

An Exploration of Parenting Practices and Adaptation of Nigerian Immigrant Parents in  
Denmark

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the adaptation of Nigerian immigrant parents in Denmark, with a particular focus on their parenting practices and cultural adjustment. Immigration has become a significant global phenomenon, resulting in a consistent flow of human capital from emerging countries to advanced nations. Denmark has experienced a net increase in migration over the past decade, with a higher number of immigrants entering the country compared to emigrants. Nigerian immigrants constitute a significant percentage of African immigrants in Denmark. The research aims to understand how Nigerian immigrant families adapt to their new life, specifically examining their parenting styles and cultural adjustment abilities.

This study used semi-structured interviews with three participants to examine different facets of their adjustment as parents of Nigerian immigrants in Denmark. The interview subjects included acculturation, viewpoints on parenting in Denmark and Nigeria, the impact of Danish culture on parenting, cultural adjustments, language problems, and identities based on culture. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which was broken down into themes and sub-themes. Acculturation, respect, alone parenting, education, discipline, and language were some of the subjects covered. The participant's stories give insight on the distinct process of adaptation that immigrant families go through as they blend and reinterpret their cultural roots in a new sociocultural setting. The findings of the study have practical implications and recommendations for further investigation are made.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Currently, immigration is a significant worldwide phenomenon. One in every 33 persons (3.1 percent) on the earth are migrant now (United Nations, 2008). A consistent flow of human capital has occurred worldwide, especially from emerging countries to advanced nations (Catton, 2006; Coleman, 2009; Dumont, Spielvogel, & Widmaier, 2010). This flow has been attributed to globalisation, the demand for foreign labour, and laws governing immigration. Around 3.2 per cent of the world's population, as reported by International Migration (2015), reside in a nation other than their place of origin, a figure that has substantially expanded over the past few decades due to the empowering impact of migration (UN, 2016).

Throughout the last decade, Denmark has seen a net increase in migration. During this time, the number of immigrants entering the country was generally greater than the number of emigrants departing it. In 2022, a record-high 121,000 individuals immigrated to Denmark, while approximately 63,000 people emigrated, resulting in nearly thrice as many immigrants as emigrants, this is due to the long-term political and socioeconomic balance there (Statista Research Department, Feb 13, 2023).

Similar to other immigrant groups, the number of African immigrants increased when the Nationality Act was put into effect in 1965. This law removed the restrictive national quotas from non-European nations. It is more likely that African immigrants will be admitted through the Diversity Programme or the Family Reunification Clause. Increasing numbers of immigrants from underrepresented nations are now able to migrate, due to the Diversity Programme (Logan & Thomas, 2012). With 19% of all African immigrants as of 2009 (Capps et al., 2011), Nigeria makes up the largest percentage of all immigrants from Africa. This study's objective is to explore how Nigerian immigrant families adjust to their new life in Denmark, with a focus on their parenting styles and capacity for cultural adjustment.

## 1.2 Motivations for Migration

Immigration decisions and the ability to adjust to the new sociocultural context are influenced by immigrants' pre-migration environments (Burgelt et al., 2008). Travelling, escaping from ideological or religious oppression, starting a family, financial growth, and career advancement are the primary reasons for immigration, as determined by the situational background of the pre-migration population (Piacenti, 2009; Ruth, 2008; Tharmaseelan, Inkson,). Human migration, whether voluntary or involuntary, is impacted by a variety of circumstances, as mentioned before, including the socioeconomic and political conditions of the destination country, known as the pull factors, and those in the migrant's homeland, known as the push factors.

According to Berry (2006b), immigrants can be divided into the following groups: Those who voluntarily emigrate from their home country in quest of job, economic advancement, marriage, or family reunification are referred to as voluntary immigrants. Involuntary immigrants are people (refugees) who are forcibly uprooted due to conflict, oppression, or a natural disaster and are relocated to a new country, frequently as a consequence of international treaties. Asylum seekers flee their native countries voluntarily because they risk persecution, torture, or execution. Sojourners move to a new country for a certain reason and duration with the aim of returning home when the specified amount of time has passed. Based on the reasons or motivations for migrating, post-migration adaptation alternatives and behaviours are assessed and demonstrated. Retraining and requalification for certificates in the host nation are activities that immigrants who are driven by career-building objectives favourably assess. Despite the difficulty of the process and the depreciation of the credentials gained in the ancestral country, professional achievement predictions in the new country seem to be more valued than those obtainable in the ancestral nation (Andemariam, 2007; Tharmaseelan et al., 2010).

Sometimes, immigrants may change their pre-existing identities (like their profession or religion) in order to build a new international identification. In a study, Joseph (2013) looked into the motivations behind the migration of Malaysian women to Australia. Detailed studies revealed that their experiences with governmental and cultural discrimination in Malaysia, where they originally lived, were what motivated them to relocate. Following their move, the women experienced

numerous obstacles in adapting to their new environment, including prejudice based on their language abilities and accents, as well as discovering that their educational degrees were deemed insufficient, restricting their work options. They decided to rethink their pre-migration identities in the context of their new cultural, professional, and religious surroundings in order to get past these challenges. Forced to flee, refugees frequently feel sadness, marginalisation, despair, a decline in their social status, and depression. People who are forcibly relocated may display symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a reluctance to integrate into the host culture as a part of their adaptation (Chu, Keller & Rasmussen, 2013; Phillimore, 2011; Schweitzer, Brough, Vromans & Asic-Kobe, 2011). This is because of the numerous stressors, unpleasant circumstances, and trauma involved in this process.

### **1.3 Immigrant Families**

Immigration is often not a personal choice but rather a systemic process involving close and/or extended family members, as well as entire communities (Borjas & Bronars, 1991; Tucker et al., 2013). Massey (1996) advocates a new economics of immigration that emphasizes the family as the primary motivator for immigration. Decisions to migrate are made by families, households, and sometimes entire communities in many developing nations as individuals want to diversify their household or family income. Vecchio (2006), emphasises that in the 1900s, Italian immigration to the New World occasionally encompassed the relocation of entire towns, showing a collective decision to move and a social networking system that encouraged migration. Similar to this, Tucker et al. (2013) provide data from their study on Mexican adolescent migration to the United States that demonstrates older family members would bring over their younger relatives. Families made up of immigrants display flexible and volatile organisational patterns. Families can travel together to a new nation in some cases, but they can also move separately, one or a small number of them may leave first, and the others may follow later in other cases (Buriel, Gindling, and Poggio, 2012; Solheim, Rojas-Garcia, Olson, and Zuiker, 2012). A transnational marriage, in which one spouse brings the other over to start a family, is the origin of a different group of immigrant families (Buriel, 2012; Nandan, 2007). Last but not least, some families come together after arriving in the host nation (Lichter, Carmalt, & Qian, 2011).



## **1.4 Previous Research Gaps**

Asian or Latino households have been the primary focus of the majority of empirical studies on the adjustments of immigrant families (Abrego, 2011; Ayon & Naddy, 2013; Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Behnke et al., 2008). Nevertheless, the number of immigrants from Africa is increasing (Capps et al., 2011; Thomas, 2011), so it is imperative to give more attention to how immigrant families from the African continent, particularly Nigeria, are adapting and adjusting in order to have a full picture of all immigrant families.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The study goal is to investigate how Nigerian immigrant families adjust to their new lives in Denmark, paying particular attention to their parenting practices and the ability for cultural adjustment to a setting and culture that are different from their own. The study will highlight the contextual factors that contribute to immigrant families' adaptability and ongoing cultural change.

The following research questions will be covered by the study:

1. How do parents of Nigerian immigrants in Denmark view parenting in light of their own experiences in Nigeria?
2. How do the decisions and adjustments made during the acculturation process impact the child-rearing practices and beliefs of Nigerian immigrant parents?

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Acculturation Theory was used in the study. The importance of the idea will be discussed. However, it should be highlighted that the use is not intended to assess its effectiveness but to offer a potential explanation for the phenomenon under study.

#### 2.1 Acculturation Theory

Migration is an everyday phenomenon. When people move from one civilization to another, they bring their cultural origins, experiences, and opinions with them. It is necessary to reevaluate one's values in order to determine which are irreversible and which can be modified when adjusting to a new social and cultural setting. Acculturation is the term used to describe the cultural transition that takes place during this process. This concept can be understood in a variety of ways, ranging from changes occurring simply to immigrants as individuals or teams to a dynamic process involving both the host and immigrant communities. According to Martin et al. (2007), acculturation is the process of becoming familiar with a new culture and altering one's conduct as a result of exposure. Contrarily, Yoon et al. (2011) view acculturation as a gradual procedure in which immigrants change their language, behaviours, beliefs, and values as a result of their contacts with the dominant culture. This viewpoint, which is individual-centered, underlines the pressure that is put on immigrants to conform to or adapt to the majority culture, whether directly or indirectly. A transactional process approach to acculturation is one of the first definitions offered. Acculturation was described by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) as an occurrence that takes place when parties from different cultures frequently meet, modifying the initial cultural behaviours of either of the two groups. A similar definition is given by Berry (2001), who defines acculturation as an action that involves two or more ethnic groups and has an effect on everyone involved.

These perspectives to acculturation show how the idea of acculturation has changed over time. Traditionally, acculturation was thought of as a one-way process in which a particular racial minority group transitioned from their native culture (culture A) to the way of life of their

community (culture B), hence lessening the impact of culture A, earlier acculturation models (Miller, 2007) described this viewpoint. Previously, it was thought that immigrants would ultimately adapt to the culture. They were anticipated to transition from identifying solely with their pre-immigration ethnic origins to being familiar with both their roots and host societies, and then either abandon their ancestral culture, ultimately embrace their host culture or combine into a "melting pot" of cultures (Gordon, 1964; Sam, 2006). Nevertheless, due to John Berry's work over many years, recent acculturation research has changed to a multifaceted view of cultural adjustment (Berry, 1997; Schwartz et al., 2010).

Immigrants' acculturation process is intricate and involves a variety of tactics, all of which are influenced by the societal atmosphere of the country of arrival and the particular historical setting in which they are used. Understanding how acculturation methods are affected by the societal context of the host nation is essential to understanding the complex dynamics of cultural adaptation in immigrant families from Nigeria. The fundamental goal of this study is to determine the cultural domains, value systems, and contextual elements that influence these families' daily decisions on acculturation.

This theory is expanded upon by Miller et al. (2013) in their hypothesis specific to the domain adaptation strategies, which contends that individuals may choose various acculturation strategies for various attitudinal, or value dimensions based on the situation, time, and setting. In essence, immigrants are believed to embrace particular beliefs and practices due to their upbringing and immigration-related factors (Cheah et al., 2013). In the case of a Nigerian immigrant family, for example, the mother may be well-assimilated in terms of her involvement in her children's education but more conventional in her views on relationships and close interactions. Similarly, Miller et al. reported in a study of Asian college graduates that a considerable proportion of the sample (67%-72%) employed distinct techniques for specific behavioural and value domains. These findings support the idea of domain-specific acculturation and have implications for modifying the broader framework of acculturation theory.

