CONFLICTS OVER PARENTING IN MULTICULTURAL HOMES: A PROBLEM ANALYSIS IN THE AREA OF SAFETY

Introduction

Parenting involves the upbringing and shaping of the life of children to become individuals that add value to their personal life, family, and society. This process supports and promotes the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social development of children from infancy to adult life. Parenting styles vary from person to person, they are also influenced by cultural and socio-economic variables, psychological factors, and the personal characteristics of a parent. These different factors contribute to the style of parenting and can affect a child either negatively or positively. However, the point remains that a person who raises a child assumes that (s)he does it in the best way possible.

Parenting is not without its own challenges such as emotional, economic and health-related issues, which makes it even more difficult when combined with the challenges of multicultural differences. The inability to raise children properly due to multicultural differences may lead to temporary or permanent issues. Bringing up a child properly means avoiding other social issues that may occur in the lives of children due to the impact of poor parenting, which makes the issue of multicultural differences a matter of great concern.

Marriage is described as a game (a very fierce game), and multicultural marriage is even more complicated because each partner brings into it a

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different set of rules, different values, habits, views, social relations, and approaches to the negotiation of these differences.\textsuperscript{4} Intercultural union occurs when two people from diverse cultures as well as different countries, which may not necessarily indicate the differences in race and/or religion, come together.\textsuperscript{5}

Within a family, culture delineates boundaries, expectations, the way challenges are seen, interaction rules, and patterns of communication, and ways to develop skills for coping.\textsuperscript{6} It is only after a child is born that most partners in multicultural relationships find out that different cultures can pose a challenge in child upbringing.\textsuperscript{7} Multicultural parents are confronted with challenges similar to those faced by other parents with regard to such issues as what values to pass on to their children, what traditions to instill in them, how best to get them educated, and what role will the extended family play in the lives of their children. Nonetheless, despite this similarity, the above challenges appear to be more complicated due to multicultural parents’ concerns on how to blend their cultures, values, and traditions.

Many studies have been carried out on parenting but the rise in the numbers of African migrants to Europe and the increase in mixed cultural families make this study particularly important. This research aims to examine the challenges of multicultural differences in parenting using African migrants in Lithuania as a case study with the purpose of contributing to knowledge on the subject of study. When the issues are identified, ideas about the way out can be found to help improve the approach to parenting adopted by multicultural parents.

### Theoretical framework

**Parenting science.** For parents, whether biological or not, it is fundamental to be committed and equipped to adequately perform their functions as parents, caregivers, and guardians of their children to enable proper child’s development into adulthood.\textsuperscript{8} D. Divecha\textsuperscript{9} specifies that to ensure


\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{7} Nyonga C.L, Dealing with the challenges of child upbringing in multicultural relationships: Mother’s perspective. Helsinki, 2016. \textit{Electronic source}: https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/107517/Colette%20Laynyin%20Eps%20Zeyeum%20Nyonga.pdf?sequence=1


\textsuperscript{9} Divecha D, Why attachment parenting is not the same as secure attachment. 2018. \textit{Electronic source}: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ why_attachment_Parenting_is_not_the_same_as_secure_attachment
attachment, parents must perform three functions, i.e.: a) providing security and safety, b) offering a secure base from which to go around, and c) regulating emotions by being able to relieve distress, calmly support and generate joy. Therefore, the essence of good parenting is to ensure the safety and physical and emotional wellbeing of a child.

Parenting might be characterised in two terms as parental ‘responsiveness’ and ‘demandingness’. Parental demandingness is the extent to which parents are set to guide their children, and how they choose to discipline their children based on guidelines, while parental responsiveness is the emotional characteristic of parenting. Responsiveness is the degree to which parents give support to their children and attend to their needs. The responsiveness and demandingness of a parent are said to be linked with how secure is the attachment of children to their parents.

There are several approaches to the study of parenting. Firstly, three styles of parenting have been identified: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Authoritative parents communicate effectively with their children, they are responsive and affectionate. They maintain control of children when needed, use developmentally appropriate demands. Authoritarian parents are highly demanding, exercise strong control, and show little affection and do not communicate often. Permissive parents make few demands, exercise little control, and are very responsive and affectionate. The permissive style distinguishes indulgent and neglectful parents. Indulgent parents offer considerable acceptance and little discipline; neglectful parents provide little acceptance or discipline. Neglectful or uninvolved parents make few demands, exercise little control, show little affection, and do not communicate often.

