family privacy is being intruded and their self-identity misrepresented. In a research done by Schreiber, Fuller and Pacey, (2013), Edvardsson, (2010), they viewed the CPS in Sweden as beyond an intruder into the privacies of families. He said, that the Swedish welfare system assumes a position of control over the Swedish society. Further argument was that the system takes an investigatory approach, thereby putting scrutiny on parents and leaving constituted fear on them. Subsequent to the above, it was discovered that, parents' perception of the CPS in the United States (US) were similar to those in Sweden, as they developed feelings of fear and shame once being identified as a case in the CPS. More so, other researchers affirmed that the expressed feelings of fear and shame of these parents, makes the CPS work difficult during intervention. Thus, the Child Protection Workers become reluctant in engaging parents effectively during assessment of child safety, problem definition, and decision process (Ayon, Asienberg, & Erera, 2010; Harris, 2012; Kriz, Slyter, Iannicelli, & Lorie, 2012). One of the greatest fears of parents is the removal of their children from their homes by a social welfare worker that they presume to have legal powers and backup (Ayon et al., 2010; Dumbrill, 2006). As a result of the expressed fear by parents,

CPS workers encounter some difficulties in establishing the mutual and cordial worker/client relationship while working with the families. Therefore creating loopholes in the intervention process (Kriz et al., 2012).

Child protection has been an uprising issue among the Scandinavian country and across the world. In Finland, the child protection and welfare is also been regulated by the state policies and laws just as Sweden (Vornanen, Pölkki, Pohjanpalo & Miettinen, 2011). Priority is given to the child best interest and open care measures to the family with the out of home placement of the child as the last resort. However this does not dispute the feeling of fear and uncertainty of parents about their relationship with their child (Vornanen, et. al, 2011). The Norwegian child protection is also similar, but it has its administrative control owned by the state and the municipalities through assistive and care interventions which strictly focuses on the child`s best interest, though the need to work with a child and not bring misunderstanding within families have proved difficult, resulting to the unsatisfactory concerns of the Norwegian society (Kroken, 2012).

The effective enhancing of social work practice has frequently been occurring in different areas of social work research (Cheetham, Fuller, McIvor, and Petch, 2000), and one of the social work field where effective intervention is needed to improve is the child protection work (Vornanen, et. al, 2011). There are set of risks involved in the child protection work, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, which has limited knowledge, base on how to diversify interventions for a more suitable social work process; thus, the need for developing good practice in child protection, with clarity on administrative and professional roles with decision making in child protection (Munro, 2009).

This research seeks to address, the arising challenges that surrounds parents while working with child protection professionals. The experiences of Nigerian parents living in Sweden was examined and analysed, as considerable and practical ways of enhancing the child protection work was generated. This research is based on an ontological reasoning with specifics from the findings from the qualitative interview done with Nigerian parents, as it helped to explore and constructively analyse the discourse from their interpretations (Bryman, 2012; Brannen, 2007).

1.3 Rationale to the Study

Sweden is popularly known for embracing multiculturalism. As mentioned by Wiesbrock, (2011), Sweden moved from immigration policy to integration policy. The official shift was initiated by the idea of promoting social cohesion built on diversity, equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all its population not considering ethnicity and cultural background (Jederlund, 1999). With the reflection on the above statements about Sweden, I got interested in the integration policies relating to families when I came across some Nigerian families who were unsatisfied with their involvement in the child protection issues. More curiosity was based on the fact that they felt they were not properly integrated into the Swedish System as they lack sufficient knowledge about the Child Protection Laws which their defaulting led to some consequences on their family lives.

The rationale to this study is drawn from the well-known multicultural and social inclusive integration policies of Sweden and the Nigerian parent`s unsatisfactory experiences with the Swedish child protection service which includes a multicultural framework. Impacts of the involvement of the Social welfare on family lives raised some issues of self-identity,

misunderstanding of the multicultural frameworks and need to improve the process of intervention in the field of child protection. Hence, the aim of the research was generated.

1.4 Research Aim/Purpose:

The aim of the research centres on understanding the perception of Nigerian parents on the Swedish child protection service according to their experiences. Also, it proposes to examine the challenges and possibilities that arise while working with the professionals, and to outline practical ways of enhancing the intervention process of child protection in Sweden. This will contribute to the existing studies on child protection and add relevance to the knowledge of social work with families and children.

1.5 Research Question:

The research seeks to explore the following areas of questions;

1. How do interviewed Nigerian parents perceive the intervention process of the child protection service in Sweden according to their experiences?
2. What are the challenges interviewed Nigerian parents encounter while working with the child protection professionals?
3. How can the intervention process of child protection in Sweden be enhanced?

1.6 Conceptualization of Keywords

For the purpose of this study, the following keywords; Child Protection, Enhance, Child, Child Rights, Child Protection Professionals and Intervention Process are defined to reflect usage below.

Child: Under the Child Care Act 1991, “A child is defined as anyone who is below the age of 18 years”.

Child Protection: following the statement of the Inter-Agency group (2012), Child protection has the aim of giving guarantee to the rights of all children. A life free from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect in both emergency and non-emergency situations.

Enhance: this is the act of adding features to something. In this study it will be used as the features needed for improvement and betterment of the CPS system.

Child Protection Professionals: These are people who work with the Swedish Child Welfare System. They are workers who have been trained on how to intervene in family issues according to the law guiding their work.

Intervention Process: although, the term “intervention” could be used interchangeably with “methods”, they both represent a vital tool in the social work practice (Teater, 2010). In this research, the concept “Intervention” would reflect the step by step procedure involved by the

child protection professionals while doing child protection work. This involves a collaborative work with parents and social workers or child protection professionals.

Corporal Punishment: This would be referred to as “the deliberate infliction of physical pain by hitting, paddling, spanking, slapping, or any other physical force used as a means of discipline. It does not include physical pain caused by reasonable physical activities associated with athletic training” (Michigan Department of Education, 2011).

Social Work: For the understanding of the research, the social work profession is operational under the global definition of social work which was approved by the IASSW and IFSW. It states: “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels” (Global Definition of Social Work, 2014).

1.7 Structure of the Research

The research has been presented in six chapters. Chapter one introduces the research with a background to the UNCRC position on child protection and the Swedish approach to following the UNCRC mandate. The chapter further presents the statement of problem, rationale to the study, research aim/purpose, research question and conceptualization of keywords. Chapter two reviews literatures that relates to the research topic. Chapter three explains theoretical frameworks relevant for the understanding and analysing of the findings. Chapter four presents the methodological process of the research, including the research design, choice of participants, data collection procedure, ethical considerations and limitations to the study. Following, is chapter five, which presents findings and discussions in an ontological way without representing the researchers’ prejudices. Lastly, chapter six gives a summary on the findings and a conclusive remark on the entirety of the research with recommendations for all social actors in the child protection work.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Reviewing literatures plays a vital role in understanding a research. According to Bryman, (2016), it will serve as a background and justification for the investigation. In accordance to the above statement, some literatures that are relevant to doing child protection work and understanding issues that surrounds it will be presented in this chapter.

2.2 Understanding Child Protection in Sweden

While doing Child Protection Work, it is pertinent to understand that every country has its different applied law and intervention approaches. The CPS in Sweden engages in an investigatory process to secure any form of maltreatment against any child (Cocozza, Gustafsson, & Sydsjö, 2010). In addition, it includes prevention, response to violence, abuse, neglect and any form of exploitation done against a child (Lilian, 2015). Sundell, (2007) and co-authors in their article mentioned that the acts of physical and psychological abuse are not left out while doing the child protection work in Sweden. Therefore, any form of pain inflicted actions done by anyone towards a child as a means of punishment or discipline. The Social Services Acts in Sweden, regulates social supports and intervention processes. This includes taking children into protective care when the need arises. This is authorized and independently done within the two hundred and ninety (290) municipalities in Sweden (Leviner, 2013).

The child protection law, hereafter CPL, in Sweden has gone through several changes as the country developed in terms of welfare and policy implementation. It was first made in 1902 and amended in 1924. At that point, it laid responsibilities on the government to displace children from their primary home and into custody when there is a threat to their development and exposure of dangerous behaviours by the parents. This was based on previous assumptions that the behaviours that surround the child's environment can affect the future criminality of the child (Backe-Hansen, Højer, Sjöblomc and Storø, 2013).

In 1960, there was a review of the CPL which deployed more professional social workers into the field. In 1960 the CPL centred on the assessment of cases and administrative functions of the social workers. Parents conducts were also evaluated especially those who had problems with excessive drugs consumption and alcoholism. This was in accordance to the previous concern of measuring child future development with parental conduct and environment where they are been brought up from to prevent criminality and dysfunctional behaviours in children (Backe-Hansen, et, al. 2013).

The above explanation was criticized in 1980 as legislators argued against the notion of "problematic childhood" for a general reason to displace a child. Rather, they centered their opinions on the parents who have mental disturbances. This led to another amendment of the CPL in 1980 which extended its tentacles to a more integrative policy approach by voluntarily addressing the basic needs of the families. According to Andresen, (2005), the main objective of the Swedish Welfare System was not disjointed despite the changes in the past years. It remains on the family orientation approach with focus on child the needs of the child. Mandatory reporting is upon the police, staff of the schools, all who work with children

in various setting and to the general public to report to the social welfare services any ill treatment done against and towards a child. (Backe-Hansen, et, al. 2013).

The above explanation is still the main focus and principles of the Swedish CPL. Gilbert, Parton, & Skivenes, (2011) also mentioned in their research, that the voluntary intervention is faithfully followed by the delegates at the 290 municipalities. However, where there are severe need for urgency, a coercive decision is been taken as regards to the child and decisions about care are taken temporarily before a judicial opinion is granted. Therefore, decision about the care of the child increased as the need for foster care or residential care increased. Children are been placed in foster homes when their primary home is perceived by the social workers, to have harmful and uncondusive environment for the child's growth (Sjöblom & Wiklund, 2012).

During the period when the child is placed out of the home of the birth family into a different family, the aim of the CPL is to rehabilitate the parents and ensure family reunification without disrupting the biological and natural bonding of the parent/child relationship. Although, the previous report has it that when children leave care at the age of 18 which are the Swedish authorized age, they tend to return back to their birth parents or move to an independent life (Socialstyrelsen, 2006). Evidently, the several changes have not influenced the child centered approach of the Swedish CPL.

2.3 Child Protection Framework in Nigeria

The Federal Republic of Nigeria consist of 36 states which is divided into 589 local governments and one federal capital territory- Abuja. Since the 1960 independence of 45.2 million people, there has been a massive increase in population. The National Bureau of statistics recorded an estimate of 182.2 million in the last year 2015 population census. In the Nigerian government, there are three tier levels which includes; the federal, the state and local level. These levels of government control the legislative and judiciary functions of the country with supervision from the federal government. However, every state operates under its own government.

The Nigerian Child Right Acts (2003) states:

“The Act recognizes the rights of children, restores their confidence and self-esteem and improves their status. It will also enable children with disabilities, to enjoy their rights fully, as it provides special measures for their care and protection. All sectors of the society, including government and the people, will benefit from the production of well-grounded and self-confident future leaders”.

According to the Child Right Acts (2003), the rights of a child includes the right to protection and care necessary for wellbeing, survival and development, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of thoughts, conscience and religion, private and family life, freedom of movement, freedom from discrimination, dignity of the child, health services, parental care, protection and maintenance, free and compulsory universal primary education, among others. The Nigerian 1999 Constitution also states that every child must be listened to and has the right to be heard in matters concerning them. All the above is under the one key principle of “the best interest of the child”. Also there are policies and programmes that address violence against a child. These policies and programmes are designed under different levels of operations, which are; Family/Home level, School level, Institutional level,

Neighbourhood/Community level. The programmes at the various levels were supposed to help law enforcement in protecting the Nigerian child from all abuse, violence and neglects (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2004).