Berry (1979) articulated essential notions still relevant in present research on immigrant acculturation. He emphasised two primary factors that influence an ethnic group's adjustment to

the host country: (a) cultural maintenance, which entails deciding whether it is worthwhile to maintain one's cultural identity, and (b) participation, which entails deciding whether to participate in the host country's social and cultural activities. The two dimensions (maintenance and participation) can be considered distinct conceptions, implying that an immigrant may desire one without necessarily sacrificing the other, meaning abandoning the heritage culture in favour of the host culture. When an immigrant rejects the native culture and upholds their own, they become separated. Last but not least, marginalisation entails rejecting both cultures. According to the answers to these two essential questions, acculturation orientations can be divided into four categories: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation (Berry, 2003). When immigrants preserve their ethnic culture while assimilating into the host culture, they achieve integration. Assimilation entails renouncing one's ancestral culture and adopting the host culture. When an immigrant rejects the native culture and upholds their own, they become separated. Lastly, marginalisation entails rejecting both cultures.

Berry's model of acculturation suggests that immigrants choose acculturation strategies, but various demographic and contextual factors also impact their decision-making process. These variables include community setting, place of residence, academic and social ties, pre-migration tradition, and other environmental considerations, which could impact how immigrants approach specific parenting techniques. This study's main objective is to investigate the parenting practices of Nigerian immigrant families and understand how their experiences as newcomers in a setting that differs from their home culture on a cultural and ecological level affect these parenting behaviours.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter provides historical context for understanding modern immigration by discussing a) the history of immigration in Denmark, b) immigration to Denmark from Africa, c) Nigerian Immigrants, d.) Nigerian Families and Parenting Practices. This study section will also discuss the variables impacting Nigerian immigrant family acculturation by exploring Nigerian immigrants, immigration and acculturation integration, challenges immigrant families face, and immigrant family resource|s employed in dealing with the challenges.

#### **3.1 History of Immigration in Denmark**

Early 20th-century immigrants from nearby nations like Sweden and Norway were the first to arrive in Denmark, beginning a long history of immigration. However, most of the immigrants to Denmark came from Turkey, Pakistan, and other Middle Eastern and North African nations until the 1960s (Blom Hansen, 2014). Initially, the Danish government welcomed these immigrants as low-cost labour for the nation's developing economy. Nevertheless, as the immigrant population grew, so did the hostility between the native Danish and newcomers. The Danish government responded to this tension by implementing several regulations to limit immigration and encourage immigrants' integration into Danish society (Blom Hansen, 2014). The "24-year rule" implemented in Denmark in 1983 was one of the most divisive immigration laws. To reduce the number of family reuniting instances, this policy required that immigrants be 24 years old before bringing their spouse or other family members into the country (Korzeniewska, 2017). The Danish People's Party, a right-wing political party, has been at the vanguard of the nation's anti-immigration movement, calling for stricter immigration regulations and more robust border security (Borup, 2018).

#### **3.2 Denmark Immigration from Africa**

Like many other European countries, Denmark has seen a substantial influx of immigrants in recent years. Even while immigration from Africa to Denmark has generally increased, Nigeria

has emerged as one of the major continents of origin. The Danish Immigration Service reports that since the turn of the century, the number of African immigrants to Denmark has been gradually rising. 66,857 immigrants from Africa made up 3.3% of Denmark's overall population in 2019. According to the Danish Immigration Service (2020), 3,123 of them were from Nigeria, making it the seventh-largest nation of origin for African immigrants in Denmark. Economic opportunity, political unrest, and family reunification are some of the elements that have influenced the surge of African immigration to Denmark. With regards to terrorism, corruption, and a lack of employment possibilities, Nigeria has faced substantial political and economic difficulties, particularly in recent years (World Bank, 2021). Due to these circumstances, many Nigerians have left their country in search of better chances overseas, primarily in Denmark. The Danish government has implemented a number of measures to monitor and manage immigration, such as restrictions on family reunions and temporary resident cards. Critics claim that the strict restrictions imposed by this act make matters harder for immigrants, especially those from Africa (Hansen, 2017). These limitations, which have come under fire for being unduly stringent, exacerbate the issues that immigrants already face. The needs and experiences of all immigrants, particularly those from Africa, must be considered as Denmark grapples with immigration difficulties.

### **3.3 Nigerian Families and Parenting Practices**

Nigerian households are typically large, influenced by cultural expectations and the pursuit of social and economic status (UNICEF, 2013). Patriarchy is often upheld in Nigerian households, with defined roles for family members, including fathers providing financial support, mothers taking care of the home and children, and children expected to obey and respect their parents (Heaton & Hirschl, 1999). However, shifting financial realities, particularly rising female labor-force involvement, have caused alterations in these roles. (Heaton & Hirschl, 1999). Urbanization has changed Nigerian families over time, driven by rural-urban migration following the 1970s oil expansion (Aworemi et al., 2011). Urban growth has led to various challenges, such as poverty, limited employment opportunities, inadequate housing, increased crime rates, environmental degradation, and food insecurity (Aworemi et al., 2011; Oke, 1986). The migration from rural areas to cities has resulted in a shortage of farmers, leading to food shortages and higher prices

(Oke, 1986). These challenges have significantly influenced the structure and functioning of Nigerian families.

Nigeria encompasses numerous ethnic groups, with shared cultural family ideals and expectations, particularly among the Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, and Ibibio ethnic groups (Saddiq et al., 2010). These tribes predominantly follow a patriarchal system, where male dominance shapes family dynamics (Ekong, 1986). Extended relatives, including cousins, aunts, and uncles, hold significant kinship status equivalent to the nuclear family (Ekong, 1986). In Yoruba culture, the concept of "idile" represents the importance of familial bonds, and families in villages reside in closely spaced houses, fostering a social and economic unit (Ekong, 1986). In Igbo culture, "Ezi n'ulo" emphasizes a close familial bond beyond physical proximity, and nuclear and extended family members have interdependent roles (Alber et al., 2010). Kinship groups are expected to provide support, share resources, and display affection (Alber et al., 2010). The Ibibio lack a specific word for a nuclear family but uses "Ifok-Ekpuk" to refer to a household where blood relatives reside together, highlighting an extended family system (Ekong, 1986).

Childrearing in Igbo culture is a collective effort, exemplified by the saying "ora n'azu nwa," emphasizing community responsibility in raising children (Alber et al., 2010). This viewpoint implies that all adults, not just biological parents, contribute to childrearing, and children are considered part of the more comprehensive kinship network (Alber et al., 2010). Consequently, child fostering, where non-biological relatives raise children, is prevalent in Nigerian families (Alber et al., 2010). Fostering serves various purposes, such as financial, educational, or social reasons, allowing children to receive education from wealthier relatives or learn ancestral practices from grandparents (Alber et al., 2010). It mainly benefits working mothers who rely on their family network for childcare support and new mothers who may foster a relative's child to help with infant care (Alber et al., 2010). Despite the impact of urbanization and migration, Nigerian family networks have primarily remained intact, although relocating to distant countries like Denmark can disrupt the logistical, financial, personal, and communal support Nigerian families provide (Alber et al., 2010).

For Nigerian children, respect is a crucial prerequisite. Age, social standing, education, and marital status are among the factors that determine seniority. In Nigerian culture, disagreeing with or interrupting an adult is seen as disrespectful (Ohuche, 1986). Nigerian kids are encouraged to prioritize their family's needs over their own. They are given responsibilities, including helping out in the family's enterprises or trades, working on the farm, looking after younger siblings, completing tasks, and acting correctly and in accordance with cultural norms. This is done to ensure the family is accurately portrayed and not made to look bad (Bledsoe & Sow, 2011; Ekong, 1986).

Immigration creates difficulties instilling Nigerian cultural values and beliefs in children due to conflicting views on child development in the new society. Nigerian families have been observed to take their young ones to be raised by close relatives in Nigeria to make sure that they are raised in accordance with traditional cultural expectations (Bledsoe & Sow, 2011). Nigerian immigrants frequently join ethnic support organizations, like immigrants from other parenting cultures, to discover childrearing or childcare services that align with their cultural values and practices. Many registered Nigerian associations exist (Motherland Nigeria, 2013). These groups frequently hold celebrations on national holidays in Nigeria, such as Independence Day and the New Yam festival. Additionally, they raise money for charitable and humanitarian endeavours in Nigeria, assist sick or grieving family members, and set up playgroups or language lessons for members' children (Reynolds, 2009; Ukaoma, 2011). This study aims to learn more about how parents' cultures of origin affect their parenting goals and the techniques they employ to assist their young children in maintaining a Nigerian identity while living in Denmark.

### **3.4 Immigration and Acculturation**

According to Berry (2001), a critical factor in an immigrant's ongoing adjustment is the context of reception, which includes the way the host country treats immigrants and their interactions with immigration officials, as well as their experiences with housing, employment, neighbourhood, and community. He contends that depending on how immigrants engage with the host society negatively or favourably, a matrix of reaction patterns develops.



**Cultural Adaptation (relationship sought among groups)**

		<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
		Separation	Integration
<b>Maintenance of heritage culture</b>	<b>High</b>		
	<b>Low</b>	Marginalization	Assimilation

**Figure 1: Acculturation Strategies: Adapted from Berry (2001) (Kiylioglu & Wimmer, 2004).**

Berry (2001) asserts that civilizations that value variety and pluralism have a multicultural ideology. Immigrants are more likely to use an integration acculturation technique under such circumstances. Policies at the structural level, such as curricula that encourage variety and institutionalized language diversity, reflect multiculturalism. Demographic integration, such as multiracial marriages and the enrollment of multiethnic students, is another example of multiculturalism. Furthermore, sociocultural diversity—such as the availability of various meals from different cultures—can be seen as a manifestation of multiculturalism.

On the other hand, nations that encourage immigrants to integrate into the larger social culture via social and ideological discourse, immigration laws, and cultural practices or mindsets are said to practise a multicultural ideology. Host societies can be viewed as exclusive and segregated if they do not promote multiculturalism and do not provide many possibilities for immigrants to integrate. In such societies, immigrants typically use tactics that involve exclusion and segregation. The nation's immigration policies and history impact these sentiments toward immigrants. For

example, Canada implemented a multiculturalism policy to address the escalating racial and ideological tensions between the English and French (Wood & Gilbert, 2005). Immigrants may experience hostile attitudes, primarily if apparent cultural disparities exist between the immigrant community and their host nation (Phinney et al., 2001).

An immigrant's cultural adaptation is influenced by three key factors, including language, customs, and racial affiliation, by an acculturation paradigm. There are many ways to define culture, but the fundamental idea is that it is a shared meaning that a group of people assigns to themselves. Norms, values, and beliefs that can shape behaviour are referred to as culture by Broesch and Hadley (2012). Known as cultural models, these topics—such as religion, diet, or attire—are organized around which this information is socially communicated. The idea of cultural domains underlines that culture is not a single, consistent thing.

There may be variances within a specific cultural setting regarding adherence to cultural domains. For example, the Christian faith contains numerous denominations, such as Baptist, Catholic, and Presbyterian, each with its own beliefs and practices. Also, immigrants can adjust to particular cultural aspects of the host society. The concept of domain-specific acculturation, which matches the ecological contexts of acculturation outlined previously, can be used to identify this tendency to utilize various methods in different cultural environments.