Therefore, good parenting involves active participation in a child’s cognitive development, being assertive, acknowledging the child’s positive behaviors through a constructive process such as discussing and creating ground rules with realistic outcomes. Also, good parenting can be understood as parenting behaviors that involve stimulation and affection that are clear and praise focused, supporting an increase in autonomy, encouraging

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healthy habits, setting goals, establishing rules that are firm and entail consequences.\textsuperscript{15} It is also promoting a strong relationship within the family.

Parenting shapes the patterns of dependence-independence, ascendancy-submission, cooperation-competition, and conservatism-liberalism because their genesis begins from the early parent-child interactions in their family. Parenting is also important because it is associated with how a child turns out in life in the areas of academic achievement, self-esteem, satisfaction in life, social competence, sexual behaviors, and adjustment.\textsuperscript{16} Positive parenting will give a child positive outcomes in life in terms of self-identity, physical maturity, morals, etc. On the other hand, negative parenting may result in a negative outcome in children such as substance misuse, poor life satisfaction, depression, or poor mental health.\textsuperscript{17}

**Culture** is a set of distinctive patterns of behaviors and beliefs that shapes how parents care for their children. Individuals learn the norms and scripts for appropriate and effective behavior in their immediate cultural environment.\textsuperscript{18} Culture has an important effect on how an individual perceives the world and behaves in it. Culture can be viewed as a gravitational force bringing the regions of a nation into a shared cultural space and keeping them apart from the regions of other nations.\textsuperscript{19} Therefore, essential to the concept of culture is the expectation that different cultural settings are characterised by distinct beliefs and parenting behaviors.\textsuperscript{20}

There are differences in cultures across the globe and understanding the differences and commonalities in parenting and child-rearing goals resulting from these differences is an important step in developing relevant cultural guidelines that might help in parenting.


Some couples find out that despite their numerous differences, their essential beliefs and values remain the same, and they are able to adapt to each other in their own way. They are also able to instill the same strong individual code in the children they have.\textsuperscript{21} Also, couples are said to be fortunate when one person is willing to compromise even though he or she has a feeling of loss for failing to pass down his/her own values to the children. According to Nyonga\textsuperscript{22}, when two culturally different individuals decide to have a child, a third culture is born which is a compromise reached by these two cultures.

Regardless of race, culture, values, ethnic group, \textit{etc.}, every individual has his or her worth and should be treated with respect, unconditional love, and care. Intensity of the aggression strategy of an adolescent child in a situation of social conflict is directly proportional to the degree of frustration of his or her emotional needs (love, trust, security). Rejection associated with frequent punishments increases aggressive tendencies in a child.\textsuperscript{23} These are some of the issues common to parents in multicultural relationships if emphasis is placed on differences rather than similarities. Love and individual respect are the bedrock of any good relationship that helps children adjust better to other people in society. Communication on the choices parents make in multicultural relationships can help resolve the challenges that are eminent as a result of the differences in cultural background. Beyond the difference in cultural values, ethnicity, background, language, \textit{etc.}, it is important that they decide to make the best choices in parenting to avoid negative consequences on the well-being of their children as they develop.

\textbf{Cultural Variations in Parenting.} With reference to African culture, most unacceptable practices are perceived by people as devilish because African cultural practices are mostly attributed to gods. Parenting in Africa involves a system that takes a lot of forms that allow the child to be shaped into a responsible adult. The African family is a major source of basic necessities of life and health, of love and tenderness, food, water, clothing, shelter, and sanitation which is made possible by the socio-economic situation, and condition of the cultural environment.\textsuperscript{24}

The extended family is more emphasized in a traditional practice in the African community.\textsuperscript{25} The extended family comprises of a number of joint compounds, elementary and nuclear families occupying separate but nearby homesteads.\textsuperscript{26} The extended family further provides emotional support.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Romano} Romano D, Intercultural..., \textit{op. cit.}
\bibitem{Nyonga} Nyonga C.L, Dealing with..., \textit{op. cit.}
\bibitem{Amos} Amos P.M, Parenting and Culture — Evidence from Some African Communities, [in:] Seidl-de-Moura M.L (Ed.), Parenting in South American and African
\end{thebibliography}
or needs to all persons involved in the family.\textsuperscript{27} It is a unit that is cohesive and it ideally makes room for economic, social, and psychological security to all its members and, more importantly, it ensures procreation of children and early care and training of the young one in the family. The extended family also makes it possible to ensure that social and moral norms are passed down to the children, it safeguards both material and spiritual customs and traditions and provides a variety of models of preparing children to adulthood. The elders/aged are dominant in the family and they have a high degree of social control over all members, especially the youths.