Despite the existence of the Child Rights Act (2003), most of the state governments have not implemented it in its totality; rather there seem to be different levels of acceptance of the law which affects its implementation. There has been a confronting issue on the numerous clashes on the cultural and ethnic values as regards to the care and upbringing of a child. Finance and lack of human resources, insufficient documentation on violations of rights are yet but a few of the challenges facing implementation. These challenges reflect in the social protection systems and programmes (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2009). Just like other African countries, Nigeria is not a welfare state. It operates under the mixed economy of socialism and capitalism. Hence most of the social programmes are been carried out by the federal ministries in partnership with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO), Charity organisations, etc (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2009)

In situations of child abuse and neglect, the major focus of the Nigerian law is when there are extreme and evident harm reflected on the child. There is no strong state involvement in the family affairs of its citizen except in cases of criminal, issues of domestic violence and child labour or juvenile delinquencies (Jones, 2009; 2011). Families have an understanding of the relationships that exist within them. Spanking of a child or any mild physical punishment is seen as a form of discipline for the development of the child. But, in extreme cases where pain and injury is inflicted on the child, then, there are raised alarms by neighbourhood which reports to social welfare office at the local government levels or an NGO, INGO. As revealed from the above explanations, there have been a lack of consistent synergy between social protection and child protection as it is been operated in the western countries (Jones, et al., 2011).

Child protection in Nigeria has been like the community responsibility as in other African countries. A popular saying in the Nigerian Culture states “It takes a village to raise a child”. Therefore, child protection has a different approach and focus (Holmes, et al., 2011), which is beyond the grievances of spanking, pointing, yelling at a child and its likes. Apparently, this is a far cry from what exist in the Swedish society. Hence, there could be confusion for the Nigerian families living in the Swedish society. Therefore, the need for adequate information and change is required of the families to live in conformity to the legal standards of the Swedish Child Protection laws.

2.4 SWEDEN’S BAN ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND PARENTING STYLES

Laws regarding children’s recognition, and respect as persons and individuals with rights was first enacted in Sweden in 1957; making the Swedish law against corporal punishment a case of first impression and a precedent to other countries across the globe which have either adopted the law or are yet to do so. This law went through several developmental stages before its final emergence in 1979. The ban on corporal punishment, no doubt, is in conformity with the socio-cultural norms in the Swedish society, with futuristic implications on the cognitive behaviour of the child and the attitude of the parent.

Many a scholar have argued that since the ban came into being, significant successes have been recorded due to a greater inclination to reported cases of child abuse, but not without a few challenges bordering on the competence of those responsible with handling such cases and the resources with which they are to work (The Children's Ombudsman 2006).

However, the issue of parenting and parenting styles cannot be divorced from corporal punishment in children. According to the Ombudsman (2006), parents and would-be-parents are supposed to be properly educated on how to ensure a better dealing with their children, while the children on the other hand are to be taught that they have right not to be subjected to any form of corporal punishment(s).

Baumrind (1966) postulates a prototypical description of three parenting styles namely; **permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles**. A critical evaluation of these parenting styles shows that the permissive and the authoritarian styles are at variance with each other, while the authoritative style is a crafty combination or harmonization of the first two parenting styles in children with the ability to elicit better cognitive behaviour in children when carefully applied. Logically, each of these parenting styles will be considered in juxtaposition with the law against corporal punishment in Sweden vis-à-vis which is better within the socio-cultural configuration of the Swedish society and in tandem with the law.

The **permissive parenting style** is more or less a lesser fair parenting technique, where the child is at absolute liberty to do that which he/she deems morally fit by his/her way of reasoning without any form of adult mentoring and character moulding. Baumrind (1966) opined that the parent "presents herself to the child as a resource for him to use as he wishes, neither as an ideal for him to emulate, nor as an active agent responsible for shaping or altering his ongoing or future behavior (p.889)." Rather, she (the parent) allows the child to regulate his own activities as much as possible, avoids the exercise of control, and does not encourage him to obey externally defined standards. No doubt, this parenting method supports the law on the ban on corporal punishment, but portends great danger for the individual, the family and the larger society. It is deducible therefore, to say that the Swedish law against corporal punishment favors the permissive parenting style.

On the other hand, the **authoritarian** parent believes in using punitive measures to instill obedience in the child. In most cases the child is not told why he/she should not behave in a particular way as considered wrong by the parent. In other words, this style of parenting is the direct opposite of the permissive style. The parent believes in keeping the child in his place, in restricting his autonomy, and in assigning household responsibilities in order to inculcate respect for work. She regards the preservation of order and traditional structure as a highly valued end in itself. She does not encourage verbal give and take, believing that the child should accept her word for what is right (Baumrind, 1966, p. 890).

This parenting technique, no doubt, would have given rise to the enactment of the law banning corporal punishment in Sweden. Since, the government reserves the right to take over the control of a child from the parent when a case of abuse is reported; it therefore means that the child belongs to the government who has set rules that totally insulate the child from any corrective measure by the parents considered to be inappropriate or infringing on the child's rights. Little wonder Hoskins (2014) argued that the authoritarian parenting style encourages verbal hostility, psychologically trauma, coercive assertive-power behavior which is detrimental to the maturation of the child.

The **authoritative parenting technique** is semi-democratic in nature as the parent tries to enforce her own perspective as an adult, but recognizes the child's individual interests and special ways. Under this parenting style, the parent takes into cognizance the feelings, attributes and the abilities of the child while seeking for a means on how to synchronise hers with that of the child. It is not in doubt, that one can deduce from this parenting technique that corrective measures are meted out to the child but not in any abusive way while helping the child to develop a sound cognitive behaviour.

Baumrind (1966) avers that the authoritative parent affirms the child's present qualities, but also sets standards for future conduct. She uses reason, power, and shaping by regime and reinforcement to achieve her objectives, and does not base her decisions on group consensus or the individual child's desires (p.891). However, the parent does not regard herself as infallible, or divinely inspired. Hoskins (2014) corroborates this assertion when he opined that children with authoritative parents exhibit the lowest level of depression and the highest levels of school commitment among their peers. Also, the authoritative parent tends to relinquish her monitoring role as the child matures to adolescent and starts making increasing demands on independent decision making.

Similarly, proponents of the ban on corporal punishment have argued that there are better ways to teach, correct and discipline children which are better for the child's development and relationships with parents and others, without using corporal punishment (Save the children, 2010). It is believed, that as corporal punishment is applied on the child, the child tends to believe that violence is a strategy through which issues can be resolved and a means to secure obedience from others. As a result, Durrant (1999) posit that several years after the ban on corporal punishment in Sweden, a plethora of changes must have taken place in the country in terms of policies, new regulations etc. But results from cognate researches carried out to ascertain the level of compliance and how effective the law has been towards the actualization of total extermination of the use of physical force on children, alteration of attitude in parents or guardians and early identification and intervention have recorded tremendous success.

2.5 CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN SWEDEN

Over the years, children all over the world have continued to suffer from different degrees of harmful actions or inactions from adults. This therefore, is what has generally been known as child abuse. According to Ambrose (2001) child abuse is “the deliberate and wilful injury of a child by a guardian either by hitting, beating with belt, cord, or other implement, slamming against a wall, burning with cigarettes, scalding with hot water, locking in a dungeon, torturing, sexually abusing and even killing. It involves active and hostile aggressive physical treatment (p.8).”

In 1999, the World Health Organisation (WHO) consultation on Child Abuse Prevention compared definition of abuse from 58 countries primarily to harmonise these variegated definitions of child abuse which are based on the cultural cum socio-psychological milieu of these countries. After the consultation, it was observed that child abuse is not limited to physical harm. That most child abuse statutes include emotional harm, sexual abuse or

exploitation, as well as acts or failures to act that result in an imminent risk of danger to the child (www.mtholyoke.edu, 2010, p. 6).

In Sweden, investigations into child abuse cases began in 1960s but assumed a national outlook in 1980 following a nation-wide survey carried out. Staffan et al., (2011) observed that from the mid-1980s cases of child abuse in Sweden was reported to be on the increase; however, the increase depended on a greater tendency to report abuse in children without any indication on severe abuse of children recorded. Consequently, it does appear that the compliance to the ban on corporal punishment in Sweden to a great extent has a positive impact on child abuse in trying to ameliorate it.

Again, there are speculations that since parents in Sweden complied with the ban on corporal punishment on their children, some school children still report cases of insults from their parents, thereby making it a necessity for constant investigation into cases of child abuse. Going by the definition of corporal punishment, it does encompass child abuse and neglect. In a research carried out by Save the Children (2010) the words *uncared-for*, *unwelcomed* and *neglect* among others were identified as synonyms to corporal punishment, suggesting that the ban on corporal punishment does not mean the child should be left alone or neglected, but that parents have a role to play in the development of their children not through punitive measures but through positive discipline. This was corroborated by the Committee on the rights of the child (CRC) in their explications that while corporal punishment is rejected, discipline is recognised as fundamentally important in a healthy childhood (para. 13). Therefore, a child reserves the right to be respected as a person and not to be abused, while the parents are encouraged to discipline the child when the need arises and not to inflict harm (physical, emotional, psychological and sexual) on the child.

2.6 THE SOCIAL WORK PROCESS

The process of social work practice comprises of sequence of task that is usually presented in a sequential manner. This manner usually revolves in a form of a cycle in which case, the social workers move from one process to another usually from assessment through implementation and evaluation and then back to assessment again till the termination and conclusion stage (School Of Social Work, 2011)

First, the social worker will have to be able to **assess** the needs of their service users, their strengths, resources and risks. This is followed by mapping out a plan of action on how the needs can best be met. These plans are then implemented by the users together with the social worker and others. And as the work progress, they are reviewed to see if the objectives and goals are achieved. And once it is achieved, the case is then closed and the person involved continues with life. In most cases the process is repeated before closing the case. Below shows diagram of the social work process as a cycle.

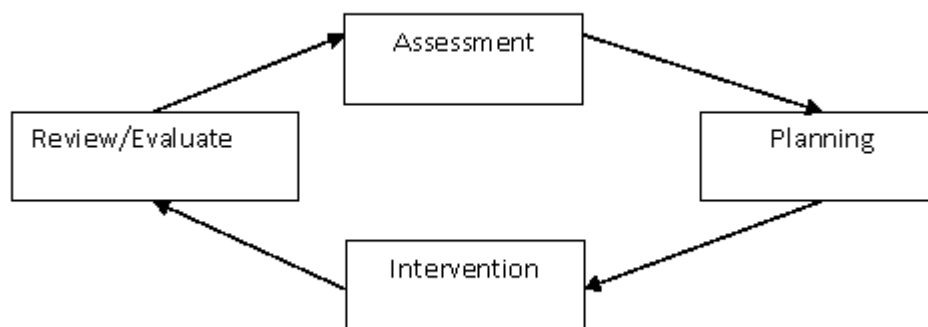


Figure 1: Social Work Process as a Cycle

The purpose of assessment is to determine and have a detailed understanding of a person’s needs, goals, strengths and resources. The social worker engages the service user at a human level and begins the assessment. Here, the social worker will be able to know who or what needs to be change, how things might change and why they need to be change in order to help the service user. This is the starting stage of investigation done with the CPW. They investigate the micro level and also interaction is been done within the meso level to ascertain concrete information on the child protection case. As mentioned in the research of Vornanen, Pölkki, Pohjanpalo, & Miettinen, (2011) on how to improve effectiveness in child protection work, Parents should be involved from the assessment stage which is the beginning of the process. In their research, they presented parents displeasure when been left out at the beginning of intervention. The macro level communicate within themselves and sometimes do not include the opinions of the micro system. This was defended with the “best interest of the child” concept.

As the assessment begins to take shape the social worker together with the service user and any other person that might be involved will use the assessment to begin to plan what to do. In planning, decisions are made based on the outcomes from the assessment. Deciding on what is going to be done with the assessment is a key factor in the social work process. A very well detailed assessment will lead to planned action. Planning takes care of who does what, when and how they will do it making reference to what the expected results are – the objectives. Planning should be flexible as this will help the social worker to respond adequately in times of changing circumstances. Not only that, it should be able to have enough information as regards to what is expected of those who are involve in the entire process. Working with families and children is a very sensitive area of social work that if not well managed could cause harm in family life (Welbourne, 2012).