Understanding the complex acculturation process requires careful consideration of the sociocultural paradigms before and after migration. Different cultural models impact the degree of cultural separation between the heritage and host countries, which may affect the acculturation process (Babiker et al., 1980; Berry, 1997). The acculturation process is made simpler when the host and heritage groups share more traits, such as similarity in language, education, and cuisine. For instance, due to the close cultural ties, American immigrants to Canada would find it easier to integrate. On the other hand, Iranian immigrants would come into contact with new languages, values, and customs in Canada, which would cause a more significant cultural gap and necessitate psychological adaptation using associated steps such as cultural melting and acquiring new cultures (Berry, 1992). According to (Berry, 1997), the process of culture shedding and learning involves unwittingly letting go of some behaviours and values while adopting new ones better

suited to the new culture. According to Kwon's study on Chinese graduate students adjusting to the Korean host society, cultural distance quantifies subjective differences in sociocultural adjustment (Kwon, 2013). The students claimed that social interactions, manners, teaching methods, and language proficiency gaps caused stress in them.

Language is a sociocultural information indicator illustrating a group's common cultural identity (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). It serves as both a tool and an objective in the process of socialization (Tannebaum, 2009; Tingvold et al., 2012). Following Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, language acquisition happens when a person interacts with a more knowledgeable person, leading to communicative language use and transmitting cultural attitudes through language. Individuals' spoken interactions become internalized psychological processes (Vygotsky, 1962). People are thus socialized through language to become competent members of their sociocultural context. Learning how, when, when, and why to use various types of language aids in socializing into one's cultural group and serves as a guide for identifying one's ethnicity (Mucherah, 2008). Language patterns that convey confidence, autonomy, and individuality are characteristics of the Danish language and culture, whereas language forms that convey co-dependence, communalism, and submissiveness are features of the Chinese language and culture (Kwon, 2013; Shi, 2010). Mother-generation Mexican immigrant parents usually desire that their children speak Spanish as the primary tongue in order to impart culturally essential qualities such as "respect" (respect) and reliance (Buriel, 2012).

The ability to recognize and accept oneself and one's culture is necessary for understanding the concept of identity (Miller, 1993, p. 159). Identity was described by Erikson (1959) as "maintaining a strong connection with a group's values and identity" (p. 102). A person's awareness and acceptance of themselves within the framework of an ethnic group is what is meant by their ethnic identity. According to Phinney et al. (2001), ethnic identity is a sensitive and nuanced idea that encompasses self-identification, a sense of community, loyalty to a group, and a standard set of beliefs and behaviours regarding one's own ethnic group.

Migration can result in the loss of cultural references that serve as the foundation for one's mental representations and comprehension. When immigrants are cut off from their cultural roots, they

frequently become more conscious of their ethnic identity. The process of acculturation may also be hampered by the fact that people who once belonged to the ethnic majority in their native country may now find themselves in the minority there. Such difficulties, for instance, were faced by Chinese Buddhists living in the United States. Chinese Buddhists who immigrated to the United States encountered difficulties adjusting to their new ethnic and religious environment. They had to Americanize their religion to blend in, which involved changing its tenets, rituals, and organizational structure, hiring non-Chinese leaders, and joining religious organizations. Redefining one's ethnic identity can lead to acculturative stressors, crucially mediated by ethnic identity. According to the acculturation paradigm, ethnic identification significantly impacts the acculturation strategy choice. The importance of being associated with one's traditional and ethnic background and taking a national or host cultural identity are both essential parts of ethnic identity, much as acculturation encompasses these two vital considerations.

The interplay of culture, language, and ethnic identification plays a significant role in shaping the personalities of immigrants at both macro and micro-sociological levels. Immigrants often develop a cultural identification that is similar yet distinct from their native country, closely tied to language and culture. A study focusing on immigrant women from Africa and Asia revealed their strong identification with their cultural foods, referring to them as "our food" or "we eat," while considering the food of the host country as "their food" or "they eat," highlighting the importance of food as a cultural marker. Sub-Saharan immigrants in Australia were found to maintain their traditional dietary customs from their home countries while incorporating some culinary preferences and customs from the host nation (Renzaho & Burns, 2006). Lunch was identified as the largest and most formal meal by the majority of respondents (86%), reflecting their ancestral culture but differing from Australian culture, where dinner is typically considered the most substantial meal. When certain staple foods from their native country were unavailable in Australia, substitutions were made. Changes in dietary patterns among immigrant populations may be influenced by shifting gender roles, as women increasingly work outside the home and may have less time to prepare traditional meals (Bowen & Devine, 2011). These dietary shifts, allowing individuals to create diverse identities based on the availability of food resources in the host country, are hypothesized to impact ethnic identity (Chapman & Beagan, 2013). Immigrants may

need to adapt their self-concepts to fit into a new cultural environment, potentially affecting their self-perception.

### **3.6 Challenges Immigrant Families Face**

According to Suarez-Orozco and Carhill (2008), immigrant families can be both similar and dissimilar. When they relocate to a new nation, they come from varied occupational, ethnic, and sociocultural backgrounds, yet they are all categorized as "immigrants". The diversity of immigrant families and the conditions they experience in the host country can make adjustment difficult and provide different obstacles (Haller & Landolt, 2005). The legal stay of immigrants sets them apart from one another and affects the nature and extent of the challenges they encounter. Immigrants face various difficulties, including language barriers, finding work, dealing with bureaucracy, disrupted family relationships, insufficient childcare, uncertainty about their immigration status, unmet expectations, and discrimination. These challenges include:

#### **Language**

This barrier can threaten an immigrant family's ability to communicate and understand one another (Calzada et al., 2012). If language brokers are accessible, parents with inadequate English ability may need to rely on people from outside the family or their children (Morales et al., 2011). Role reversal diminished parental authority, conflicts between parents and children, and weaker family cohesion may result from generational language gaps and parents' reliance on their offspring to communicate with the host society (Schofield et al., 2012). Language hurdles can make it difficult to communicate even for parents fluent in the local tongue, as Stewart et al. (2008) noted. It may still be difficult for them to communicate properly because they have yet to become familiar with the language's nuances and regional conventions. Language difficulties can also have a cascading effect on other challenges that immigrants encounter, such as finding employment, navigating the bureaucratic system, and accessing childcare.

## Family issues

Ho (2010) noted that children and parents usually acculturate differently in pace and extent. While prior research has generally demonstrated that kids acculturate more quickly and thoroughly than their parents in the host culture (Bahrassa et al., 2013), some research has found the opposite. Children adapt more to their cultural backgrounds than their parents, Lim et al. (2009). This might be because parents are more concerned with assimilating into the host culture to profit from its alleged benefits (Nesdale, 2002). However, teenagers are more concerned with forging their unique ethnic background and ensuring a successful transition using a bi-cultural approach (Ho, 2008).

According to Portes and Rumbaut (2001), consonant acculturation happens when parents and kids acculturate at the same rate, but discordant acculturation happens when they do so at varying rates. Acculturation gaps result from the second type of acculturation, which occurs when first-generational parents continue to uphold the cultural norms, standards, and values of their native country while their offspring quickly adapt to the host culture and its structures, mainly through relationships with others and schooling (Dasgupta, 1998; Tingvold et al., 2012). According to research by Schofield et al. (2012), difficulties with communication among immigrant parents and kids moderate acculturation discrepancies. Acculturation gaps have also been associated with detrimental effects, such as poor child adjustment, teenage behavioural disorders, criminality, poor performance in school, and disputes between parents and kids (Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Kim et al.). According to Ornelas, Perreira, Beeber, and Maxwell (2009), feeling alone and having trouble finding support for childcare, employment, and emotional well-being are consequences of being cut off from extended family and other relatives. Due to the host country's more egalitarian expectations for male and female engagement in the workforce and at home, immigration can also result in gender roles and marital disputes (Shirpak et al., 2011; Yu, 2011). The additional freedoms granted to women in host nations may challenge males from more traditional and patriarchal cultures, increasing the likelihood of conflict, aggressiveness, and relationship dissatisfaction (Falconer, 2013).

## **Financial Stressors**

According to De Bustillo & Anton (2011) and Takei & Sakamoto (2011), immigrants experience poverty to a greater extent, particularly those who arrived recently and have not had a chance to acclimate to their new surroundings fully. According to many immigrants, poverty results from institutionalized racism, bias, and discrimination in housing and employment possibilities (Phillimore, 2011; Stewart et al., 2008).

Different immigrant families manage stressors in diverse ways. According to Hill's ABC-X concept of stress in families, the three components of stress adaptation, created in 1949, are stressors in the family, resources, and perception or characterization of the stressful situation. The C image factor, which deals with immigrant families, is quite significant. Whether or not family members perceive their stress to be a way to a purpose or as an untenable circumstance may impact how the family functions. According to the article "Family Immigration and Academic Achievement," immigrant families frequently incorporate their reasons for immigrating into their family stories to remind themselves of their purpose and to push them to achieve their goals. These stories, which could contain phrases like "it is better to do this than that," are cognitive strategies families use to adjust to the difficulties of a new country. Immigrants usually consider their migration goals when faced with difficulties and demands, which helps them manage these situations. Anecdotal data suggests that immigrants from Nigeria, who come from a socio-political setting of unsteadiness, fundamental favouritism, and economic instability, use stories that emphasize their reasons for moving to Denmark to cope with acculturative difficulties and unfavourable circumstances.

### **3.7 Immigrant Family Resources**

The ability to communicate effectively in language, personal and financial resources, familiarity with the norms of the country of resettlement, and encouragement from networks of friends, are just a few examples of the resources that can be used to deal with difficult experiences and situations (Beckhusen et al., 2013). Another resource is the characteristics of one's culture before migration (such as strong family ties, religious beliefs, and values). Individuals' cultural features

before migration can benefit their adaptation as immigrants. Chinese immigrants, for example, have been found to exhibit cultural values such as filial duty, obedience, hard work, and family honour, which have been recognized as contributing to their significantly more effective assimilation. Nevertheless, human characteristics such as education, professional skills, social ability, and economic resources that individuals hold before migrating are essential to immigrant adaptation (Guo, 2013). Rumbaut (2008) asserts that immigrants who have acquired education and work experience relevant to and in demand in the host nation are more likely to be welcomed by the community. For instance, Rumbaut's contention that immigrants are the most and least educated groups in the US is supported by a comparison between Asian and Hispanic immigrant groups. Portes and Fernandez-Kelly (2008) study the reasons for immigrant adjustment and acculturation disparities. They concentrate on immigrant children and contend that factors influencing their adaptability include the intellectual assets of their parents, the make-up of their families, and the methods of assimilation. Government, society, and community frameworks are critical in determining how well immigrants can use their human capital to help them adjust. Suppose government institutions and policies are accommodating or neutral. In that case, the social environment encourages integration and offers opportunities, and social networks and local dynamics foster co-ethnic interactions; immigrants are more likely to be able to use their human resources and career abilities to aid in their adaptation. According to Beckhusen et al. (2013), these components allow immigrants to prosper in their new country and positively contribute to society. Immigrant families can benefit immensely from an organized community of other immigrants, such as those formed around religion or ethnic groupings. These communities can give critical support and assistance to help mitigate the difficulties of the immigrant experience (Berkman & Glass, 2000). In addition to emotional support, these communities can provide vital resources such as career opportunities, healthcare, daycare, transportation, and other necessities (Anthias & Cederberg, 2009). Language classes, mentors, and peer relationships with individuals of the same background may also be available in immigrant communities, which can aid adaptation by creating a sense of familiarity (Beckhusen et al., 2013).