Furthermore, there is a common saying in Africa that “it takes a village to raise a child”. This is so because the uniqueness of this system with reference to parenting in traditional African communities is not the responsibility of the biological parents alone but the entire community takes care of the children. It is shared by all the extended family just like the proverb which says “a single hand cannot nurse a child”. This saying means that even though the mother’s responsibility is to take care of a child, this responsibility is shared by all.

Additionally, African values and culture see the mother as the keeper of the home. The wife’s responsibility is to ensure that the domestic aspect of the home and the children are taken care of. At the same time, grandmothers are around to help bring up the children in a responsible manner within the extended family.\textsuperscript{28} Fathers are the breadwinners and the protectors of their families. They are the pillars on which the family relies for direction. The father guides the family towards a common goal and also enables the members of the family to live together in peace taking his place of authority.

The African family parenting style emphasizes obedience to authority and compliance with the instructions laid down by a parent. The traditional society values involve respect for elders and authority figures and, more specifically, the authority of their parents where the man is the head of the family.\textsuperscript{29} Based on this tradition, parents request that their children are obedient to parental authority and comply with parental instructions. Nonetheless, most parents complement these demands for obedience and compliance with instructions, responsiveness, love, care, sensitivity, reciprocal dialogue, and explanations for parental disciplinary actions (authoritative and authoritarian style). Hence, the authoritative and authoritarian style of parenting, and also their hybrids, are commonly practiced by most African parents.


\textsuperscript{27} Degbey J.L, African family structure..., \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{28} Amos P.M, Parenting and Culture..., \textit{op. cit.}

The basis of the nation of **Lithuania** is the nuclear family, but in recent years the number of children in the family has been decreasing with most families consisting of four members (two parents and two children), which has become the social norm. The Lithuanian parenting styles and values vary widely from one family to another and the libertarian laws support this.  

The relationship that is developed between a mother and her child is that of love and happiness without common anxiety and worry.  

Similarly to African cultures, family bonds or ties with relatives in Lithuania are also strong. The mother often does not raise the child alone but at times grandmother offers assistance, and also the family as a whole. Parents usually do their best to ensure that their children are happy. The Lithuanian family model mostly reinforces family bonds and, more importantly, the notion of having peaceful, well-behaved children. Children are taught and raised to be satisfied with what is provided to them and not necessarily are provided with whatever they request. 

Furthermore, in Lithuania, households are mostly run by women, who are traditionally the homemakers, cooks, and cleaners, etc., even though this culture is gradually changing as most women now seek opportunities to make career, money and also have a competitive status in the labor market. Lithuanians mostly use the term ‘acquaintance’ and grant the title of ‘friend’ only to someone who is considered close and almost like a family member, this shows their style of creating bonds.

As a western country, Lithuania has laws that frown against corporal punishment because in 2006, the Parliament has amended the Law on Fundamental Protection of Rights of the Child. But despite the debate over the use of corporal punishment for children in general, there has been an increase in the attention for ‘positive parenting’ that involves encouraging and rewarding good behavior. 

However, according to Ndagano, this style is considered disrespectful to authority; it says everything about rights but says nothing about responsibilities. This generally appears as a weakness on the part of the parent when compared with their African counterparts considers corporal punishment as a method of discipline. Even if it is now frowned upon as is the case in the western world today, it has been a strong part of the African practice of parenting.

The African parenting culture is said to highlight strong values which emphasize discipline. It is believed that “people have failed to distinguish between disciplining a child and child abuse”. Ndagano argues that it is the western world’s method of putting the rights of children before...
parenting responsibilities, which is creating untouchable and undisciplined children, which causes social concern. The importance of the issues of cultural differences in methods of discipline have been emphasized by many authors. This study also investigates the parenting issues of multicultural differences between parents of African and Lithuanian descent.