Walker, and Beckett, (2011) described intervention to be involving, the social worker, the service user. This presents the need for collaboration between all social actors (parent, child, school, CPW). Failure to effectively involve the participation of all social actors could generate different problems. Doing intervention in CPW, all decisions are strictly put into actions. It is the more suitable approach for CPP to take by first exploring strengths within the family system before acting on removal of the placement of the child from primary home environment to a foster care home.

A proper review and evaluation is needed at the final process to determine how effective the actions being carried out were. This is necessary as it helps the social worker to reflect on his actions and keep updating the assessment and the plans. Here it is necessary to find out if the result that was expected was really achieved, if things changed for the better or worse, if the person involved now has the wellbeing to continue without support, etc. This kind of analysis forms the basis of a review and evaluation as without this step it is impossible to say whether the intervention really helped. Sometimes this stage can lead the social worker back to reassessing the whole situation and carry out the processes again by going through all aspect of the work before finally closing the work (Walker, and Beckett, 2011)). This is the reasons why sometimes the social work process sometimes seems to be more like a cycle than a straight line as shown in figure 1.

2.7 PRINCIPLES FOR PRACTICING CHILD PROTECTION

In accordance with the social work values and the objective of the UNCRC 1989, the Department of children and youth affairs (2011) presented a national guidance to inform best practice in the child protection work. In their writings, ten principles were elaborated which would be resourceful in this research. They include the following;

1. The welfare and best interest of children is the central aim and priority.
2. In cases of risk and vulnerability, there should be early intervention through family support.
3. Parents/Carers and families have rights and their rights must be respected while protecting the children's' rights. In terms of clash of interest, the child welfare should be of major focus.
4. Children should be seen as independent beings in all matters that affect their lives. Their rights to be heard or listened to and opinions considered should be promoted. The level of their understanding in relation to their age should not be despised.
5. The voices of the parents/carers should be listened to and respected because they are part of the family.
6. Intervention should not work with the child in isolation. The circumstance around the child; like religion, culture, race, gender, age, stage of development should be understood within a family context.
7. Criminal behaviours and risk must not be overlooked.
8. Out-of-home placement should only be considered when all means of working with the families have been exhausted. In view of the child's future, family reunification should be of importance.
9. Organisations working with children should be trained on using a multidisciplinary approach through effective management, understanding actors' responsibilities in preventing, detecting and handling cases of child abuse and neglect.
10. Where professionals acts in the best interest of the child, the impacts of an adult behaviour should also be considered while working with children (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011, Paragraph 1)

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The social work profession is rooted in a systematic body of evidence informed knowledge, and recognises the importance of theoretical tools in its practice, evaluation, research and documentation. Therefore, this research will explore the following theoretical tools and approaches to further buttress answers to the research questions, suggest possible ways of understanding Child Protection work. Also, a knowledge base for practitioners would be exposed on how to enhance professional practice while working with families and children. This will make the research more empirical and scientific in nature.

- Ecological systems theory
- Ecological Approach in Social Work
- Power Relations

3.2 Ecological Systems Theory

In a bid to understand and draw relationships, between the ecological systems theory and Social Work practice, it is pertinent to state the basic definition of the term “Ecology”. According to Wikipedia definition, ecology is the study of the relationships between organisms and their environment. Apparently, the above definition of “Ecology” shows parallel connectivity between the natural and social sciences. In the social sciences, the ecological system theory centers on the dynamic and reciprocal relationships between human organisms and various environmental factors. These factors range from the family, community, sociocultural, political and institutional contexts (Kemp, 2015).

The ecological systems theory has a broad perspective that spans through numerous fields of theory and research in the social sciences. Its main aim is to influence researchers and practitioners on the relevance of incorporating the multiphase, multidimensional and integrative approach in regards to human-environment relationships. Overtimes, there had been criticisms against this theory to be overly abstract and difficult to operationalise in practice. Despite the criticisms, researchers and practitioners found the ecological systems theory to be a functional tool and informing in various range of practice (Kemp, 2015).

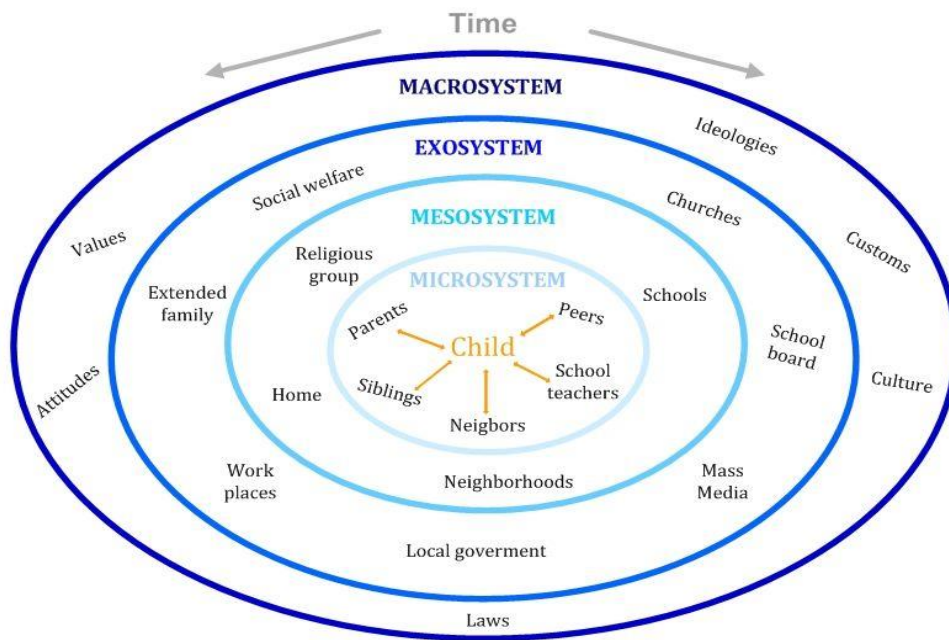


Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's Structure of the (Human-in-environment) Ecological Systems Theory

3.2.1 Contextualizing Ecological Systems Theory in Child Protection Work

Urie Bronfenbrenner, in his ecological systems theory, identified five systems that help to understand the interactions between and within the environment. Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem and Chronosystem (Berk, 2000). In child protection work, this theory could be an effective tool in the intervention process. This theory proposes the various levels of interaction that should be put in to consideration while working with Children. The Child is the center of this approach. Therefore, for further clarifications, the basic levels of the Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory will show some relationships between the child protection work and the Human-in-environment concept.

Microsystem: is the immediate environment that influences the child development. This consists of the family, neighbourhood, school, peers. In this structure, the child is influenced in two ways. Berk, (2000) described it as either influence towards the child or away from the child. Hence the responsibility of parents to care for their child could play a great role in the development of the child. Because, the family is the first environment the child develops in.

Mesosystem: The Mesosystem is a structure that explains the interaction between the micro systems; the family and the school, the family and the child's peer, etc. The teachers play the next role of ensuring every child has a balanced and risk free environment. The mesosystems fosters a relationship and responsibilities on both the family and the school.

Exosystem: This system connects immediate environment with the social setting where the child does not play an active role. This includes the social welfare, place of worship, mass media, and parent's work place, among others. The child development can still be felt by the positive or negative influences from the interaction of these systems with its immediate environment.

Macrosystem: This system describes the outer layer of environment around the child. It includes the culture, ideologies, values, customs and laws (Berk, 2000). This system explains how all these laws, cultures and the likes, influence parents' way of raising their children; which could have some clashes between themselves at the point of interconnection of relationships. Therefore, the parents' responsibility at the microsystem level become questioned (Berk, 2000).

3.3 Ecological Approach In Social Work

The ecological approach in social work was explicitly developed by Caryl Chessman in 1973 and became increasingly known and commonly used among social workers as a practice approach for intervention and in exploring research (Pardeck, 1988). The ecological approach had some criticisms on its ambiguity and failure to outline specific procedures for (i) engagement in assessment, and (ii) practice in intervention process (Pardeck, 1988, p 92-100). Yet, researchers still recommend its use in the field of social work and particularly in the child protection work.

This approach further explains how individuals can adapt and fit into their environment. The key focus of this approach is the interaction between organisms and their environments. This is an extract from the ecological systems theory but developed to accommodate the issues in the social work practice. Pardeck (1988) mentioned three major concepts necessary for understanding the ecological approach. They are; "(1) understanding the behavioural setting, (2) study the ecosystem and (3) define the client's problems individually." He affirmed that with the understanding and deep observation of those concepts, there will be an easier and dynamic approach to the knowledge gained while adopting the ecological approach to understand the social world (Pardeck, 1988, p 92-100).

In addition to the above, having defined what ecology means, there is a need to understand the existing behavioural relationship among individuals and between individuals and their environment as they behave differently according to their environment. As described by Pardeck (1988), the individual ecosystem consist of a number of intra-personal and inter-relationships between the individual themselves, families, peers, educational settings, and the broader community. Hence, the classifications of the ecological system explore all interactions of ecologies from the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem to the macro system (Jones, 2010). Therefore, in a clearer view, the ecological approach could be seen as a tool, that enables and equips social workers to conceptualise the different problems they encounter with the people they work with. Although, in their work, complexities could occur during the study of behaviour as it relates to its environment. However, it helps social workers understand the dynamics of behaviours portrayed by individuals, families and all groups which they work with and apply uniqueness in the process of intervention.(Germain & Bloom, 1999, p 16-22).

The ecological approach further explains how individuals' adaptation to their environment could affect their development. Now, taking a closer ontological interpretation of the ecological approach, it could be inferred that, for proper integration of individuals into their new environments, there could be need to shift from previous behavioural settings, social norms and adjust accordingly to the social norms of their changed environment (Norman, 2000). However, when there is a clash between the harmonization of both norms existing

inherent in the consciousness of the individual, then, the need for social workers intervention will become of utmost necessity to mitigate between the existing clashes and guide the individual on how to adapt effectively in the new environment (Norman, 2000).

Tew, (2005) viewed the ecological approach as a distinct way of doing social work. He said that, the approach does not concentrate on the individuals alone as the conventional social work would in the definition of problems of the people they work with. Rather, the approach focuses individuals' problems and difficulties in relation to the malfunctioning of the eco systems. The ecological approach hence, points out the need for social workers who explore merely the individual approach in practice, to rather consider the individual-in-ecology approach in the assessment and intervention of the social work process.

3.3.1 Using Ecological Approach for Intervention

According to Norman (2000), there are two processes the ecological assessment can take. Firstly, there should be the identification of the root cause to the problems, and sources of strengths which can be utilized to enhance the adaptive and developmental wellbeing between the eco systems. This explains the relevant use of the ecological approach for intervention process in child protection work. Where social workers are able to look at the confronting problem between families in different angle and also look into the families for inherent strength and utilize social resources to help the families regain stability. This negates the individualistic method of the traditional social work which emphasises on the individual deviant behaviour. Secondly, there is the need for social workers to specify those services that could be used to help the families to progress and live according to their present environment in compliance to the social norms (Norman, 2000).

To further buttress Norman's contribution, Nash, Munford & O'Donoghue, (2005), identified seven important stages for the intervention process which are different from the traditional social work methods; (1) entering the system, (2) mapping the ecology, (3) assessing the ecology, (4) creating a vision for change, (5) coordinating and communicating, (6) reassessing and (7) evaluating (Nash, et al, 2005, p 32-41). From the first stage, the social worker enters the eco systems and interacts with the various systems. This is to help the social worker have a clearer picture while identifying the problem (Kerson, 2002). The mapping stage which is the next does critical interpretation and assessments of what has been identified previously and interaction with the different sub systems like parents, spouse, and the child. The assessment of relationships could involve the family, school, workplace, and community where relevant information could be derived from (Norman, 2000). The creation of a changed vision involves the openness of the social worker to change throughout the intervention process. The social worker is expected to portray dynamism and not rigid within their discoveries. They should pay attention to new information and symptoms that can guide their work effectively. Following afterwards, is the coordination and communication which is very in child protection and the general social work. Pardeck, (1988); Norman, (2000) states that social workers must coordinate and communicate with the people they work with and at every stage. This will make them know if there is a need for reassessment or proceed to evaluation which is the final stage which helps influence the decision and treatment procedure with the families they work with (Nash, et al, 2005).