In addition to aiding in language acquisition and acclimatization to cultural norms, the length of an immigrant's stay in the destination country can also help in adaptation (Miglietta & Tartaglia, 2009). When new immigrants come, they could first feel uneasy in their new environment,



especially if they do not speak the language well. Kuo & Roysircar's (2004) study found that Chinese teenage immigrants to Canada with poor English language skills experienced higher stress levels due to adjusting to the new culture. For individuals who spoke English well before moving to Canada, the advantages of acculturation were greater because they were better able to: a) grasp the local way of life, b) interact with locals on a more personal level, and c) avoid possible cultural conflicts. The ability to speak a language, whether acquired before or after the migration (Kuo & Roysircar, 2004; Miglietta & Tartaglia, 2009), is a vital sign of effective adaptation.

Immigrants typically employ this resiliency by comparing their new nation's prospects and level of living with their own (Parra-Cardona et al., 2006). The data provided demonstrate that immigrant families face several psychological and environmental difficulties. These restrictions have an impact on the coping strategy used by immigrants, which is moulded by the social interactions they engage in their new setting (Tardif-Williams & Fisher, 2009). The primary goal of this research is to investigate the experiences of Nigerian immigrant families in Denmark, including how well they adjusted to their new surroundings and how that affected their parenting styles. To examine the ideas of acculturation tactics, parenting, difficulties faced, and resources accessible, the study will use in-depth one-on-one interviews. The literature review will be used as a point of comparison between the participants' acculturation experiences and those of other immigrant groups and people. We can find commonalities, distinctive experiences, and acculturation processes by contrasting the participants' experiences with those of other immigrant groups and people. This will help us comprehend the phenomenon much better.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study investigates how Nigerian immigrant families adjust to their new life in Denmark, focusing on their parenting styles and capacity for cultural adjustment. The study's qualitative methodology will be covered in this chapter.

#### **4.1 The Qualitative Framework**

Since it acknowledges and emphasizes the significance of meanings, the existence of multiple realities underneath a family, and the socio-psychological and emotional backdrop that shapes knowledge creation, qualitative research is context-sensitive and particularly appropriate for family research (Ambert et al., 1995; Trochim, 2001). According to Ambert et al. (1995) and Fonow & Cook (1991), qualitative approaches can produce detailed and vivid descriptions that allow researchers to acquire insight into the nuances, motives, and complexities of daily life in families (Baffoe, 2010; Kim et al., 2011). Concerning Nigerian immigrant families in particular, this research seeks to investigate these meanings and processes. An inductive process of knowledge creation is generally used in the qualitative research approach. The goal of qualitative research is frequently to investigate a subject from the respondent's point of view. To determine the significance of certain phenomena, in-depth narratives are gathered through interviews and discussions of common experiences. The quantitative paradigm is being compared to the qualitative paradigm in this discussion since that is how paradigms are typically discussed.

Quantitative methods are typically the most suitable when conducting research that calls for huge sample sizes and a large amount of data. Statistical projection-based generalizations are better suited to quantitative approaches. Comparatively, qualitative research is more appropriate for studies that emphasize the participant's unique experiences, offer in-depth descriptive information, and present findings that interact with the human situation (Newman & Benz, 1998; Trochim, 2001). Since this study concentrates on exploring the acculturation experiences of participants in-depth, a qualitative approach seems more appropriate for identifying important themes.

## 4.2 Qualitative Methods

This study's objective is to explore how Nigerian immigrant families adjust to their new life in Denmark, with a focus on their parenting styles and capacity for cultural adjustment using a phenomenological approach. According to van Manen (1990), phenomenology is the study of lived experience, and its central epistemological tenet is that people's subjective experiences influence how they understand the outside world (Trochim, 2001). In order to improve our comprehension of the human experience, phenomenology seeks to characterize and explain our everyday surroundings (Dahlberg et al., 2001). The human experience being investigated in this study is the adjustment of immigrant parents from Nigeria. It is anticipated that the actual experiences that family members encounter in their everyday lives will generate a wealth of information about how these events are interpreted. The study used in-depth, semi-structured interviews to obtain narrative accounts of the participants' real-life experiences with acculturation. Participants' seemingly unrelated stories come together to build a comprehensive picture. Parents born in Nigeria were only interviewed to provide a more authentic experience.

## 4.3 A Researcher's Role

It would be my obligation as the researcher to gather data from the interviewees during the interview process. I am aware of the impact and potential prejudice that my group membership, in this case, as a Nigerian immigrant in Denmark, can have on my work as a qualitative researcher. I am also conscious of the possibility that my nonverbal communication, such as my attitude of speaking, my movements, and my visual expressions, could influence participants' responses as well as the overall results of the study. This is so that I can do my work as a facilitator, which does not happen in a vacuum. I will use techniques like reflexivity and critical self-examination to address these issues during the data collecting and analysis process, as proposed by (Mason, 2002; Pilnick & Swift, 2010). In their conception of grounded theory from 1990, Strauss and Corbin criticized the influence of current hypotheses on research results. They argued that such theories could impede progress and limit originality by obstructing the development of new theories from empirical data. Hence, as a researcher, I must not limit myself to existing theories' boundaries but instead explore questions and issues beyond their limitations.

#### **4.4 Sources of Data**

Two forms of data were used to address the study inquiry: a) pre-interview questionnaire responses that provided background data and b) participant interviews. It's important to note that the interviews started with two sensitizing acculturation questions, which I will include in Appendix 1. I did not divide the participants into pre-established groups using these questions. Based on acculturation theory, they were instead employed as a framework to help investigate and understand immigration experiences. Given that theories are an account of universal human behaviour and are influenced by their historical and cultural context, the questions were developed with this understanding in mind (Ezzy, 2002). Similarly, the historical and cultural environment shapes the perception of immigrants' acculturation experiences and behaviours. Using acculturation theory as a broad framework, this study aims to analyze the more profound aspects and dynamics of those views.

#### **4.5 Framework for Data Collection and Sampling**

Semi-structured interviews were employed to create a complete account while supporting a conversational and natural tone (Merriam, 1998). In addition to allowing for a guided discourse (Lofland & Lofland, 1995), this approach also enables the use of follow-up or probing questions to increase clarity (Draper & Swift, 2011).

Purposive sampling, which involves deliberately choosing participants who are likely to be able to contribute important information to the study's issue was chosen as the sampling technique (Marshall, 1996). Given the paucity of data on parents who moved from Nigeria to Denmark and their adjustment experiences, purposeful sampling was an appropriate and effective strategy for choosing the study participants.

#### **4.6 Data Collection Procedure**

Despite initially intending to interview five, I conducted face-to-face interviews with three Nigerian immigrant parents. Two of the participants were unable to participate due to time constraints. This study's participants were Nigerian immigrant parents living in Aalborg who met

the required inclusion requirements: 1) married people with kids ranging in age from four to eighteen; 2) first-generation Nigerian immigrants, and 3) have lived in Denmark for at least three years to establish cultural familiarity. Reaching out to Nigerian families I knew was part of the process I employed to recruit the study participants. However, the majority of them fell short of the study's requirements. Instead, I asked them to recommend families who fulfilled the requirements or who might be aware of possible participants.

Before the interviews, parents were required to sign a written consent form informing them of the study's purpose, their right to privacy, and their ability to opt out of the study at any time. Prior to the interviews, the participants were asked to complete a questionnaire about their background. Their age, education level, occupation, length of stay in Denmark, years of marriage, income, and the sexes and ages of their children were all asked about in this questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews with 12 open-ended questions were conducted at participants' residences. Each interview lasted about 50-60 minutes on average. All of the interviews I conducted were conducted entirely in English. The study's interview questions were prepared after a review of the literature on immigrant parenting.

#### **4.7 Participants**

The research project comprised three Nigerian families from various regions of Nigeria who had resided in Denmark for an averaged of three years with a duration of three to eighteen years. solely Nigerian immigrants who had at least one child born in Denmark were included as participants in the study. The study excluded parents born in Denmark and parents who emigrated to Denmark from Nigeria but did not have a minimum of one child born here. The parents' ages varied from 30 to 45. All of the parents have graduate degrees, and one of them even holds a Ph.D.

#### **4.8 The Rigour of Qualitative Research**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested four standards to gauge the validity of qualitative research. The four requirements are credibility, transferability, reliability, and confirmability. An overview of these criteria is provided below:

- a.) Credibility in qualitative research relates to how well the researcher captures the participants' viewpoints. The qualitative study is considered credible if other people with comparable experiences can identify the participant's descriptions (Sandelowski, 1986). Credibility was attained by presenting the results of this study using the participants' own words.
- b.) According to Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) and Polit & Beck (2012), transferability in qualitative research is the degree to which the results may be used to analyze data from various populations or settings. By using the comprehensive data on the participants, including any inferences drawn that were supplied, the findings of this study can be extrapolated to other immigrant families from Nigeria as well as immigrant families from other nations.
- c.) In qualitative research, dependability refers to the instrument's consistency and dependability throughout time, i.e., if the same results would be obtained if tested twice. Even though it is difficult for two research scenarios to be exactly the same, this study's objective was to demonstrate dependability by employing an instrument created based on past studies' results. Even though additional follow-up questions were asked throughout the semi-structured interviews to clarify responses, the 13-question interview provided the research with a strong foundation.
- d.) Confirmability in qualitative research is the ability of the researcher to demonstrate that the information appropriately presented reflects the participants' perspectives rather than their biases or viewpoints (Polit & Beck, 2012; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Similar to quantitative research, confirmability aims for a high degree of objectivity. A discussion of reflexivity will be included below, though, as total objectivity is unattainable in social research (Slife & Williams, 1995). However, to help develop different themes, this study included several quotes from the participants to achieve confirmability.
- e.) Reflexivity is a constant act of reflection and self-awareness that researchers engage in to recognize and resolve any potential impact of their emotions and perceptions on data collection, analysis, and findings (Hughes, 2014). It is especially vital to declare when the researcher, as in the current study, is a member of the group being examined. I was born in Nigeria and raised there before migrating to Denmark as an international student. I know

some Nigerian immigrant parents and have witnessed and heard some of the stories shared by the study's parent participants.

#### **4.9 Qualitative Data Analysis**

Analysis in research involves the researcher's efforts to explain and comprehend their findings while deriving meaning from them (Carey, 2012; Blaxter et al., 1996). Data analysis's three primary steps are reduction, reorganization, and representation (Flick, 2013). Data analysis may also include other phases, such as data visualization, inference drawing, and validation (Miles et al., 1994, 2013). Visual aids like charts, graphs, and tables are valuable for interpreting and presenting data (Flick, 2013). There is no set method for translating data into conclusions (Willis, 2015; Adam et al., 2007). The analysis involves gathering data and releasing findings (Willis, 2015). It is critical to define the unit of data being analyzed, establish protocols for summarising and interpreting the data, and assess the extent to which the findings shed light on the phenomenon being studied (Willis, 2015).