Method

The qualitative method was used in obtaining the opinions of participants and their experiences as it enable them to freely share thoughts and feelings about their multicultural parenting experiences. To capture information from participants, *semi-structured interviews* were conducted. The semi-structured interview format involves using a few predetermined questions to guide the research within the scope of the study while others are spontaneous and allow for discussion. The interview allows the researcher to follow up on answers provided by the respondents in real-time, by engaging in valuable conversation about the subject, which is not possible if the researcher used a structured method. Therefore, it is crucial to pursue the aim by finding answers to the research questions, including “What are the challenges that multicultural parents confront?”

Because of the pandemic (COVID-19), which limited the possibility of meeting participants, the interviews were conducted using a chat tool (Skype, WhatsApp) and a telephone interview. The data were collected as recodings (voice). Later, recordings were transferred to the paper format using a spread-sheet so that data sources could be sorted out according to identified stakeholders, based on the assigned code.

The thematic data analysis method is widely used in qualitative data analysis and it was also used in this study. It is used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, and it is most often from the perspective of the participants. It is based on the basic research questions asked or the theoretical position reviewed or prominent in the study. Therefore, the empirical research results are presented using thematic representation. The analysis of qualitative data focuses on words, ideas and descriptions of opinions using qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis can be used in many ways for analysis, for this research a large amount of information was transcribed and re-grouped into summarized subthemes and themes.

A subtheme (code) was developed from the data, then an initial theme was formed. Finally, the final theme was taken from the initial theme to guide the presentation of the interview outcome.

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Participants. A total of 10 informants were selected for this research initially using purposive sampling, but 9 respondents took part eventually as one could not participate due to COVID-19 issues. The selection of participants was based on certain criteria: a) participants are in a multicultural relationship (e.g. African migrants with Lithuanian spouses); b) participants are residents of Lithuania; c) participants are parents; d) participants express willingness to participate in the interview online. Demographic characteristic of informants is provided below (Table 1).

The size of the research sample was determined with the use of the information saturation method: when the information started to recur, there was no purpose in involving more research participants. The research was carried out in October and November 2020.

In conducting research for this study, the following ethical standards were considered: a) confidentiality — the names of the informants have been deliberately concealed (all names of informants were coded with numbers P1, P2, etc.), and the participants were also assured of the ability to withdraw at any time during the research; b) informed consent: the permission of all respondents was initially received to avoid violating the principle of informed consent in social research. Informants were informed about the possibility of becoming acquainted with the generalized research results.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Intercultural Marriage</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>African descent from Congo, husband is a Lithuanian</td>
<td>Two children, 3 and 6 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>African descent from Nigeria, wife is a Lithuanian, married for five years</td>
<td>Two children, infant and 5 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Lithuanian, husband is from Cameroon</td>
<td>Three children, infant and 2 and 5 years old kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>from Zimbabwe, wife is a native of Lithuania, married for about 6 years</td>
<td>Two children aged 2 and 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>native (Lithuania), married to a Nigerian man</td>
<td>One child, 4 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Lithuanian, married to a native of Eritrea</td>
<td>One child, 3 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>From Cameroon, wife is a Lithuanian</td>
<td>One child, 4 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Lithuanian, partner is from Nigeria</td>
<td>Two children, 2 and 4 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Lithuanian, spouse is from Nigeria</td>
<td>Two children, 2 and 5 years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ciuladiene and Kazeem’s study data
Results

The main themes of the interview were singled out from the subthemes and were summed up by similar content. The subthemes were excerpts from interview ideas taken from the informants. They are presented in a table below to offer a clear presentation of the important points or phrases from each of the responses.

Results indicate that individuals of African descent are very particular about their values which differ from western ideas, which causes disagreement between spouses on parenting — being initially hard to compromise.

The theme “Challenging decision making” indicates that although parenting is a shared responsibility, certain responsibilities in child care over the years are managed based on gender (i.e. no room for the assertion of the male authority as is the case of most African settings). While the male from an African background is always assumed to be the head of the home and the responsibility of the head means taking the lead in authority. In most cultural settings it is women that are in charge of the general upkeep of the home and also the care of children. This idea is beginning to change as men are not exempted from taking care of children, babysitting, and as paternity leave to take care of newborns are some of the modern ideas welcomed in the advanced economies. However, this may not necessarily go well with some parents in a multicultural relationship. In one of the views on this subject, the informant said his “cultural background which makes me, the male, the authority figure in the family is not acceptable with my wife”. Issues of this nature provoke conflicts in a world where there has been advocacy for gender-based equality. In such circumstances, the absence of a form of compromise in sharing responsibilities to effectively care for the child may not be ideal for the child.