3.3.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Ecological Approach

Bringing focus to the intervention process in child protection work, the ecological approach as explored by Germain in the 1970s unfolds certain positive influences which would be ontologically interpretative for social work practitioners. In the research work of Pardeck (1988), he identified that the approach helps social workers to (1) have a deeper understanding of human problems and the external factors that surround such problems. (2) The social workers tend to approach the child protection work with a different viewpoint which is the individual-in-environment perspective. This gives rooms for the social workers to explore the maladaptive issues as a function of the influence of the families' social and cultural backgrounds and not see the parents as deviants in their individualistic way; Hence the need for a multicultural understanding (Miller, 2011). (3) Another advantage of the ecological approach to social work intervention process in child protection work is that, the interaction of the social worker with the various eco systems (Parents, schools, etc.), helps to foster good relationship and promotes the collaborative and partnership way of working and achieving set goals in the social work profession (Pardeck, 1988).

On the other hand, having mentioned the advantages of the ecological approach to the social work intervention process, there are some critics as well. (1) It has been criticised that the broad perspective of the ecological approach could lead the social worker into ambiguity while identifying the problems of the people they work with. (2) Since, it provides numerous possible understanding to the root cause of the problem, it has lacked possibilities in giving specific answers and techniques on how to handle the confronting social problem. Therefore, it leaves the social worker with some kind of confusion in finding suitable approach and tool to work with (Pardeck, 1988).

In summary, there has been a lot on the above theoretical approach. Hence for social workers doing child protection work who would choose to adopt and apply the ecological approach, it will provide a wider knowledge and understanding of the families and their social, cultural environment. It will also be a helpful tool in preventing the "blame the victim" act. Yet there should be a considerable harmonization between the ecological approach and other relevant tools for an effective intervention process and enhanced social work with families and children.

3.4 Power Relations

The concept of "power" has often been defined differently which has sometimes shown lack of clarity and contradictory to the term "empowerment" (Pease, 2002). Therefore it will be very helpful to have a clear description of the notion of power and how its relations have a measure of impact on the child protection work.

According to Tew, (2006) the concept of power could be understood as a social relation between people at different scales of relationship. "It ranges from the patterning of the society, the interpersonal interactions and the construction and organisation of personal identities". He further explained that the top-down and bottom-up operation of power could be systematic in constructing social differences which can result into individual or social change (Miller, 1991 in Tew, 2006).

“The understanding and operation of power maybe contradictory, oppressive or limiting in some situations. It could also present open or close opportunities (like resources and social or economic participation, developing personal identities and capabilities, expressing needs, thoughts and feelings, and renegotiating relationships) for individuals and social groups (Tew, 2002; pg 165)”.

Power as a dynamic concept leads to individual change as well as great change on the society. Holmes, (2002) mentioned that every individual and population have obligation to respect orders and be obedient. Hence, portraying some scale of power between the superior and inferior. The two modes of power that was categorically analysed by Tew, (2006) was presented in the understanding that power could be in a superior way of “power over” and in a collective way as “power together”. They are as below; (1). Productive modes of power (2). Limiting modes of power Productive modes of power: this could be protective in terms of protection for vulnerable individuals, children and families. Here power is being deployed as to have the cooperative power of collective action with so much value on communal sharing Limiting modes of power: which includes oppressive and collusive power.

The different classification of power by Tew, was presented in a matrix which concisely defines the variations between the concepts of power. Below is the matrix which could be used to understand the day to day interactions between people, families and organisations in the society and could be applied in understanding the social work practice.

Table 1: Matrix of Power Relations (Tew, 2006).

	Power Over	Power Together
Productive modes of power	<i>Protective power</i> Deploying power in order to safeguard vulnerable people (families) and their possibilities for advancement	<i>Co-operative power</i> Collective action, sharing, mutual support and challenge – through valuing commonality <i>and</i> difference
Limiting modes of power	<i>Oppressive power</i> Exploiting differences to enhance own position and resources at the expense of others	<i>Collusive power</i> Banding together to exclude or suppress ‘otherness’ whether internal or external

3.4.1 Applying the Matrix of Power Relation to Child Protection Social Work:

Child protection social work involves working with families as earlier mentioned. The picture of the family with the parents and children would be used to explain and understand the position of Tew’s matrix of power relations. The Productive modes of power which includes the protective and cooperative power can be described in a family scenario. Parents want to protect their children, they want to be involved in the decision making and upbringing of their children’s lives. However, children should equally be made to stand as independent beings in matters concerning their lives. Families could work in a collaborative way when the understanding and roles of both parents and children are clearly defined without interference.

Yet we cannot overlook the moments of clashes in responsibilities. This is the point of limiting power, when either the parent tries to oppress the child with the superior position or the child with the knowledge of their rights, get away with any behaviours which may not be accepted by the parents. Also collusive power can be reflected with either the parent or the child trying to refuse responsibility for their behaviours (Tew, 2006). It is a bit complicated how power can be demonstrated within the family. Yet, when there is no clarity on how it could be applied while doing child protection work, then, there could be a disadvantaged group.

Social workers need to be aware of the dynamics of power relations between families so as to appropriate their skills in the process of intervention. Smith and Seward (2009) noted that thinking of families as being shaped by their social circumstances could help social workers in having different views about the happenings between the families they work with. This will help in distinguishing between oppressive power and co-operative power and give social workers an in-depth understanding to the definition of family life in the context of those they work with (Reisch & Jani, 2012). Though, this could seem more like a dilemma for the social workers, because so much is expected from them while they struggle between exerting and following the instruction of the state as regards child protection “in the child’s best interest”, and being non-judgemental towards the parents as there is an already existing social construction of stigma and shame attached to been seen as a family with issues of incompetency and problems of deviant behaviour towards the state (Roose, Roets, and Schiettecat, 2014). Therefore, some measures of carefulness should be applied by the social worker in this context.

3.5 Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Symbolic interactionism theory had Erving Goffman as one of the leading proponents. Although, it was further developed by other social scientist like; Herbert Blumer, George Simmel and others. According to Blumer, symbolic interactionism is the process and practical understanding of interaction in the formation of meanings for individuals and, in relation to their environment (Blumer, 1969). The theory was based on three focus areas: meaning, language and thought. These three focus areas developed further explanations on the definition of ones’ self, identity and socialization into a larger community (Griffin, 1997).

For further exposition on the focus areas of the symbolic interactionist perspective; meaning, explains human behaviour and reactions towards people as a result from the meanings individuals attach to each other’s actions. This was further illustrated by Griffin, to be said that human responses were not directly to the actions of individuals rather they are responsive and focused on the meaning and the interpretation of those actions. Language describes how humans negotiate meaning through symbols with each other. While thoughts redefines the interpretation of the symbols communicated among individuals (Griffin, 1997).

Symbolic interactionism centers on the social construction of meanings deduced from and ascribed to the world around us. This theory is more about how we use things as symbols to interact with each other, and how we create and define the self-concept that is reflected outwardly and within us as the reality we believe. Ritzer & Stepnisky, (2017), highlighted the principles of the symbolic interactionism theory. They include;

"Principles of Symbolic Interactionism

- Human beings, unlike lower animals, are endowed with the capacity for thought.
- The capacity for thought is shaped by social interaction.
- In social interaction people learn the meanings and the symbols that allow them to exercise their distinctively human capacity for thought.
- People are able to modify or alter the meanings and symbols that they use in action and interaction on the basis of their interpretation of the situation.
- People are able to make these modifications and alterations because, in part, of their ability to interact with themselves, which allows them to examine possible courses of action, assess their relative advantages and disadvantages, and then choose one.
- The intertwined patterns of action and interaction make up groups and societies" (Pg, 341).

Taking inference from the above defined focus areas of the symbolic interactionism theory, Goffman (1958), described the concept of self as when individuals evaluate themselves as a function of the interpretations and meanings from other people's view about themselves (social construct). The concept of self was further added to be a function of language (cultural construct) and generalized thoughts which are the make-up of expectations of people around us. Therefore individuals tend to define themselves as part of a community when their behavior is judged to meet the expectations of the society and environment they find themselves. This theory could be effective in evaluating human interaction and behavior as a social and cultural constructs. However, it can also lead to problems in communication when there are wrong assumptions made and closed communications among individuals (Griffin, 1997).

As stated by Chaiklin, (1979), interaction is when communication, relationship is being considered by those involved. This is when one is taking account of the other. Furthermore, interaction is successful when expectations of each participant are properly communicated and understood. This does not necessarily mean that there will be full acceptance of the expectations, but proposes the existence and awareness of those expectations by each participants. The symbolic interactionism theory, proposes an individualistic approach to working with people. Its deep and variety knowledge gives an overview in the social work with families and children.

3.5.1 Relevance of Symbolic Interactionism to Child Protection/Social Work

“To make social theory useful for practice its concepts must be in a form which is compatible with the ways practitioners relate to people. Symbolic interaction has a unique contribution to make to this endeavor. Its unit of attention is interaction; what goes on between people. Facts and ideas at this level of abstraction can be used in intervention. By contrast theories of society and theories of system are descriptive. They provide useful background information for practice” (Chaiklin, 1979).

Symbolic interactionism helps in the field of social work for theorizing and practice (Forte, 2001). The child protection work as an area of social work, works with many social actors at the microlevel, mesolevel, exolevel and macrolevel of the ecological systems. Goldstein

(2001), mentioned the importance of this theory to social work. In that, it enables social workers understand the world and social view of the society through a pragmatic and humanistic perspective. The theory further help appropriate meaningful interactions between practioners and the people they work with. This is very applicable in the child protection work. Parents interactions and behaviours towards their children is not socially constructed to be good or bad according to the environment they live but understood within the communication and cultural value of the families. This theory however, does not excuse abuse and unacceptable behavioureven though it streesses on freedom. It projects roles as anothter major concern. The adherence to individuals roles and responsibilities would however help in strengthening mutual interaction and human development with little or avoidable conflict in ideas (Goldstein, 2001).

3.5.2 Advantages and Limitation of the Symbolic Interactionism theory

According to Chaiklin, (1979), the symbolic interactionism theory, could be seen as advantageous to practitioners working directly with individuals, families and other groups. This is because the theory which took the bottom-top approach of working with people focuses more on individuals, how they act and the interactions that exist between them. This is different from most of the social theories that rather focuses more on the society and take the top-bottom approach of ameliorating and handling social problems. Also the cultural construct imbibed in this theory helps to promote individual autonomy and rights to be respected in their own world with a strong philosophical base in understanding and interpreting the behaviors and reactions of people.

In addition to the above statements, Chaiklin laid more emphasis on the principles of the symbolic interactionism theory as a helpful tool in directing practitioner's attention towards the evident behavior(s) confronting and supporting practice. More to it, the important concerns addressed in the theory (self-concept, roles and mutual expectations, importance of meaning, language and thoughts, culture, social construct of self and human development) are directly connected to the understanding of social views, knowledge, multicultural situations and the ecological point of departure in theory. In a nutshell, the symbolic interactionism theory harnesses the interactions between the micro-levels that can help social workers and child protection practitioners in drawing conclusions in their work between the relationships that exist within and among the micro-level, meso-level, exo and macro-levels. It gives a direct and clear direction for practice without the confusion and complexities that exist with the application of theories to practice.

A limitation to the symbolic interactionism theory is that it lacks a comprehensive knowledge about how to address all aspects of human behaviours. Hence, the need for social workers and social scientist to draw knowledge from other theories so as to have a balance in practice and a more appropriate method while intervening into social problems.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter shows the how the research was conducted, approaches and methods used, who participated, why they were chosen, where the research was conducted with the process of analysis adopted and the ethical considerations.