Thematic analysis, an inductive methodology that allows themes to emerge from data, was used to evaluate the interviews in this study (Carey, 2013). Themes can be identified during or after the interview, and the stages proposed by Aronson (1994) were followed (Carey, 2013). The study involved interviewing participants, recording their comments, and transcribing the interview data (Willis, 2007). Themes and sub-themes were extracted from the transcriptions based on standout participant statements (Willis, 2007). These themes, including acculturation, respect, alone parenting, education, discipline, and language, were supported by significant participant remarks (Willis, 2007). To facilitate referencing, codes were assigned to systematically organize expressions, noting similarities and differences and placing them under relevant topics and subcategories (Willis, 2007). The next chapter discusses these significant themes, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS

The aim of this study is to investigate how Nigerian immigrant families adapt to their new lives in Denmark, paying particular attention to their parenting practices and their ability for cultural adjustment. The study explores and discusses the cultural adjustment that immigrant families from Nigeria go through, with a focus on the challenges that they face as parents in a new social and cultural setting different to their own. To gather first-person narratives of participants' experiences and their interpretations of them, the study method utilized qualitative approaches.

A summary of the study participants' backgrounds can be seen in the table below. I had originally intended to interview five participants, but two could not take part because of time constraints. Three immigrants from Nigeria participated in total, a man (coded as M1) and two women (coded as W1 and W2) respectively. The man is 37 years old, while the women are between the ages of 34 and 44 respectively. It might be claimed that factors like the participants' acculturation process and length of stay in Denmark may have affected how they perceived their experiences. There were ten kids overall among the participants, ranging in age from one to eighteen (1-18). Whereas the male participant had only resided in Denmark for 6 years, the female participants had spent between 14 and 25 years in Denmark.

#### 5.1 Table 1 . Participants background information

Code of respondents	No of years in Denmark	Religion	No of child/children	Ages of the children
M1	6	Christian	3	13, 11 & 9
W1	14	Christian	3	10, 8 & 4
W2	25	Christian	4	18, 15, 10 & 7

The study's findings are organised into thematic sections in this chapter that focus on particular subjects. Many categories that defined the ways in which Nigerian immigrants interpret their



experiences were revealed in the data analysis. Just the most prominent themes, however, are provided due to the study's size limitations. The following list of categories does not reflect the relative importance of any of the categories as is merely arranged numerically.

1. Acculturation: "I could choose the best from Nigeria and this country and combine them."
2. Respect: "A child walks past you without saying a greeting. That is just not African".
3. Alone parenting: "Raising children alone just with your spouse can be challenging because there is no one to offer support."
4. Education: "You have to go to school; education is important if you want to be successful and important"
5. Discipline: "The right to educate my child in accordance with my own beliefs, rather than conforming to societal expectations regarding how to raise my child."
6. Language: "I had to keep explaining myself."

## **5.2 Category 1: Acculturation**

Acculturation was the subject of only one inquiry, yet it appeared in many of the stories that were gathered. This category will be further broken down into two sections to better understand how immigrant parents adapt: a) The desire of the parents for cultural integration b) Their desire (Parents) of their kids to combine both cultures ( Nigeria and Denmark )while being conscious of their differences too.

### **Category 1a). The desire of the parents for cultural integration: " *I could choose the best from Nigeria and here and combine them* "**

The parents' comment reflects the concept of biculturalism, which is one of the characteristics of acculturation theory. Biculturalism, the ability to integrate characteristics from both the originating and host cultures, is reflected in the parents' approach to parenting (Berry, 1997). Incorporating elements of both Danish and Nigerian culture may lead to positive outcomes such as higher self-esteem, lower stress levels, better academic performance, and improved intercultural communication abilities (Benet-Martnez & Haritatos, 2005; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Nguyen & Benet-Martnez, 2013). However, managing potential conflicts between the two cultures is crucial for successful biculturalism (Berry, 1997). Identifying common values and finding solutions to any discrepancies are important considerations in this process.

**Respondent W2:** *“I could choose the best from Nigeria and here and combine them. Doing this will create a pretty excellent blend of cultures. I attempt to come up with what I think is best for my family and relationships with my family by borrowing a little bit here and a little bit there.”*

Respondent W2, an immigrant who has lived in Denmark for 25 years, along with other immigrant parents, aims to create a unique cultural blend that combines values from their home country (Nigeria) and Denmark to provide their children with opportunities for success. These parents, due to their immigrant identities, have the ability to critically evaluate cultural norms and values that would otherwise be unquestioned. In order to thrive in Denmark, they must consciously assess the cultural options available to them and make deliberate choices about which aspects to preserve and which to let go of.

**Respondent M1:** *Well, I think in general, one needs to actually strike a balance and find the middle point between where you are and where you come from. That's where you come from is something that no one can take from you. It is you wherever you go, right. Now you're in Denmark, you need to adapt a bit, of course, you need to start to speak a bit of the language, you need to start to learn at least some shake, take cultural perspective and understand where you are. Right? That's where you actually call home for now. And then where you're from is your permanent home, because that's who you are.*

**Respondent W1:** *Both Denmark and Nigerian cultures are great and would be good for them to explore, it would be great if they could appreciate both.*

Each participant stated a wish to develop a harmonious synthesis of their two cultures by removing undesirable, ineffective, or unnecessary cultural practices. Their ambition is to benefit from the best of the two countries for their children and themselves. They emphasized the necessity of establishing open communication between parents and children. This is unusual in Nigerian culture, where many parents use strict parenting methods.

**Respondent W2:** *I now communicate openly with my children, which has changed the way I parent. At the age of 7, I lacked the courage to approach*

*my parents and express my thoughts and feelings. You did this to me, and this is how it affected me. Occasionally, my 7-year-old will approach me and ask, "Can I ask you a question? Why did you say what you said yesterday? Why did you speak that way? Why don't you want me to do this or that? I would have said be quiet in Nigeria. Don't do it as I have told you not to do that. But is a different case here, she must have been deliberating before asking me that question, so I take my time to clarify. She occasionally leaves after being satisfied or coming back. I can tell when she is upset because she comes to me and tells me. I appreciate it because I want to know whether the child is bothered by anything.*

***Respondent M1:*** *In Nigeria, children's opinions are often disregarded, and they are told that they are still just kids. This is not an ideal situation in my opinion. I want my child to trust me enough to share anything with me, whether it's about changes they are going through or any challenges they may be facing, that is my goal as a parent.*

The parents in the study hold the belief that Danish children are fortunate to have a privileged lifestyle compared to children in Nigeria. However, they also express concern that when children have everything they desire, they may lack resilience due to a lack of hardships. While the parents do not want their children to endure the same challenges they faced during their own upbringing in Nigeria, they do wish for their children to gain a small understanding of the difficulties faced by some children in Nigeria. The mothers who participated in the study were particularly vocal in expressing this perspective.

***Respondent W2:*** *Children here do not really go through any difficulties in life like some children in Nigeria. I think it is good for children to not have everything they want sometimes, that will allow them to understand the worth of things and know that there are some children in the world that do not have half of what they are enjoying. Life is so different here.*

Berry (1997) suggests that combining cultures is the best way for succeeding generations of immigrant families to acculturate. Nevertheless, some stated that, given the choice, they would

like to place greater priority on teaching their kids about Nigerian culture. Due to the fact that it has benefited them throughout their upbringing and contributed to their current status. They think that giving their kids more exposure to Nigerian culture would be beneficial for them, but it is challenging for them to do so.

**Respondent M1:** *I like my African culture. We would be in Nigeria if the area were so secure. Like ... Nigeria is not that secure right now. If it were, we would be back there. It is very challenging to train our kids in Nigerian culture, like my son, if I do not speak the Nigerian language to him, no one else does, I would have love him to speak the language.*

**Respondent W2:** *I have a desire for a blend of cultures that contains Nigerian cultures and an additional Danish culture. This is because my upbringing was influenced by my Nigerian culture, and I want to instill the same values in my children. As they mature, they will learn how to successfully blend the two cultures, and I will also find a balance that works for me.*

However, despite the fact that all three parents stated a wish to introduce their kids to Nigerian culture, they also admitted that they did not belong to any Nigerian community organisations. According to studies on how immigrants adjust, it is typical for them to look for associations or groups that are associated with their country of origin to gain access to a common knowledge base, support system (Anthias & Cederberg, 2009; Berkman & Glass, 2000). These organisations can also be used to socialise the young ones to the norms/value standards of their country of origin. The parents stated that the main barrier to joining a Nigerian organisation was the challenges of identifying with an "organised" organisation.

**Respondent W1:** *We do not belong to any Nigeria association, but I have my Nigeria friends.*

**Respondent W2:** *When you belong to the Nigeria association, you are required to take part in a variety of events, such as buying asoebi (a sort of Nigerian cloth) when another member is hosting an event or having a wedding. I dislike the idea of buying asoebi since I would need to come up with the money to do so.*

To preserve their cultural heritage, these parents in the study tend to prioritise more informal and close-knit interactions with other Nigerians. An interesting finding is their assertion that when a member of the group is involved in a significant event like a wedding or anniversary, others are expected to actively participate and support the celebration. This requirement reflects the communal social dynamics prevalent in Nigerian socio-culture, where participation in family and community celebrations is expected. However, the willingness of these parents to relinquish this obligation may indicate a greater acceptance of individualism. They deliberately evaluate and choose norms and values that are best for their own household or reflect their immediate family rather than the larger Nigerian community. This decision to forgo involvement in organised associations also impacts the opportunities for introducing young children to Nigerian cultural standards. These parents demonstrate a bi-cultural mindset, particularly in their approach to raising their children. This mindset plays a significant role in shaping their ongoing choices regarding personal interactions with the new culture and the level of integration they seek for their children.

**1b) They express their desire wanting their children to combine both cultures while being conscious of their differences. “We need to combine both, but make sure they understand the difference between the two.”**

Acculturation theory, which postulates that people or groups who come into contact with a different culture may either maintain their original culture or adopt elements of the new culture, can be used to explain the parents' desire for their children to blend both cultures while being aware of their differences. Depending on elements including an individual's motivation and the type of cross-cultural contact, the degree of cultural integration may differ (Berry, 1997). To prevent misunderstandings and potential confrontations, it's crucial for people to be aware of the distinctions between cultures (Berry, 2003). This is in line with the parents' expressed wish for their kids to be aware of the differences between the two cultures. In general, the parents' wish for their kids to blend both cultures while also appreciating their distinctions can be considered as a bicultural approach, which has been shown to have favourable effects on people's psychological wellbeing. The prevention of potential disputes and uncertainty also depends on being aware of cultural differences.

The parents who participated in the study clearly said that their main motivation for moving to Denmark was to give their kids a better life. The words "safety," "educational opportunities," "job

security" were mentioned as justifications. The parents indicated a wish for their children to integrate into Danish society in a way that would make it easier for them to become a part of the greater community.

***Respondent W1:** Given that my children are here and they are likely to live out the rest of their lives in Denmark, it is very obvious that they will gain more of the Danish culture. However, I still want them to know a bit of Nigerian culture but I will not force it on them.*

The parents' comments support what the other participating parents had observed regarding the obvious and challenging cultural norms and values gap between themselves and their children. Their assumption, which is held by the parents of other research participants, was that their children might become more accustomed to Danish culture. In terms of how they would handle this situation, the parents' responses, however, varied, with some using one approach and others using a different one. This demonstrates that there are various ways in which people can respond to this reality.

***Respondent M1:** I feel sorry that I cannot take my kids to Nigeria so they can learn about the culture. I am optimistic and hopeful that we will someday be able to visit Nigeria, and when we do, I want my children to be able to thoroughly immerse themselves in the local way of life.*

The participants also thought that promoting children's acceptance of both Danish and Nigerian cultures could extend their exposure to both cultures and open up more options for them. For their own benefit, they were fostering their kids' capacity for cultural and situational adaptation because they have a worldwide view on their kids' growth. With the decision to leave their country of origin already made, this attitude demonstrated that they did not feel constrained or bound to one location. Participating in Nigerian food and maintaining those links develops a growing sense of cultural heritage. The parents' Nigerian cultural heritage definitely influenced the foods they promoted and cook for their children. According to research by Morrison & James (2009), parents of immigrants from Portugal, Asia, and Africa shared similar motives. To further assist their children in making connections to their heritage culture, the parents committed to food integration. Eating Nigerian food was quickly accepted by all of the study's parents as "part of their heritage." They continued, saying they hoped their kids would come to appreciate it.

***Respondent W1:** Being a part of their cultural heritage, I urge my kids to eat Nigerian food, which they now enjoy.*

It is worth emphasizing that when compared to a decade ago, parents' efforts to introduce their children to Nigerian cuisine habits have become relatively easier to achieve. Previously, it was difficult to find the essential ingredients to duplicate Nigerian recipes in Denmark, according to anecdotal reports. However, the increased availability of cultural cuisines in Denmark has produced a notion of a cosmopolitan atmosphere that parents value and use to teach their children about Nigerian cultural history. Even while it can be challenging for parents to persuade their kids to eat Nigerian food, they are nevertheless driven to instil that particular cultural trait in them, even if they have trouble using it correctly in other contexts.

***Respondent W2:** Although I am well aware that they might not appreciate Nigerian food in the same manner that they do pizza or burgers, I consistently encourage my kids to try it. They were used to eating every other food at first, but they now seem to have somewhat adapted to eating Nigerian food. On the weekends, we often eat Nigerian food and give them all the time they need to finish their meal. I think the primary motivating factor behind our eating preferences is the idea of bringing them closer to their African heritage .*

To sum up, these parents strive to balance Danish and Nigerian cultures in their parenting choices. Given the awareness that Danish culture will have a significant influence on the formation of their children's cultural identities, they still have hopes for the sociocultural adaptation of their children. Depending on how costly and logistically difficult it is to travel to Nigeria, as well as how little time they spend with other Nigerians, the children's exposure to their native culture will vary. Despite the difficulties, these parents nevertheless make an effort to give their children a taste of Nigerian culture. One way they do this is by imparting on them Nigerian cultural values and acceptable behaviour. Respect is one of these expected behaviours and is the next theme I will be discussing.

**5.3 Category 2: Respect: "A child simply passes you by without saying a greeting. That is just not African".**

In African communities, respect is a cultural value that is reflected in this sentence. In many African societies, respect is an essential value that is instilled in kids from an early age. This value places a strong emphasis on the concept of respecting and honouring elders, family, and other community members.

Respect was a topic that appeared as a common theme among all the participants. They all acknowledged that children are expected to show respect to elders or those in positions of power because it is rooted in Nigerian culture and is often taught. The participants indicated considerable concern with how some kids behave with adults, especially their own parents.

***Respondent W1:** A child simply passes you by without saying a greeting, that is just not African. It is usual in Nigerian culture to greet family members with "good morning" or "good afternoon" as they wake up or enter the house. This requires teaching children the right cultural norms, and happily, my children have been able to adapt and show respect through greetings like "Good morning mum!" and hugs, rather than simply saying "hi Mum". My child cannot "hi" me in my home.*

From a Nigerian viewpoint, it is crucial that individuals support and maintain the social cohesiveness of society by acknowledging the existence and social value of each individual. For young children, who are expected to greet their parents and older siblings first thing in the morning, it is regarded as culturally unacceptable to pass someone without saying good morning, good afternoon or good night. Despite the fact that it is not a common greeting in Denmark, the parents in the research acknowledges that but they still want their children to learn it, even if they admit that it can be challenging at times.

***Respondent M1:** I object to kids calling their parents, aunts, and uncles by their first names or saying "Hi or Hello" to their parents or other elderly family members. I let them know that inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable if I observe it.*

***Respondent W2:** In Nigeria, Children are taught to answer "Yes sir/Yes ma'am" to their parents or elders as an act of respect.*



Concerned about their kids "talking back" to them, the parents voiced their strong opinions. The premise behind this notion is that young people ought to respect adults and other authority figures. However, "talking back" in this case refers to the child's body language, tone of voice, and attitude rather than a typical dialogue between an adult and a child. In Nigerian culture, it is considered rude for kids to argue with adults or contradict their parents. Such conduct is interpreted as a challenge to the adult's authority, character, and morality.

***Respondent W1:** It is not even an option for me, like talking back to your parents when they are speaking. Children are expected to wait until their parents have done speaking before expressing themselves, without exchanging words or disputing. It would be unacceptable for a child to dispute or speak back.*

Children in Nigeria assimilated these cultural expectations regarding behaviour in discussion with an adult with ease because it is a part of their daily life, according to parents who shared their experiences. Being in Denmark inhibited the children from experiencing the socialization factors that possibly promoted a social-cultural process (Vygotsky, 1962) which might have educated them on the norms and attitudes in Nigeria. The parents, particularly the mothers, highlighted how challenging it is to practise community parenting in Denmark as it is in Nigeria.

***Respondent M1:** These are not issues of concern in Nigeria, rather children learn them through observation. This is probably due to the fact that these behaviours are widespread and obvious in the neighbourhood.*

According to Ohuche (1986), acting respectfully is essential for preserving healthy adult-child relationships in Nigeria. Immigrant parents who acquired this viewpoint as a child believe that because of the setting in which they were nurtured, children were born with a natural understanding of how to respect adults. But they believe that moving to Denmark has reduced their kids' exposure to social factors or influences that would have taught them appropriate Nigerian cultural behaviours. The lack of societal and communal support for parents in Denmark and the necessity of relying completely on your own or your spouse to impart cultural values to children led to complaints from many parents, particularly mothers. The next section will go deeper into this subject.

#### **5.4 Category 3: Alone parenting "Raising children alone just with your spouse can be challenging because there is no one to offer support."**

In Nigeria, it is normal for new mothers to have a lot of people at home after giving birth or to hire a young woman to assist them in taking care of their child. In a similar manner, mothers of older children might also employ a housekeeper to assist with home chores. The moms in this study use this cultural experience to interpret their new lives in Denmark.

***Respondent W1:** Well, in this case, it is quite challenging to care for your newborn by yourself. Without the help of anyone, I had to raise all of my kids, which was challenging. In comparison with Nigeria, where family members particularly aunts, are willing to help without you even asking first. In this new environment, my husband and I are alone without any help, and is really challenging.*

The communal way of functioning that exists in Nigeria also makes sure that every person in a certain village, tribe, or group is aware of the ideal attitudes and practises for young children. Regardless of the parent's relationship to the child, the older adults in the community have a duty to watch over and discipline any young person who disobeys these expectations. Children are raised according to a conventional sociocultural method, where older children teach younger ones certain abilities and lessons, such as how to dress themselves and use acceptable body language when speaking to parents or other adults. The following are some relevant responses that touch on this subject.

***Respondent W2:** In the community where I was raised, parenting is a team effort, with neighbours and family members helping parents observe and correct their children's behaviour. When I had my first child back home, it was so much easier because I had people around who could help take care of the child. Help was constantly available from all members of my family.*

The Igbo principle "Ora n'azu nwa" is frequently referenced and means that the community is accountable for a child's education or upbringing. This notion is commonly held and practised in Nigeria, in contrast to the parenting philosophy prevalent in current Danish culture, where parents typically keep to themselves and refrain from publicly reprimanding a child's misbehaviour.

Parents expressed difficulty with letting their children play with neighbours they don't know well because it is challenging to reproduce the Nigerian communal setting. In order to ensure that they instill values and goals in their children, parents take on the major duty for raising their kids.

Despite all the challenges of “Alone Parenting”, they discussed how they have been able to overcome them. They have used a variety of tactics, such as scheduling periodic visits from a grandmother or other relative or changing work hours to fit their children's extracurricular and academic interests. Participants also shared how they keep motivated to deal with their circumstances by recalling the reasons they moved in the first place. By developing a story that emphasizes the disparities between the norms of living in Nigeria and Denmark, they remained inspired to overcome perceived challenges. This strategy is comparable to what Parra-Cardona et al., (2006) study on resilient Latino families found, where parents asserted that the standard of their education was a motivating element for their ability to persevere. In the part that follows, more details on this subject will be provided.

#### **5.5 Category 4: Education: “Education is important if you want to be successful and important”**

The importance of education in a person's achievement was acknowledged by every parent in this study. Each of them had already obtained a bachelor's degree before moving to Denmark, and two of them were presently enrolled in graduate programmes, namely a master's and a doctoral programme. Education was seen as a means of obtaining a career and enhancing one's ability to maintain discipline.

***Respondent M1:** I might be mistaken, but throughout my life I have found that education greatly impacts practically everything. Um.. although I am unable to provide exact numbers, people with strong education typically lead respectable lives. It takes discipline and a lot of commitment to get a good education, I am giving my kids' education the utmost importance. I always remind them that education is what allowed us to have this opportunity and allows us to be in Denmark.*

***Respondent W1:** I let them know that education is essential if you want to be successful and important. I always help them in whatever way I can, like with their homework.*

Previous research has shown how important education is to Nigerian immigrant parents and the great sacrifices they make to help their children succeed in school (Amayo, 2009; Fogg, 2009). In order to assess the importance of education in their new environment, Nigerian immigrant parents use their prior educational experiences as well as their reasons for moving, much like other aspects of cultural adaptation. Unfortunately, the quality of education in Nigeria has significantly declined recently (Ofoegbu, 2013). The participants claimed sending their children to private schools in Nigeria is the only option for parents who wish to give their children a high-quality education, despite the fact that doing so is expensive.

According to other studies (Akerele, 2003; Njubi, 2001; Okoli, 2002), the majority of immigrants from Nigeria enter their host countries on work or student visas, which is consistent with the study's participants. Everyone who took part in the study came with a student visa, with the exception of one who came with a work visa. The idea that "education is essential for success" in the host country has an impact on parents' desire for the academic achievement of their children. Every parent stated a desire for their kids to have access to a higher standard of education than what is available in their own country. The parents employ a variety of techniques to emphasise the value of education to their children in order to accomplish this goal. Among these tactics are parents insisting that their kids read before playing outside during the summer, taking them to the library for a three-hour reading session, and arranging a schedule where kids rest after school and immediately begin working on their schoolwork before going outside to play.

**5.6 Category 5. Discipline: “The right to educate my child in accordance with my own beliefs, rather than conforming to societal expectations regarding how to raise my child.”**

The majority of responses, which indicated reflection and adjustments in attitude and behavior among the participating parents, were in the discipline category. An examination of discipline's application in Nigeria and Denmark was sparked by the subject of discipline. The parents' replies will be broken down into three subcategories: a) authority as parents, b) discipline,

and c) adjustments to parenting, in order to adequately represent the different facets and nuanced features of this category.

**Category 5a). Authority as parents: “We the parents hold high authority in Nigeria.”**

The parents who participated in the survey claimed to have grown up in a socio-cultural setting with set standards for how adults and children should behave and what their roles should be. The level of authority that children had over adults in this situation depended on their age, and certain behaviours were expected of them. As an example, older siblings typically had more influence over younger ones. In this framework, parents were given full cultural and legal control over their children's upbringing, especially when it came to discipline. The replies that follow demonstrate this point of view and the ways in which Nigeria parents are adjusting to cultural changes.