4.2 Epistemology, Ontology and Qualitative Research Method

Choosing a research method, it is important to consider epistemological, ontological and theoretical approaches while representing researchers' opinions. Thus, in this research, opinions and discussions were presented in an interpretative and constructive manner following previous research literatures and theoretical approaches (Bryman, 2012; Brannen, 2007). The interpretative perspectives given by the participants took the form of the epistemological reasoning as explained by Bryman (i.e. theories, findings and discussions were generated from the interpretation of the experiences the Nigerian Parents had with the Swedish child protection service). Following the above, there was focus on the meaning of words drawn from the participants' experiences (qualitative research) and not on quantification as it is been done in the qualitative research. This made the study embrace the richness of knowledge and ideas presented through the qualitative research method at the expense of volumes of information provided with quantitative approach (Brannen, 2007).

According to Bryman, (2016), qualitative research was used to understand and have deep knowledge of the experiences the interviewed parents had about the child protection laws and how they lived or not live in conformity to the law considering their different experience from their home country. The research design as an exploratory instrumental case study – was used to develop an understanding of five specific cases of parents' encounters with social work professionals. Understanding the social phenomenon of intervention process in child protection and how the Swedish system takes the investigatory approach. This included the views of the interviewed Nigerian parents as major actors in the research (Kvale, 1996).

Interviews, transcription, coding, analysis was done by the author. There was no aid from any research assistant. Doing all the methodological process as the researcher, helped in understanding the research without need for clarifications (Bryman, 2016). There was no need for an interpreter so all data was adequately accessed and understood.

4.3 Study Area

The interview sessions were carried out in the convenient setting of the participants in order to ensure their feelings of trust and safety during participation. To support the previous sentence, I had to travel to the locations of the participants. Initially, I had wanted participants within Gothenburg for easy movements, but, due to the sensitive nature of the research, it was a bit difficult getting some families to participate. Some still had their case ongoing in the court and that had placed them in an unhappy situation. Therefore, trying to convince them to participate will place them in an objectified position and make my intentions selfish and

inconsiderate. As a result of that, the snowballing technique finally suggested contacts with some families who lived within and outside Gothenburg and had concluded their case(s) with the Swedish social welfare.

4.4 Study Population

The Nigerian Parents were chosen for the study population because, I as a Nigerian was interested in understanding the differences between the two countries in terms of child protection frameworks (Nigeria and Sweden). Also, I was interested in Parents who had experience both approaches. This means Parents who were not born in Nigeria were not allowed to participate, rather, those who grew up in Nigeria and had understanding of the practices back home before moving to Sweden were the major target population for the research. So, with my understanding of the national laws and some major languages spoken in Nigeria, I established good relationships with the parents I met at the year 2016 December conference in Stockholm which included Nigerians and other nationalities from all over Sweden. Previously, I thought of making the research to include other AfroSwedes (i.e Africans living in Sweden), but there was a kind of difficulty and shortage of time in contacting the organisations who work with such families. Also, some families I met were not the English-speaking, therefore communication was not smooth, and for me to get a translator then, was not at my disposal.

There will be an informed consent as well as a confidentiality undertaken to ensure no bridge of ethics. The interview sessions will be tape recorded with the knowledge of the participants. It is pertinent to mention as this will be a threat to dignity and integrity of the researcher if done without the knowledge of the participants (Hammersley, Martyn & Atkinson, Paul, 2007).

4.5 Literature review and Limitations

Bryman (2016) emphasised on the relevance of reviewing literatures in social research. Previous research on the child protection framework in both Sweden and Nigeria was presented. The Swedish ban on corporal punishment and the different parenting styles was used to link different parental behaviours as the both countries (Nigeria and Sweden) take different approaches to child protection. This was used to drawn relationships between the need for understanding the need for multiculturalism as projected by the participants. In addition, literatures were reviewed on how to understand communication in the child protection work and further presented the social work process with principles used in working with families and children.

During my search for relevant literatures, I was confronted with the limitation of getting more appropriate theoretical approaches that would address all issues highlighted in the findings. Vornanen, et. al., (2011) in their research for effective child protection mentioned difficulties in theorizing intervention process in child protection work. That was major challenge as well to this research. In addition, most previous research done in Sweden and most Scandinavian countries were interested in children placed in foster homes, parents' attitude to engagement, children who needed their voices to be heard and the likes. Research on parents experience

and challenges were usually substantially underreported. However, I explored knowledge from the above listed areas and the tried to be explicit in presenting the experiences of Parents and how they can the social work intervention process could be enhanced through fostering parent collaboration with the CPW and promote family support groups to serve as a preventive measure to alienating perceived child abuse and unacceptable disciplinary behaviours towards children and among families

4.6 Sampling Technique and Selection process

The snowballing technique was adopted in this research. The first contact (Parent) I met was at a year 2016 December conference I attended in Stockholm. During our interaction she got to share her experiences and developed trust in me because of the platform where we met. With her as my first contact I shared my interest of research and she agreed to be helpful in participating as well as linking me to other parents although the participants were across Sweden and not one specific city. This posed as a limitation to me as I had to incur travel expenses at different times and at the convenience and availability of the participants. The snowballing techniques as one of the most commonly used technique in qualitative research were quite successful to my research. All participants were selected through contacts from other parents. It is worthy of mentioning that most of the participants gotten initially were those whose cases were still ongoing. Therefore to avoid objectifying the participants, parents who had concluded their case(s) with the CPS were only selected.

4.7 Sample size

The research had the sample size of five participants who were Nigerian parents who have had experience(s) with the Swedish Child Welfare services, have lived in Sweden for a minimum of one year and were not born in Sweden. This, I decided for was because I wanted to get views from Parents who have experienced the different child protection approaches both in Nigeria and Sweden. A random selection of snowball was adopted in making choice of the exact five participants.

4.8 The Participants

Participants included five parents (4 mothers, 1 father) who were within the ages (30-50 years) and the children involved were within the ages (5-11 years). To ensure confidentiality as an ethical issue, the cases of each participant was presented in an anonymous manner. Also, it took the form of the use of pseudonyms and not their real names, without any of their locations mentioned.

4.9 Participants Experiences

The participant's experiences were presented in the chapter of findings. This was done for a better understanding of the findings and analysis as each finding had its peculiarity based on the different stories narrated by the parents. Some parents had experiences that gave them a positive impact about the CPS like being impressed about the good and deep level of

investigations and feedback in communication; others were negative where the child was removed from the home which led to other impacts on family life.

4.10 Data Collection

The study uses both primary and secondary data. The primary data would be collated through interviews from Nigerian parents who have lived in Sweden for more than one (1) year and had previous experience(s) with the Swedish child protection service. The participants were families who do not have an ongoing case. Secondary data from scholarly sources like journal articles, published dissertations and books were used. This acquired an appreciable knowledge in understanding the research topic and developed considerable recommendations. Obtaining secondary data, databases such as SAGE Journals, Scopus, PubMed, Cambridge Journals online, ProQuest, and other online library was collected, for secondary data – through the Gothenburg University website, the google advanced search books and articles.

4.11 Interview Guide

The interview guide included two sections; section A showed the criteria for each parent to participate. Their personal information like name, age, period of living in Sweden was asked. Section B part of the interview guide showed, relevant questions relating to the research questions. Open ended questions were used to allow Parents give deep and rich explanations.

4.12 The Interview Process

Before the commencement of each interview, parents were sent the letter of participation and informed consent prior to the meeting by emails. They were told that they could decline at any time. Yet, they were equally informed about how the research will protect their identity by presenting the findings in an anonymous manner. The interview lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour maximum and was audio recorded.

4.13 Semi-Structured In-depth Interviewing

In this research, the qualitative research method was adopted as earlier mentioned. The research used the semi-structured in-depth interview as the method of qualitative research. This was adopted because of the sensitivity of the research topic and how it draws close connection to real life experiences. Meeting the parents, one on one basis, helped in strengthening their trust and openness while sharing their experiences. Hence they gave in-depth and deep explanations (Walliman, 2006). Their opinions were not influenced as against that of focus group discussion where participants' opinions could be influenced by other participants at the focus group discussion (Bryman, 2016).

4.14 Analysing the Data

Transcription and Thematic Analysis

Transcription was done manually and coded in the denaturalised form. Words were considered only without the inclusion of pauses or any form non-verbal communication cues. This was time consuming the interview recordings had to be listened to several times to ensure no words were missed.

Thematic analysis was used to code the data, develop themes and analyse the data. Following the point expressed by Kohler, (2008), thematic analysis helps in having a straightforward analysis. Its clear methods were helpful in generating significant findings. The thematic qualitative analysis method was used to interpret the findings after the interview. Some extracts was taken from the transcript for the analysis was not all the information from the recording will be analysed. Only parts that address the research questions will be retrieved. Hence, it will be in a denaturalised approach (Bryman, 2016). All interviews will be transcribed, coded and analysed by the researcher. This will give better understanding and knowledge in developing themes from the interviews and explaining the result findings. Bryman (2012) affirmed that it is an added advantage if the transcription, coding is done by the researcher, because it will lead to a flow of understanding the data while interpreting and developing themes for the results of the findings. Below is Table3 showing the classification of themes and their subthemes.

Table 3: The seven (7) research themes and subthemes.

S/N	THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1	Parents´ knowledge on the Swedish CPS	
2	Parents´ experiences with the child protection practitioner	❖ Self-identity
3	Issues of power between the parent, child and CPP	❖ Parent/Child power ❖ Parent/Worker power
4	Parents´ involvement during intervention process	❖ Communication ❖ Need for parents´ voices to be heard
5	Impacts of intervention on family life	❖ Disrupts peaceful moments
6	Assessment on Workers attitude towards intervention	❖ Understanding the multicultural context ❖ Good investigations ❖ Feedbacks
7	Possible ways for enhancing intervention process in child protection work	❖ Promote child rights and child´s obligations to being respectful ❖ Sensitization for social workers ❖ Education for families about CPL ❖ Open-mindedness and Love ❖ Listen/Consider Parents Opinion ❖ Support Family Forums ❖ Increase Family support and Reduce family separation

4.15 Validity, Reliability and Generalizability

Validity in qualitative research shows the trustworthiness accuracy and correctness of the research findings. It is very possible when a research done by the researcher could reflect bias

and personal prejudices. However it qualitative validity presents methods of how the purpose of the research was done (Bryman, 2016 Cresswell, 2014; Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). This research is however valid as the interview guide shows strong connection and relevance to the research questions in a transparent manner. Aims and purpose of the research were made known to participants before the scheduled time and meeting.

Qualitative reliability is concerned with the consistency and repeatability of the findings. The findings of this research were consistent and interpreted from the in-depth semi-structured interviews and the results were linked to the findings of other researchers who had similar study in relation to child protection work. There is clear evidence that the data and findings of this research could be reliable and replicable because the transparency and consistency was revealed in the earlier stated methodological processes with several and careful checking of the transcription to ensure accurate results and analysis were presented (Cresswell, 2014).

Generalizability is when the findings of a research can represent a broader population and general view (Bryman, 2016). This research however lacks generalizability due to the small sample size of Nigerian parents. It cannot give a general representation of all Nigerian parents or countries e.g (African countries); even though most African countries share same child protection frameworks. Still, the small sample size explored richness of knowledge in a qualitative method research from the experiences and perception of interviewed Nigerian parents, without emphasis on producing a conclusion suitable for generalizability.

4.16 Ethical Considerations

Hammersley, Martyn & Atkinson, Paul (2007) clearly mentioned the relevance of ethics in a social research. In their work `Ethnography`, they explained the issues of confidentiality, harm, privacy, informed consent, exploitation and consequences to further research which would serve as useful knowledge in this research work. The ethical issues were included in the letter of participation and informed consent which is below at the appendixes.