***Respondent M1:** Reflecting on my upbringing, my parents were extremely strict. If they asked me to do something, I did not need any further instructions or explanations because they would not repeat themselves, and I was not allowed to question their authority.*

This parent's statement represents similar experiences mentioned or expressed by other parents in the study. They stated that this interview has brought them some memories and reassessments of their parental practices, and parents discussed their perspectives on such authority.

***Respondent W1:** Nigerian parenting can be ruthless and insensitive sometimes. The parents' focus is not on how their child feels, as they believe that, as parents, they hold the ultimate authority and can exercise it without consequences.*

Due to the patriarchal nature of Nigerian families, fathers in particular have a lot of influence over family decisions. Fathers have some influence over their children's career choices, marital partners, and, to some extent, how they spend their income as adults. A participant (W2), for instance, recounted how her parents compelled her to comply with their expectations for her by exercising their power over her.

***Respondent W2:** In Nigeria, if a child refuses to comply with their parents' wishes for them, there are various consequences that can follow. For*

*example, parents may send their child to a rural area as a form of punishment. Personally, I was viewed as a rebel when I refused to attend a school my parents had chosen for me. Consequently, my parents sent me to live with my grandparents in the rural area for a year. However, I eventually changed my mind and agreed to attend the school of their choice. Such actions are not acceptable in some countries, as there are laws that protect children's rights.*

Each parent discussed adjusting their approach towards absolute parental authority since relocating to Denmark. Such changes were driven by either their own recognition of the advantages of altering their disciplinary style, or by societal norms and laws that demanded a different approach. The subsequent discussion focused on the adjustment in disciplinary style and attitude.

**Category 5b). Discipline: “I am being mindful and deliberate in dealing with my children.”**

Participating parents in the study stated that they had been spanked as a method of punishment when they were children. These comments and accounts serve as evidence of both the authoritarian parenting style that is common among Nigerian parents and the widely held conviction that parental authority is absolute and unchallenged. The participants' parents were inclined to resort to spanking as a form of discipline due to their upbringing and cultural background. This was often their default response to any disciplinary issue that arose. Nevertheless, many parents discussed the limitations they encountered because of societal norms and legal regulations of the host culture.

***Respondent W2:** I want to be free to raise my children how I see fit, without feeling compelled to live up to the standards set by society. I feel constrained by society since it forbids me from smacking my kids sometimes, like when their behaviour is particularly poor. I'm making an effort to raise my kids within the constraints set out by Denmark, albeit with some flexibility. I have to walk a fine line between upholding these societal standards and making sure that my child is properly corrected for their behaviour. I must admit that it is quite challenging.*

According to the aforementioned quotes, parents are creating a unique social environment at home that aids their children in internalizing their dual cultural identities in the host culture while also taking into account the host culture's social environment and ecological needs. To accomplish this,

parents teach their children "This is not how we do things," which is a type of domain-specific acculturation that allows parents to teach their children specific social conventions across a wide range of cultural domains, not just discipline and parental authority. According to the parents' comments, they feel that social systems like law enforcement, educational institutions, and the state have made it challenging for them to raise their children in a way they would have done in Nigeria. The Parents believe that they have not succeeded in their attempts to raise their young children in a way that they have determined.

***Respondent M1:** There are some things my kids do here that I would get upset about and possibly want to swipe them if they did them back in Nigeria. In order to avoid involving the police, I am cautious in how I handle them here. Kids are aware of their parent's rights and boundaries. They are aware that if their parents go too far, they can call the police. I take extra precautions as my kids age. Here, Children are taught about their rights in the classroom and that it is improper to hit or mistreat them.*

These parents expressed a feeling of powerlessness in the face of societal expectations that states how they should discipline their children in Denmark. However, most parents talked about the adjustments being made in the method used in raising their children since moving to Denmark and the necessity to adapt to the new culture. The ways in which they have adjusted their parenting styles will be discussed next.

### **Category 5c). Adjustments to parenting: "Here, you dialogue with the kids"**

The parents discussed and considered the differences between the disciplining methods they grew up with in Nigeria and the new ones they are obligated to practise with their children in Denmark during the interviews.

***Respondent W2:** When I first came here, I found that kids are more open to asking their parents questions when they are being asked to do something. This initially was a challenge for me since I thought it was disrespectful to question your parents. However, as time went on, I understood that the child's actions were not rude. So, I had to reconsider my background and unlearn some of the views that I had been taught back home.*

The response of respondent W2 reveals how parents frequently have preconceived notions about how their children ought to behave and how immigrant parents must decide whether to follow contemporary cultural standards or uphold their own standards of conduct. Other parents decide to change their parenting strategies and convictions in response to the impacts of their new environment.

***Respondent W1:** In this society, children are encouraged to share their opinions and are given the chance to do so without being reprimanded or shut down. This was not a practice back home in Nigeria during my time, except perhaps among mothers of the present generation.*

The parents talked about their experiences adjusting to new parenting standards and practices, however, one of them said that her adjustment depended on the particular circumstance and the behaviour in question.

To sum up, the parents' parenting philosophies and practices seem to have altered as a result of their continual exposure to the culture of their new home. This conceptual and behavioural change demonstrates how immigrant families can identify and embrace norms of culture that are best for themselves and their families. The next section discusses these parents' opinions and experiences on the subject of whether or not to teach their children in their native language.

### **5.7 Category 6. Language: “I had to keep explaining myself.”**

The parents talked about wanting to teach their kids their native dialect, but they also talked about the challenges that come with it. A couple of their responses are shown below.

***Respondent M1:** When my children were younger, I used to speak to them in my own language. However, I discovered that I had to keep explaining myself, and soon, I stopped speaking entirely. My children now tell me that I no longer speak to them in our native language. Teaching children our language is difficult because I can only practise with them, and practising regularly is challenging.*

Although the parents expressed a wish to educate their children in their mother tongue, finding a way to do so proved to be challenging. One of the parents being questioned said they were inter-



tribal, which indicated that they did not share a common state of origin or tribe, nor did they share a common dialect. When parents interact with one another and their children in this way, they often speak English.

***Respondent W2:** I would like our children to be fluent in one of our languages. My husband is Benin and I am Igbo, however it would be beneficial for our children to have some awareness and connection to either culture.*

The parents admitted that it could be challenging but not unattainable to teach their children their mother tongue. They were aware of other immigrant families with kids who became fluent in their parents' native tongue and credited their achievement to regular exposure to the language. This might be accomplished by using the language more often or by having a family member, such as a grandma, who would commit their time to speak the dialect with the kids.

***Respondent W1:** I was surprised how a friend's children, who were born here, managed to speak both Igbo and Danish. Although she said they speak Danish outside the home, they say to have started speaking Igbo since they were very little. Their grandma living with them in the house was a blessing as well. So, they constantly speak Igbo.*

In general, parents expressed a wish for their kids to be able to communicate at least somewhat in their native tongue. For them, it served as a way to help their children develop a feeling of bicultural identity and feel linked to their ancestral heritage. Notably, all the parents agreed that it was essential to instil in their children the courtesy that comes with speaking to people in their own language. Giving their kids a basic understanding of their "native tongue" can help them become more conscious of other cultures, even though it may not be practical to teach them every aspect of the language.



## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION

The topics covered in this chapter are 1) the research's value to the area of immigration research 2) Ethical considerations 3) the shortcomings of the selected methodology 4) an outline of the findings and their importance and 5) the implications of the results in subsequent research and practice.

#### 6.1 The research's value to the area of immigration research

Using qualitative research techniques, this study examines the experiences Nigerian parents faced integrating into Danish society. The study makes a number of important additions to the body of work on immigrant households already done compared to other research, which focused mostly on the Asian Population, this one (1) targets a community of Nigerian parents that is less investigated on (2) Instead of using individuals as the unit of analysis, the family is the focus of the study, allowing for a deeper examination of the acculturative strategies used by the people living in an intricate familial system; 3) The why and how issues are addressed in this qualitative study, in contrast to quantitative studies that frequently leave those concerns mostly unanswered. 4) Participants in this study had the chance to talk on their personal encounters and the significance that they attribute to them. The viewpoints of the participants in the study serve as its framework and guide. This research seeks to understand more about the various parenting issues that immigrant families encounter in a new socio-cultural environment. This exploratory activity was well suited for a qualitative methodology since it allowed for open-ended inquiries about the interpretations that participants made of their own experiences.

#### 6.2. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research on parenting practices and adaptation of Nigerian immigrant parents in Denmark. The study followed a qualitative design using interviews. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they were fully informed about the purpose, potential risks, and benefits of the research, and had the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning pseudonyms and securely storing personal data. Privacy and data protection regulations were followed to

safeguard participants' information. Voluntary participation was emphasised, with participants having the freedom to decide whether to take part. Cultural sensitivity was respected, valuing the participants' backgrounds and beliefs. By considering these ethical considerations, the research upheld the dignity, rights, and well-being of the participants.

### 6.3 Limitations of the Study

The fact that the sampling is not arbitrary nor typical of the Nigerian community in Denmark prevents generalisations or outcome predictions from being made, which is one of the study's limitations. The ethnic composition of the sample families is relevant to the claims that the results of this research might not be true to all Nigerians residing in Denmark. As mentioned earlier, there are many different ethnic groups in Nigeria, nevertheless, the three predominant ones are Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa. The participants in this study were diverse in terms of their ethnic identity, dialect spoken, and experiences with culture, but they did not constitute a true representation of all three main groupings. Premigration events, level of cultural adjustment, different degrees of education, social strata, and money are other differences that may have shaped their experiences. Because the study's participants are middle- to upper-class, their experiences do not accurately mirror those of immigrant communities with low resources.

The results of this study might also not apply to a variety of family structures (including single-parent households, multinational families, etc.), or to families with various degrees of availability of resources (such as assistance from extended households and cultural groups).

### 6.4 Findings Summary and Significance

The findings of this study mostly agree with those of earlier investigations into the parenting styles of immigrants. The first-hand account provided in this study, however, illuminates the particular and varied interpretations that immigrant parents give to their adaptation experiences, which influence the decisions they take as parents.

The extent to which parents have integrated into the host culture (i.e., where they fall on the line between keeping their heritage culture and doing everything in the host society) is a sign of the acculturation style they have chosen and also a benchmark for the level of enculturation they desire for their children. It is dependent on the social variables of the host nation's environment, or the

"system," as some parents call it, how much and what kinds of cultural norms parents want to see their children embrace. Furthermore, the context in which these choices are made and cultural beliefs' emotional potency, which may be more intuitive than intellectual, also have an effect. One of the parents asserted that the behaviour was simply natural rather than motivated by any wish to hurt the child. With regards to controlling their children or discipline, it seems that families adopt a style of parental authority that involves more dialogue and reason, but when prompted by an event, the ingrained severe method of yelling, beating, and insisting on absolute domination tends to reappear. Understanding this inclination can aid relevant service providers, such as social workers and family life educators, in assisting immigrant parents in reconciling the conflicting parenting styles they may employ.

A parent's style of acculturation can be inferred from the parenting decisions they make. A parent made it clear that they preferred to combine elements of the host and ancestry cultures, either outright or inferred from their comments. Because of the cultural difference between Nigerian and Danish people, this choice is probably made more likely. All of the parents who took part in this survey expressed a desire to pass on this cultural legacy to their offspring, but they also said that they found it to be a difficult undertaking and felt that their instruction of their kids was lacking. The study's findings recommend that parents take full advantage of their unique position as migrants by evaluating the worth and potential of both their home culture and their host culture and selecting the attitudes or skills that will aid them the most in achieving their personal and collective objectives. Parents want their kids to acquire the language that would be most beneficial for communicating in the "new world" and with different cultures because "you never know where you will find yourself" as they put it their most popular choices were Danish and English. The parents' purposeful decision to encourage language learning may be a result of their own experiences making the most of opportunities to succeed in a foreign environment. This exemplifies a particular type of cultural adjustment, which is sometimes called "broadened acculturation," in which immigrants are more likely to pick up or modify beliefs and behaviours that will aid them in adjusting to situations that are different from the current host culture.

The study participants explicitly acknowledged or subtly hinted at the ongoing struggle to maintain "balance" amid the way of life of their own country and the one they currently call home now for both themselves and their children. Usually, immigrant parents evaluate the importance of cultural

standards using their own cultural heritage as a point of comparison. Participants, for instance, substantially objected to the new culture's absence of formal greetings like Sir, and madam, and also insisted on their children greeting their elders good morning/afternoon/night rather than saying hello/hi. To also critique Nigerian cultural norms, such as authoritarian parenting that "shuts down" children, they have adjusted to the norms of the host culture by not shutting their children down. This two-way assessment requires a balancing effort that helps parents uphold a sense of ethnic identity that combines both cultures, as opposed to exclusively adhering to traditional Nigerian practices. In doing so, individuals create a unique cultural worldview that is appropriate for their current social environment. According to Phinney (1992), this is in line with the concept of unified racial identification. One parent made the point that when she newly came to Denmark, if they encountered a child speaking back to grownups, she considered it disrespectful. The parent continued, saying she now knew that the child is not being purposefully disrespectful, rather, the Danish cultural communication style have an impact on the child by expressing himself. By adjusting expectations based on experiences in the new culture, parents are able to develop a Nigerian-Danish identity that represents the best of both cultures which can be passed down to their children.

Immigrant parents usually want to preserve their home country's cultural ideas and values, which they believe are important for their children's overall development. In this study, the mothers expressed their concern that some children were overly indulged, not challenged enough, and lacked resilience to handle stressful situations. They stressed that they consciously exhibited "tough love" towards their kids by refusing to give in to all their demands and teaching them the importance of performing household tasks without expecting to be rewarded. This strategy is consistent with the parental techniques their own parents used on them while growing up in Nigeria. Parents also acknowledged their respect for Danish children's strong and independent nature and desire for their own kids to exhibit these traits while also refraining from being impolite. This is in contrast to Nigerian culture, where it is usual for kids to be submissive, seen but not heard, and always respectful of adults. The parents' narratives demonstrate their intention to combine all cultural viewpoints in order to create well-rounded and responsible kids. In keeping with (Berry, 1997) conception of the ideal form of assimilation, this emphasises the integrating process rather than the result.

The most prominent themes that emerged in parents' narratives were related to parental authority and discipline, even though there were no specific questions on these topics. The parents' views and experiences on these issues were reflected in their narratives. Coming from a more collective and communal background, the parents were raised with the belief that children should be accountable to elders or older adult. However, the parents expressed conflicting feelings about implementing this practice and had to adjust their parenting style to fit within the cultural and legal boundaries in Denmark. They mentioned that children in Denmark have the option of phoning 911 if they feel mistreated or whipped, which is similar with the findings of immigrant parent research (Rasmussen et al. 2013). In a similar vein, they expressed feelings of powerlessness and discontentment as a result of legal restrictions that prohibited them from rearing their children as they want. According to their perceptions, schools serve as environments where kids are trained to be independent of their parents and are also taught about their rights regarding the kinds of disciplinary measures that parents may or may not employ. Parents saw this as an attack on their parental authority and sovereignty over their own children, rather than just a loss of a discipline strategy.

In conclusion, the way parents respond to their perceived loss of authority reflects the process of adapting to a new cultural environment as immigrants. This process is complex and involves interactions between various ecological systems, such as the community, school, and legal system, that influence parents' perceptions of their rights and limitations in parenting. As they navigate conflicting cultural norms, immigrant parents may adjust their parenting practices to align with the dominant cultural norms in the host society, while also retaining some of their pre-migration values and beliefs. Parents who took part in the study agreed with the parenting and discipline practises popular in Denmark. These strategies include talking with kids, involving them in decision-making, appreciating their uniqueness, and using techniques like timeouts and taking away rewards. Parents have claimed that adopting a less authoritarian parenting style allowed them to remain cool before dealing with misbehaviour. The parents acknowledged that they would turn to the strict parenting methods when they get really frustrated with their kids' misbehaviour, that spanking and reprimanding are part of their native country's parenting method. As a result, it is possible to deduce that parents' adherence to cultural norms of authority and discipline fluctuates depending on the situation and that when they are emotionally stimulated, they frequently revert to their earlier cultural practices. Parents generally respond when provoked, regardless of their

cultural background, so this tendency is not unique to immigrant parents. However, it should be highlighted that this particular perspective on child discipline was socialised into Nigerian parents and that it still seems to be a lingering issue. In the section that follows, I will discuss how the results of this study may impact continuing research.

### 6.5 Implications for future practice and research

In order to capture the meanings formed in the daily experiences of immigrant parents, this study presents the participant's narratives. Within a larger, more linked society, these narratives act as a platform for reciprocal cultural acculturation. As part of this simultaneous acculturation process, both the host society and the racial minority population must learn about and understand one another. In this instance, certain ideas show how the acculturation of Nigerian parents has influenced their parenting styles.

#### Practice implications

The responsibilities of the various family members frequently change when families relocate to a new culture. When families go from a conventional, male-dominated family structure to one that is more equal and democratic, they may struggle to adjust to their new responsibilities and power. Participants in this study revealed that such families may feel incompetent and have less power as parents. Although the method of integration and perceptions of each family vary, all the families in this study tried to achieve cross-cultural harmony for themselves and their children. Counsellors for family, social service providers, educators, decision makers should be aware that many immigrant parents from Nigeria continue to follow traditional parenting practices and behaviour expectations for children, even though these practices aren't the main determinants of their parenting decisions. Experts should assess immigrant behaviour from a dual-cultural perspective rather than just using the dominant culture's frame of reference.

Social service providers, educators, and decision-makers should be aware that many immigrant parents from Nigeria continue to follow traditional parenting practices and behaviour expectations for children, even though these practices aren't the main determinants of their parenting decisions. Experts should assess immigrant behaviour from a dual-cultural perspective rather than just using the dominant culture's frame of reference.



## Future research Implications

In Denmark, there is a scarcity of literature on immigrant African families and their child-rearing practices. Most of the research in this area centres on Asian populations, despite notable similarities in collectivism, reverence, and connection to family. However, the way these notions are perceived varies. There are disparities in how sub-groups adapt to host culture and how individuals integrate both their history and host culture, in the little studies conducted on immigrants from Africa. Researchers should keep in mind that there are numerous aspects to consider for each immigrant group and family. It is critical for researchers to understand how parents' pre-migration cultural beliefs influence their everyday emotional and behavioural parenting decisions, as well as their tendencies to make these decisions particular to different genres and circumstances. Future research could look into the various contexts within the new social and cultural milieu that trigger specific acculturation behaviours.

In the study's interviews, it appeared that moms gave more emotionally charged accounts of their kids' enculturation experiences. Future studies may benefit from concentrating solely on mothers or fathers to gain a deeper understanding of how parental socialisation techniques used by each parent may impact children's ethnic backgrounds and acceptance and how accounting for factors such as gender could influence these outcomes. Additionally, the results of this study did not confirm earlier studies that suggested immigrants frequently join cultural associations to reproduce the social support network of their native culture. Although the snowball method was used to choose participants for this study, only one person identified as an active member of a women's organisation of Nigeria, while the other participant was affiliated to a church with followers from all over the continent of Africa. To further understand how group connections affect parental acculturation, parenting styles, and the development of children's ethnic identities, future study should swiftly seek out participation from members of Nigerian associations.

To summarise, immigrant parents must navigate and bridge two worlds while simultaneously guiding their children along the same process. The narratives presented in this study allowed participants to evaluate and analyse themselves. According to one mother, the study allowed her to ponder "the reason we do the things we do," providing useful insights into their parenting practices and cultural choices. I hope that through reading this study, readers will have a better grasp of the unique qualities, possibilities, and goals that the immigrant community possesses. In

addition, I think it will foster a sensitive understanding of the challenges they encounter as we all travel in our interconnected modern and globalised world.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### Informed Consent

Greetings,

I am writing to request your consent to participate in a study titled "An Exploration of Parenting Practices and Adaptation of Nigerian Immigrant Parents in Denmark," as part of my academic pursuit. I am conducting this research as a master's student in social work and welfare at the University of Aalborg, under the supervision of Pia Ringø.

The goal of this study is to learn more about the parenting styles and experiences of Nigerian immigrant parents in Denmark and how they adapt to the Danish cultural context. Your participation in this study is completely dependent on you, and you are free to leave at any time without having to offer a reason. Your relationship with the researcher won't be impacted by whether you choose to participate or decline. Your responses will be handled in complete confidence, and any personal information you supply will be made anonymous and maintained safely. By agreeing to participate, you certify that you have read and understood the above information.

Name -----

Date-----

Contact: Monica Nwatu

E-mail: nmnw22@student.aau.dk

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## APPENDIX 2

### Interview Question

#### **Background information**

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

#### **Acculturation**

- 1) How long have you lived in Denmark, and what motivated you to immigrate to Denmark?
- 2) Is it more crucial for you and your kids to preserve your Nigerian cultural background, totally embrace Danish culture, or combine the two? Have any challenges come up while doing so? Would you mind sharing a personal story?

#### **Childhood/children**

- 3) How would you characterize childhood in Nigeria in terms of conduct, attitudes, obligations, and duties? What does this mean in terms of Danish conceptions of childhood? Could you give an instance when you contrasted the two?
- 4) What advantages do you receive from raising your children here? What disadvantages and challenges arise from raising your children in Denmark? Do you have a memory of having faced one of those challenges?

#### **Parenting**

- 5) What difficulties do you have raising children in Denmark? What cultural modifications have you had to make in order to deal with it?
- 6) What values related to family do you believe the average Danish family upholds, and which ones do you not apply or apply? (Would you mind sharing a personal experience you've had with this value?)
- 7) Would you kindly share a tale of a time when both you and your child or children disagreed and relate that to a time when you had a disagreement with your parents when you were growing up in Nigeria?

- 8) How do you communicate at home? What significance do you place on your children learning your native tongue? (Has making this possible been challenging?)
- 9) Do you interact with other Nigerians or members of Nigerian organizations? Do you have relatives in Denmark? Why? Why not? (Does the organization or your family relatives support you in your parenting efforts?) can you narrate a story to me.
- 10) Do members of your family consume food from Nigeria? How vital is it that your family consumes your local cuisine?
- 11) Have you considered possibly returning to Nigeria? Do yourself and your family sometimes visit?
- 12) Would you like to make any other additions or changes? Do you have any more knowledge that I didn't inquire about but that you believe is essential for learning Nigeria parenting and assisting Nigerians in adjusting to Danish culture?