Confidentiality and Privacy: confidentiality has always been a strong principle in social research and the social work profession, therefore, a point of ethical dilemma for researchers. When there is a point of bridging a participants` confidentiality when there is a threat to harm oneself. Ethically, it could be a dilemma to me as the researcher, whether to hold strictly in confidence the parents` intention or to report to legal authorities as this is a characteristic of ethnography as mentioned by Hammersley, et, al. (2007). The research topic with its sensitivity demanded a high level of confidentiality for the parents to feel safe and open while sharing their experiences.

Informed consent: this was a bit difficult because in as much as I need my research to be rich with necessary information, I could not by any means compromise the fact that the participants to the research need comprehensive and accurate information. Some of the parents felt reluctant and did not participate. Others were a little bit persuaded with promise not to bridge agreement. The human right of autonomy and dignity must not be violated in any form. Participants were aware of the fact that they can cease to provide any information or withdraw themselves completely from the research if they have an uncomfortable feeling (Hammersley, et, al. 2007)

Dissemination of information: All necessary information on the aim and purpose of research, which is strictly for academic research purpose, was made known to all participants. That was with assurances that no other research will have access to the data except with their approval (Hammersley, et, al. 2007).

4.17 Handling ethical dilemmas:

Before the commencement of the research project, information regarding the following was researched so as to understand ethical dilemmas;

- What are the ethical guidelines that are to be followed in the country where my research will be carried out? Hence, guidelines were followed through the social work knowledge on ethics and under the supervision of the supervisor of this research.
- What information should participants know about before deciding to take part (or not) in my research? In addition, all parents and social workers will be given an undertaking signed by the researcher, that their participation and information will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

4.18 Proposed Limitations to the Study

- **Time:** the stipulated time frame for writing the master's thesis is however short in comparison to the in-depth activities and writing that will be involved for the successful completion. This might result to so much pressure on the researcher.
- **Travel Cost:** this would pose as a limitation in the sense that as the researcher, lots of travel expenses will be incurred during the various scheduled meetings with participants for the interview session. This is because not all the participants reside in the same city as the researcher.
- Some of the results of the findings were not included in the interview guide. This was as a result of leading questions asked during the interviews. For example, the issue of power was not initially raised as a focus to the study but was part of the concerns raised by the parents under the question 2(e) in the interview guide (see (2e) in appendix). However, connections were linked between the findings and the theory.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the major source of empirical data from qualitative interviews. Data are presented of parents' knowledge about the Swedish CPS and how they perceive the intervention process with the Swedish child protection system in accordance to their experiences. Firstly, a presentation of the research questions, then the brief description of participants experiences. This is followed by the elaborate discussions of the themes and their subthemes as they show relevant answers to the research questions with analysis from the theoretical approaches, which was presented in the previous chapter. The themes and subthemes were generated from the transcripts and are supported by direct quotations from the interviewed parents.

To provide answers to the following research questions using the thematic analysis, the themes and subthemes is thereafter presented in the table below;

1. How do interviewed Nigerian parents perceive the intervention process of the child protection service in Sweden according to their experiences?
2. What are the challenges interviewed Nigerian parents encounter while working with the child protection workers?
3. How can the intervention process of child protection in Sweden be enhanced?

Interpreting from Table 3 below The 7 themes and their subthemes are further analysed with links from the theoretical frameworks. Table 3 presents the experiences of the different participants involved in this research.

Table 3: Brief Description of Participants Experiences

Participants	Case Description
Simi	<p>Simi's child was 6 years old and returned from school on a particular day to inform Simi on how the teacher constantly asked questions about what happens at home and if there were any occurrences of beating or scolding. According to Simi, she found it too interrogatory for a young child. Not too long from that incidence, Simi went to her child's school after school hours. On getting to the school, her child was happily playing around and didn't appear ready to end the play. Simi said she shouted at the child in a loud tone of her voice so that the child could listen to her. Unknowingly to Simi, that attitude of hers was noted by the teacher. Sometime in the home, Simi admitted that the father of the child touched the child as some kind of correction but claimed there was no physical abuse or injury on the child.</p> <p>That was the beginning of her case. As the normal practice of the teacher, the child was asked if there was any form of beating, scolding and such likes in the home, at that point the child said "yes, my daddy beat me" then the teacher had to report to the social welfare and after</p>

	<p>the CPW spoke with the child, the child was taken and placed in a foster home. According to Simi, the actions of the CPW were based on the information given by the child, “maybe they thought we always beat our kids and so the home isn’t safe”. The child was away from home for some months. After further investigation and the different information given by the child to the CPW, that it was just a touch and not beating at that point the child was crying to see the parents. The child was then returned back home.</p>
<p>Akpos</p>	<p>Akpos is married to a Swedish, but had a child before her marriage while in Nigeria. The child was 8 years when Akpos moved in finally from Nigeria with the child and other of their children who had a mixed colour physical features into Sweden for family reunification.. This was questioned right from the airport and then Akpos was traced and invited for a meeting at the CP office. According to Akpos, the CPW were interested in knowing if the Nigerian child with Akpos was adopted and expected documents showing that Akpos has right to custody since Akpos claimed to be married to a Swedish with different colour of children. The case was traced to the Nigerian embassy and finally accepted that the child belonged to Akpos. This Akpos found interesting and impressed on the approach taken by the CPW as they ensured that no child would elope into Sweden without proper checks. Although, Akpos affirmed that at the initial stage she was a bit scared, and felt doubted by the CPW. But, as the investigation progressed, Akpos appreciated the constant feedback and deep investigation which involved contacting families in Nigeria to provide supporting document of the child’s birth and family background. All through the process Akpos mentioned that the child was never interviewed or involved.</p>
<p>Gbenga</p>	<p>Gbenga narrated his experience with the CPS. HE mentioned how his child (11 years old) would return from school with items that wasn’t bought by the parents and claimed to get them from friends at school. At some times, the mother had to go to the school to be sure the child wasn’t taking another child’s belongings without consent. Gbenga explained that the findings of the mother were contrary to the child information. That made the mother displeased and prevented the child from going to school after one of the happenings. Unknowingly to the mother, it is not accepted in Sweden for a child not to be in school without any reason and report. Gbenga further explained how the child went to school and reported to the teacher that the mother used beating as punishment. Whereas, Gbenga affirmed that the child was only told to kneel down for few minutes which is a corporal punishment and not accepted in Sweden. The child was not taken from them. Even though non-disclosed contact was given to the child at school to communicate with the CPW without the knowledge of the parents. However, Gbenga was concerned about his child not growing up with a deviant behaviour and how best can he discipline the child.</p>

<p>Obi</p>	<p>Obi had need of finance to support one of her child travel outside Sweden for educational purpose, as a result she could not pay her house bills for as at when due and informed the landlord to allow her pay the about 2 weeks later. According to her it was agreed by the landlord (Bostad). Surprisingly, she got a call from the welfare department that they are aware she has kids in her custody and if she cannot afford to take care of them because of lack of finance, then the CPW will have to intervene. After that visits and checks on supplies in the house was done and she kept telling them she would pay, just needed more time. For her she found it intruding into her private space even after she had conversed with the landlord. That was a bit disturbing for Obi.</p> <p>A second case narrated was about her youngest child. Who was bullied as a new student and always remain sad in school. According to Obi, the teacher reported to the CPS and they investigated Obi family to be sure no harm was happening at home and causing sad moments for the child. The child was equally interviewed.</p>
<p>Rosy</p>	<p>Rosy child had skin infection (Ring worm) and according as it could be practiced back in Nigeria by some cultures, Rosy used a razor to scratch the surface of the infection a little before applying medication. According to Rosy, the child was pained and unhappy. That reflected on the child countenance in school. The case was reported by the teacher and series of investigations and home visits by CPW took place. According to Rosy, the infection was best treated in that form and there was no form of cutting or wrong cultural habits practiced. That led to other investigations that involved all of the children which was not comfortable by Rosy. Rosy said “I am not a wicked parent and I cannot cut my child”. That was a deep statement presented during the course of the interview.</p>

Note: All cases had been concluded.

5.2 Parents’ knowledge on the Swedish CPS

This explains the extent to which parents are knowledgeable about the laws on Child protection in Sweden and how they got to know about them.

The data revealed that, most of the Nigerian parents in Sweden had little or no knowledge about the Swedish CP laws before coming to Sweden. They either got to know during their encounter with the CPS. The table below shows direct quotation on the level of awareness among parents on the Swedish child protection laws.

Table showing Parents Pre-Knowledge about the Swedish CPS before coming to Sweden.

“Well, before having experience with them, I had zero knowledge. They just called me one day and said I have to come to their office. So I was like what is it all about?” (Akpos).

“well I actually did not have any pre knowledge about the child protection act here in Sweden, until I had an encounter with the social worker when they complained about my child case in school”(Gbenga).

This is a great concern that was presented from the data. It is important for parents to be educated about what is applicable in raising a family in a different country. It is commonly said that “ignorance is no excuse in law.” The data showed repeated and similar responses from the participants.

“In Sweden, you get to know things by accident or incidence. Since we come from a different orientation about family life and child protection, where there is little state intervention. We should have been informed by the Swedish systems; either they make the information available as part of the documents form the migration office or something” (Rosy).

“It is only through this experience that I got to understand some basic rules which I have been telling other families on what is obtainable here in Sweden. Because as a foreigner, no one gives you information. The rest was just disturbance” (Gbenga).

Drawing from the above, the interviewed parents, lack adequate knowledge and information about what is obtainable in Sweden as regards the child protection laws. The data also showed that foreigners were not properly sensitised and informed by the Swedish welfare authorities about the CPL, and the parents found it frustrating that their families had to be involved in the CP cases. Yet, they try to promote awareness through communication among themselves as they meet to prevent any other family from having a negative experience with the CPS in Sweden.

Good networking was also connected to the earlier mentioned point. Where interaction exist to promote community development and unity. Thereby, creating avenue for families to be more open in sharing their problems with one another, and solving it within themselves.

Summary: this theme presented the existence of a communication gap between foreigners and the relevant agencies responsible for educating expatriates on the child protection law as operational in Sweden. Consequently, the Swedish authority should as matters of policy make provision for an avenue where parents of other nationality intending to reside in Sweden can be educated on the tenets of the law, its applications and compliance.

5.3 Parents Experiences with the Child Protection Practitioner

During the interviews, parents presented their feelings in different manner while they worked with the CPP. Their experiences were not all pleasant from the beginning of the intervention process to the end of the case.

“When they collected the children from us, I was not happy. Like immediately they collected the children from us, I was not happy” (Simi).

“It was really a tough time and I felt it was really strange because I am not a wicked parent” (Gbenga).

“My case was different so it was a good thing that they contacted me to be sure the kids are provided for” (Obi).

From the data, all the parents had the initial fear once being contacted by the Social welfare and said to have a case with them. These feelings of fear are mostly associated with the removal of their children from the birth home to a foster home (Ayon et al., 2010; Dumbrill, 2006). Parents who had a different kind of case with the CPS appreciated the efforts of the workers. Whereas, parents who had a negative experience with the CPS felt unsatisfied and fearful with uncertainty about what the next decision made could cause their family.

5.3.1 Self-Identity: This could be synonymous to self-image as mentioned by Höjer, (2009), which is a critical issue in cases with CPW. As pointed out by Höjer, self-identity could cause inferiority complex in parents when they are tagged to be being incapable or failing in the expected parenting standards and responsibilities of their inherent environment. From one of the parents is a statement below that shows the struggle of self-identity that concerns parents while they see themselves having experiences with the child protection practitioner hereafter CPP.

“...because, I am not a wicked parent” (Rosy)

Quoting from the research of Höjer, (2009),

“Goffman (1971) states that a prerequisite for the presence of stigma is a discrepancy between the expected and actual social identities. When a person diverges from what can be defined generally as a socially acceptable pattern for human behaviour, this can create a certain feeling of insecurity regarding identity and sense of belonging. Such reactions may evoke a sense of insecurity which can affect the individual perception of self, and result in feelings of guilt and shame” (Goffman, 1971) in (Höjer, 2009),

Interpreting from the data, parents who had a negative experience battled with the shame and stigma of being seen as a bad parent. This has so much influenced their personal self-worth and identity. To deduce from the above illustrations, the feeling of being seen to fail in the expected behaviour of a particular society can greatly affect ones perception about self-identity. Thereby leading to insecurity and uncertainty of the future, guilt, shame, lack of trust in themselves and the people they work with. On the other hand, parents who had a positive experience with the CPP, showed more level of confidence and reliability on the workers efforts. This brings a connection to the ecological Person-in-environment theory that explains how the parents can be perceived to be in conformity or deviant behaviour as expected from that of the society in which they live.

Summary; parents detest being seen as defaulters of the law on child protection. This is directly connected to the negative image it gives and the inferiority complex that it brings. Therefore, child protection practitioners should act discreetly with parents whom they presumed to have breached the law, and those found culpable in order to protect their self-worth and identity. The symbolic interactionist perspectives, expatiates more meaning into the social self of an individual and their cultural constructs. For improved interactions between child protection workers and parents/families, expectations of all actors should be made clear to foster better meanings and interaction and avoid “blaming the victim” while helping them retain their confidence in the host community.

5.4 Issues of Power between the Parent, Child and CPP

Statements from the interviews showed evidences of power disparity between the parents and their child, and between parents and the CPP. Most parents stated that too much right are being given the child, and they feel their own authority and level of control over their children as parents has been taken away from them. They presented their opinions to the issue of power between them and their child to be collusive according to the Tew matrix of power. Where they think the CPP and the child work together and against their (parent) views (Tew, 2006). Hence, they feel limited in the way they choose to train and raise their children

“Also the right given to the children should be moderated and not that the parents would be afraid to correct their children. They would then be controlled by their children (Simi).

“ I don’t even have the parental power to correct my child, because the child can report to the social welfare if it is not his way” (Gbenga).

5.4.1 Parent/Child Power: Tew, (2006) vividly explained how power can be limiting and in the opposite way empowering. The parents mentioned during the interviews, that the state gives too much right to the child even though they appreciated the fact that it is important for a child’s right to be promoted. However, they advocated for a minimal level of forcefulness and sternness to the level of power, giving reasons that power can be abusive when not properly managed and that the children are too young to be considered totally right in all they do or say. Following the above, it has been empowering on the sides of children. The parents also mentioned that the children know their rights and they are not hesitant in demonstrating it. This promotion of child’s right which is reflecting the child power to participation and involvement in every area of their lives has been a successful implementation of the Swedish government in accordance to the UNCRC. This was a result from the change of the ideology of the “incompetent child” now perceived as the “competent child” (Reynaert, et, al., 2009). The UNCRC empathically, lifted the child’s right by outlining all child rights statements in the convention. Yet it seems to be in a contrary level of acceptance to the parents in this research.

5.4.2 Parent/Worker Power: More from the interview was the displeasure of parents about the way they are helpless when having any case with the CPW. They feel the workers are biased and have a pre conclusion of a perception about they the parents and on what decision to take as regards the case. The level of power between the parent and the social worker according to the concept of power earlier mentioned in this work appears to take an oppressive form (Tew, 2006). Parents feel they are being exploited and taken advantage of because the workers have the supports of the state and work in favour of the child to victimize the parents. However, the above statement negates the intentions of the worker as they are guided by professional values to human dignity and social inclusion as they work with families and children.

Summary: findings from this theme, revealed that parents see their child as wielding more power under this law compared to them. A situation they considered to portend danger to the family system, as they are literally prevented from correcting the child even when little or no attempt of force is applied in correcting the child. Consequently, the law should emphasise ‘positive discipline’ more while de-emphasising the notion of parent’s total handicap in

ensuring the right attitude in their wards. Also, the child protection worker should maintain high sense of professionalism, while taking into cognisance the dignity for human rights.

5.5 Parents' Involvement during Intervention Process

Parents' involvement during intervention process is a very key in the CPW; taking into consideration the importance of communicating the outcome of investigation at all stages to the families. However, some findings from the interview, showed some of the challenges, faced by these parents of which they were quick to point out. The following challenges include;

5.5.1 Communication: from the interview data, the Interviewed parents stressed on the communication style that the Swedish CPW takes to be unacceptable by them. From the beginning of the intervention process where assessment is done and all through the processes, Parents raised alarm on the need for their full awareness of what happens to their child. One of the statements from the interview says thus;

"I just got a call from the Social welfare about my child, and the teacher never mentioned anything to me about my child. Also, the social welfare have being communicating with my child behind my back! All these I never knew of"
(Rosy)

Parents expressed displeasure at the teachers for not giving them initial contact and communication where they felt any wrong happenings in their child's life. They perceived the school to have the responsibility of informing the parents first before involving a third party which is the CPS.

Furthermore, the data collected revealed that information given by the child are often influenced by the social workers. This is because most of the questions were framed in a (Yes/No) manner for the child. Parents stressed that the workers do not communicate properly their objectives to the child. As stated below was the response of one of the children to the worker during the intervention process where the mother was present.

"I love my mummy and my mummy does not beat me. I don't know why you people called her" (Obi).

In relation to the ecological perspective, the result from the data showed some problems between the microsystems, mesosystems and exosystem. This occurred as a result of an identified communication gap between the systems (Parents, teachers and social welfare). Apparently, the point of coordinating and communication in the seven stages of Nash, Munford & O'Donoghue, (2005), on intervention process has a great role while doing child protection work.

5.5.2 Need for Parents' Voices to be heard: Also, the data pointed out parents' voices not being heard as a challenge to their level of understanding and cooperation with the intervention process. Parents were expressively blunt about the need for their voices to be heard just as the child's voice is also being heard to make a fair judgement feasible. This was also identified in the work of Humphrey, Thiara and Skamballis, (2011) as essential while working families. To ensure the families adapt to change there should be fair participation

and the voices heard of all persons involved in the particular case. Below presents as excerpts from one of the interviews;

“It is just that they said they are following the laws of Sweden and my voice was not heard. They do not listen to the parents before taking decisions. It was just the information given by the child that was listened to” (Simi).

The need for the parents’ voices to be heard cannot be over emphasised as the above statement showed a great concern raised by most of the interviewed parents during the process of intervention. Many researchers promoted the child voice to be heard independently as vital during the intervention process in child protection work (Sund, 2006; Humphreys *et al.*, 2011, p181). Whereas the data postulated that, the voice of the parent should be considered alongside, as the issues and decisions made in regards to their child welfare is part of their life and should not be left to the intuition of the social worker alone (Barlow, Fisher and Jones, 2012).

5.6 Impacts of Intervention on Family Life

5.6.1 Disrupts Peaceful Moments: Following the statements from the interviews, it was pointed out by the parents, some of the impacts of the child protection work on their family life. They mentioned, interruption to daily work activities, causes of stress, fear, worry and unrest/lack of peace between parents and children and parents personal life engagements.

“They just put the parent on unnecessary stress. And I do not like it because they interrupt my work and so stressful. I do not like it at all. The rest was just disturbances and making life difficult for parents to the point you feel afraid of your own child. To talk to your child would be a problem. And they try to create enmity between the parent and the child. When there had been peace in the family suddenly they question the child and put words in his mouth” (Obi).

The above statement shows that parent is not comfortable with the intrusion of an external factor which is the state on their family matters. To the parents the intervention was perceived to be discomfoting and tiring. To sum it up, all the challenges the parents faced while being involved, led to their opinion on the impacts of the child protection intervention on family life.

5.7 Assessments on Workers Attitude Towards Intervention

Another important finding was the assessment on workers attitude towards intervention. Parents gave some appraisals and some observation which includes;

5.7.1 Understanding the Multicultural Context:

This was a major point that was emphasized. The data presented strong evidences on the need for child protection workers to understand the cultural ideologies that influence the families they work with. This shows how human behaviour can be influenced by their circles (culture, religion, values) just as explained by the ecological perspective. The data showed cases beyond corporal punishments. However all forms of neglect, punishment and attitude wrongly done towards a child is categorized as Child abuse in the Swedish context.

Paradoxically, the positive intention of the CPW by intervening in the family lives of its citizen and caring for every child has mostly turned into a negative perceptions of the interviewed parents on the CP intervention process; Hence, highlighting the need for workers to understand the multicultural way of working with individuals and families.

“Therefore, if social workers do not understand the culture of the child and the people, there is no way you can help that person. Because that is where the identity of that child is. You need to understand them. I am not permitting corporal punishments but families should be educated on alternatives. So that social workers do not instead of mending homes end up breaking homes” (Gbenga).

Rosy, also gave an illustration where the child had a skin infection of ringworm and it was so severe and the child had sores from the infection. Then the mother decided to scrap off the outer part of the infection and applied medication to fasten the healing and child’s recovery. But, the child was pained with all the inconveniences he felt from the infection. According to Rosy, the child got to school and was moody. That led to the teacher inquisitions and wanted the child to tell what was wrong. Just to summarise, the teacher called the social welfare after learning what happened to the child. In the words of Participant Rosy

“My child was just 5 years old then, and all he could say was my mummy cut my back” that statement caused us a lot for up to six months the case went as far as involving a lawyer and the court”(Rosy).

Inferring from the above illustrations, the interviewed Nigerian parents felt the Swedish CP worker did not understand them as individuals with a different way of life. This gave more light into the issue as after proper investigation that case was cancelled. It is in no doubt that proper understanding of the people we work with gives a different and better perception and approach to intervention.

In addition to the above, the data also revealed the need for child protection practitioners to understand the uniqueness of every family and not base their intervention on a single approach. The data concentrated on the need for understanding individual differences. Participant C who was one of the parents who highlighted this point, observed a similar way of work with the different social worker he had in his cases with the child at different locations. Therefore, Parents perceive generalisation of families in the approach the workers adopts in their work and they showed high distaste to it as they want to be seen as different individuals and unique in their own way.

“Even though we all are blacks and foreigners we are different people. A previous case does not mean it is the same character that applies to all families. Based on understanding each case differently then you will be able to work better. And not generalising or grouping every one as same. That idea should be abolished or remove from their mind” (Gbenga).

5.7.2 Good Investigation

Good investigation was one of the appraisals revealed by parents. The results showed that parents had satisfaction with the level of investigations done by the workers. This is key in the child protection work.

“While I worked with them, I saw that they later came and investigated. This made them found the truth which made them return the child back to us. There was good investigation” (Simi)

5.7.3 Feedback

Accompanying good investigation was the point of giving feedback. All parents affirmed that workers kept informing them about the update at every stage. This does not contradict the point of parents opinions not considered and how they were not fully involved in all intervention processes. Notwithstanding the good feedback given by the worker, Parents wanted to be part of the decision making process.

“I was impressed that they went as far as to contact the embassy, and gave me feedback on everything they did. But I think they should involve parents more in the decision making, not just conclude and give us feedbacks.” (Akpos).

Still on the feedback, another parent presented a different view about how the CPS involved a third party in the case without giving them prior knowledge on that. A surprise visit explained it all.

“Well, I do not like their approach sometimes, but since that is what they want then I have to follow. But previously in a former case, they involved a third party and that woman came to our house without informing us. We were also not informed that a third party would be involved.” (Gbenga).

Several parents provided evidences of good and poor feedback done by the CP worker. They however presented the prerequisite for good intervention to include openness, love and not build inferiority complex that questions their self-identity, clarity of aim, involvement in decision making, understanding of family uniqueness, proper and timely feedback at all levels of intervention, good communication between the microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem.

The above were the outlined findings from the interview which will lead to a more elaborative discussion on how to enhance the intervention process of child protection work in Sweden.

5.8 Possible ways for enhancing Intervention process in Child Protection Work

After the structured questions during the interviews, Parents were asked to suggest possible ways of improving the intervention process of the child protection workers according to their experiences. Below is the summary of their suggestions;

1. **Promote child rights and child's obligation to being respectful:** Parents emphasised that everyone has obligations (the state, the workers, the parents and the child). They explicitly mentioned that the workers were majorly interested in the Child's right and not looking deep into each case to understand if there was a wrong behaviour demonstrated by the child that needed to be corrected. Further from the data, Parents highlighted that children have their obligations to respect their and obey their parents. Participant E narrated a case where the child took a bicycle that wasn't bought by the parents and brought it home. The mother asked where the bicycle was gotten from but the child refused to answer. This made the mother worried and then she decided to go to the child school and discovered the child took it without the approval of the owner. According to Participant E, she said to her child not to go to school the following day. Getting to school the day after that, the child told the teacher that the mother scolded and beat the child. Now the teacher called social welfare and all that happened thereafter. This was one of the leading cause for parents emphasis on "every child has obligations and not just rights", to ensure behavioural balance and development in the child.
2. **Sensitization for Social Workers:** Social workers should be sensitized on how to work with parents in a multicultural context. There is a need to understand multiculturalism in the social work profession cannot be overemphasised. Statements from the data capture the need for the social workers to understand the uniqueness and autonomy of every family. Parents explained that if the workers get more equipped in knowledge on social work in a multicultural context, it will help a better intervention among the families they work with.
3. **Education for families about the CPL:** Parents/families should be educated on the laws about Sweden child protection upon arrival. Much had been said on this earlier as pointed out by the parents. Apparently, there is the need for families to be aware of the family laws and how to live and raise their families in conformity with those laws.
4. **Open-mindedness and Love:** Workers should work with open-mindedness and show love to parents while they work. Some of the Parents had their opinions on the need for every worker to show love while they work with them. And not place the parent in a situation where they feel guilty and judged and fearful. They suggested that workers need to work with an open mind and perceive each family as unique without connecting behaviours based on previous cases handled by worker.
5. **Listening/Consider Parent's Opinion:** To improve cooperation of parents' during intervention, the child protection workers should listen and put into consideration the parents' opinion and voice(s). This is to avoid parents feeling so frightened and helpless all through the intervention processes. They suggested that they should be listened to and also carried along all through the intervention process.
6. **Support Family Forums:** There should be an organised forum where foreign parents can be educated on alternative ways of parenting that is in conformity with that of the Swedish laws.

"This is how we know to train our children, and we do not inflict injury on them. If the social welfare feels we are doing it the wrong way, then they give

should show us an alternative. Because if a child is not reprovved, that child will grow up with behaviours unacceptable in the society” (Simi).

Interpreting from the above statement, the parents showed willingness to change only if they are sensitized. This is a suggestion put forward. That the state can support private organisations, religious institutions, to organise preventive forums where parents could be enlightened on alternative ways of parenting that will promote conformity in the Swedish context.

- 7. Increase family support and reduce family separation:** This was bringing out the strength perspective. Where problems in the families, are handled by exploring the strength among and in the families. During the interviews, Simi said;

“I think that their main goal should be on how to reconcile these families and to come and help families who have problems with their kids. To solve the problems with them, instead of dividing the families by separating the child from their families. It is easy to take the child away from the family and place the child in a foster home. Then the foster home get paid. If the same money and other resources could be used to support that child in his own family, I think it will be a better way of working with families”.

Following the above, Parents feel there should be more of strength perspective and direct work with the families. And if there should be separation between the child and the parents, that should be the last resort and at risk evidence cases. Vornanen, et, al., (2011) mentioned that open care measures should be more adopted in the work with families. This will help family workers explore various social services, like financial support, family counselling, child welfare and child protection, and taking children into care should be the last resort.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DISCUSSION

The results from the interviews showed that Parents needs to continued education on the child protection laws so as to reduce the extent of family separation or negative feeling of ones´ self-identity could be interpreted to mean advocacy for preventive measures and promote family support systems. The circulation of information among families shows cultural support among the Nigerian families. However, if there is no reorientation about the adequate knowledge on the applicable Swedish laws, Parents will transfer the same negative perspective which they have about the child protection workers to their children and then there could be a continuum of problems.

The expectations from the micro-level and meso level between the parents and the school revealed a concern that should be considered by child protection practitioners. Parents expected first communication about their child from the school before having direct interaction with the social welfare. Although, it cannot be affirmed that parents will accept or ignore the schools observations. Hence teachers act based on the mandatory reporting laws of Sweden on any form of perceived occurrences of harm around a child. From the findings, the above does not align with the perception of parents on the child protection frameworks applicable in Nigeria. This issue raised in this paragraph puts forward the perception and classification of parents as not “a wicked parent”. The definition of oneself is often associated with the acceptable behaviour of one´s environment (Höjer, 2009). Also, parents´ expressions of fear and loss of self-identity was a great concern which can be reasons for their mistrust in the child protection workers. A unity of ideas and joint collaboration all through the processes would help parents to be more cooperative with the workers during intervention. However, full reliance cannot be on the above point, because when the same parents are found to have unsafe environment to the child development, whatever the child protection practitioner does will not be pleasing to the families. This is because more from the data showed parents´ dissatisfaction with the state interference in their family life.

Subsequently, concerns were raised about the attitudes of the child protection workers by the parents. Explanations from the findings enunciate the need for all child protection practitioners to be inclined with the tools necessary for working with families in a multicultural context. Also the need to understand the influencing factors of parents behaviours towards their children in an ecological manner.

To guide the workers, suggestions from parents seem to be in line with the social work principles while doing child protection work. Workers however, need to consider those recommendations to foster better relationship between them and the families they work with. Enhancing intervention process from the perspectives of the interviewed Nigerian parents consists of responsibilities to parents, children, child protection workers and the state. Putting all in accordance to the law through promoting awareness at the schools, local levels and international level should produce a more sustainable and appreciative work with families and children.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the investigatory approach of the Swedish child protection system as mentioned by Young, and her co-authors (2014), were evident in the result of the findings. Good investigations and feedback were commended by parents based on their experiences. However, for a better intervention process the child protection work needs to go beyond good investigations. Exploring strengths and providing solution based within the family should be projected more. Communication within and between the ecological systems should be strengthened so that parents feel involved and less fear towards the CPS. The essence of developing trust while working with individuals, families, communities and organisations begins with understanding the diversities of human beings. The multicultural perspective in social work would play a great role in fostering trust and mutuality among human relationships as they interact among themselves.

Doing child protection work involves a wide range of knowledge as presented in this research. Understanding the Swedish ban on corporal punishment and various parenting styles that exist among families will help workers to carry out their duties effectively. Also considering the position of power which always evident between people. There is need to promotes rights and obligations as interpreted from the findings. All social actors need to bear responsibility accordingly. This will establish balance in power disparity so that parents also know at what point they should be assertive on their rights as parents.

The relevance of the research project to the social work profession shows fulfilment to the IFSW and IASSW, (2014) definition of social work states that “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing.” This definition has revealed the commitment of this humanitarian profession to addressing and combating social problems inherent in the society. The three levels of social work which is individual, family/group and community level is vital as important tools for enhancing the social work with families and children as it relates to child protection and the best interest of the child.

- Social workers will be enriched with more knowledge on intervening with family issues as regards parenting in a multicultural context.
- Increased recording for subsequent researchers.
- Promote awareness and sensitize young families during counselling therapy to develop good mechanics to consider national laws and follow family policies in the given country where they are.
- Enhance professionals’ skills and strategies while working with families.

Suggestions for further research;

Further researchers should seek to incorporate a broader range of discuss in the child protection work. More participants and various groups like the AfroSwedes (Africans living in Sweden), Swedish born families could be used to get varieties of experiences which will help the social workers in Sweden and abroad intervene appropriately while working with families and children. Also further studies should explore the family support approach and how it can help empower families better to guide social workers against the strictly investigatory approach which gives so many questions to social self and meaning of individual behaviours.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Topic: Child Protection Services in Sweden: Experiences of Nigerian Parents in Sweden.

Duration: 1 Hour

Section A: Participant Characteristics

- 1) Name of the Participant:
- 2) Age of Participant:
- 3) Period of living in Sweden:
- 4) Age(s) of Child(ren) involved:
- 5) Type of Case:
- 6) Duration of the case:

Section B: Interview Questions

1. How do interviewed Nigerian parents perceive the intervention process of the child protection service in Sweden, according to their experiences?

- a) Were you aware of the laws regarding child protection in Sweden before you came in?
- b) Can you tell me, what knowledge you had about the CPS in Sweden before you had experience with them?
- c) How did it change during the process of intervention/investigation?

2. What are the challenges interviewed Nigerian parents encounter while working with the Child Protection workers?

- a) What were your experiences like during the initial visits with the Child Protection Worker? Tell me everything you can remember
- b) How do you perceive collaboration during the intervention process? Were you engaged or not?
- c) Was your voice being heard and listened to from the initial assessment stage to the termination stage?

- d) Is there any difference between the child protection system in Nigeria and that of Sweden? If yes, can you explain?
- e) What other challenge(s) did you encounter during your experience with the Child Protection Service?
- f) Was there any helpful thing done to you by the social worker?

3. How can the intervention process of the child protection service in Sweden be enhanced?

- a) Can you suggest possible ways of enhancing the CPS in Sweden according to your own experience?

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION LETTER

University of Gothenburg,
Gothenburg-Sweden.

7th April, 2017.

Dear Sir/Ma,

Permission To Conduct An Interview Session With Your Participation: Ijeoma Nwaorie

I am Ijeoma Nwaorie, a graduate student at the University of Gothenburg. I am in the second semester of a two-year master's program in Social Work with Families and Children and currently writing my masters' thesis.

As part of my program, I am required to conduct an academic research on the topic "*Child Protection Services in Sweden: Experiences of Nigerian Parents in Sweden.*" The research interest stems from the facts previous studies discovered that parents have increased concerns on how they are being perceived to be a role actor in ensuring care and protection for their children. In addition, the government role to protect every child according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has portrayed some questionable loopholes in intervention process. Hence, the research seeks to achieve the following;

Aim: The aim of the research centres on understanding the perception of Nigerian parents on the Swedish child protection service. Also, it proposes to examine the challenges and possibilities that arises while working with the professionals, and to outline practical ways of enhancing the intervention process of child protection in Sweden. This will contribute to the existing studies on child protection and add relevance to the knowledge of social work with families and children.

This letter is therefore, to request an interview with you to participate in the above mentioned research topic. (This will enable me successfully carry out the research and achieve the academic requirements of my masters' program). The main purpose of the research is strictly academic purposes, and any information given by every participant will be held confidential.

I will be grateful to be granted your audience and free participation.

For further questions, clarifications and discussions, you may contact me or my supervisor by email; ijeoma.nwaorie@gmail.com, gusnwaij@student.gu.se or by telephone; 0765603756. Supervisor's email: charlotte.melander@socwork.gu.se or Telephone: 031-7866384

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

Ijeoma Nwaorie

APPENDIX 3: INFORMED CONSENT



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK INFORMED CONSENT

The following is a presentation of how I will use the data collected in the interview.

The research project is part of the education in the International Masters' program in Social Work at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. In order to insure that projects meet the ethical requirements for good research I promise to adhere to the following principles:

- Interviewees in the project will be given information about the purpose of the project.
- Interviewees have the right to decide whether they will participate in the project, even after the interview has been concluded.
- The collected data will be handled confidentially and will be kept in such a way that no unauthorized person can view or access it.

The interview will be recorded as this makes it easier for me to document what is said during the interview and also helps me in the continuing work with the project. In my analysis, some data may be changed so that no interviewee will be recognized. All analysis will be in pseudonyms and described anonymously. After finishing the project, the data will be destroyed. The data I collect will only be used in this project.

You have the right to decline answering any questions, or terminate the interview without giving an explanation.

You are welcome to contact me or my supervisor in case you have any questions (e-mail addresses below).

Student name & e-mail

Ijeoma Nwaorie
gusnwaij@student.gu.se

Supervisor name & e-mail

Charlotte Melander
charlotte.melander@socwork.gu.se

Participants` Name and Date_____

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