The theme “Child discipline conflicts” reveals that differences in opinions sometimes occur in spouses’ multicultural homes’ inability to strike a balance on the level of discipline to be instilled on the children and what constitutes abuse of children instead of child discipline. This is one of the areas that results in conflicts among multicultural parents. For instance, the informant said, “Leniency in child upbringing does not go well with me. I was raised in a strict home where children follow rules”. This is an authoritarian style for which they are often considered disciplinarians because they employ hard measures. However, irrespective of the cultural difference, the danger of this style is that it leads to the developing obedience and proficiency in children who, nonetheless, have lower level of happiness, social competence, and self-esteem.\(^{36}\)

## Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Participants’ words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging decision making</td>
<td>African husband expects his authority to be accepted</td>
<td>My cultural background which makes me, the male, the authority figure in the family is not acceptable with my wife. She expects all decisions on our children’s upbringing to be done in a joint effort (P2). My husband can be really hard opinionated at times which is a challenge and also good too (P5). An African man will always exhibit his culture one way or the other (P7). I have equal say in our children’s upbringing. My husband’s culture says differently (P8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child discipline conflicts</td>
<td>African spouse embraces obedience to parent authority to a larger extent</td>
<td>I ...upbringing was... in a very firm environment but I understand liberal society I am in with child rights and all. But, I also have a responsibility to instill discipline as best as I can. It can only be done if my husband supports me with my stand, but that is an issue sometimes (P1). She thinks I am too firm (P2). He believes a child should accept what a parent offers or asks today, anything aside that is condoning indiscipline (P3). I see the authoritarian side of him when dealing with our children due to his cultural background. It doesn’t sit well with me to see him act like that when the children do things wrong (P8). Leniency in child upbringing does not go well with me. I was raised in a strict home where children follow rules &lt;...&gt; At least it is different from what parenting is back home where discipline was strongly applied to upbringing (P7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts on child’s religious practices</td>
<td>Difference in the background to parenting style</td>
<td>I believe in grooming children to be firm in religious devotion, prayers and discipline, but my spouse had a liberal upbringing (P3). I am putting at ensuring that our children grow up strong in religious beliefs and committed in faith (P7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations with extended family</td>
<td>African emphasis on children growing up strong in religious beliefs and committed to faith</td>
<td>I for one want my children to have relationship with my parents if they stay with us on holidays. That is how they can learn a bit about my culture. I am no longer in my country of origin (P4). My parent’s presence sometimes leads to conflict with my spouse in my home due to their different views on child upbringing (P4). Sometimes I sense my husband is kind of envious that my children pick up my cultural values, even my native language. He isn’t quite happy they are closer to most of my family members alone. Our children speak my language that he doesn’t understand well. It makes him feel left out in a way (P9). The thing is, I am currently disadvantaged. &lt;...&gt; Naturally my kids are picking up their mother’s language. My wife spends more time with them and we are residing in her country of origin. It means my wife’s cultural values are easily passed down to our children (P2).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ciuladiene and Kazeem’s study data
Discipline conflict refers to the informants’ views which indicate that parents tend to want their children raised the way they were raised by their parents. The differences in their cultural background are reflected in their upbringing which may lead to disagreement and affects their relationship as parents. One of the responses states “It was quite hard for me as an African man at the beginning and has caused arguments in our relationship”. Such ideas compel the multicultural parents to feel that certain values fostered in raising them will work well with their children, and it may not necessarily be acceptable to their spouse due to a change of environment and modern ideas about, among others, child rights. This may be due to the fact that the African family parenting style embraces all three single parenting styles but emphasizes obedience to authority and compliance with the instructions laid down by a parent.37

The theme “Conflicts on child’s religious practices” indicates the role of parents which leads to issues related to religious-based beliefs which vary between individuals because of different cultural or religious backgrounds. One of the informants said “I believe in grooming children to be firm in religious devotion, prayers, and discipline, but my husband had a liberal upbringing”. Such opinions create a vacuum between parents given the divergent opinions on how involved the children should be in strong religious routine activities or in being modern, realist, or having free will. These religious activities are also part of values developed from the activities practiced at home, such as family prayer, studying the word of God, etc. It may result in conflicts that, if not addressed, may affect the children. Different religious beliefs may result in conflicts, not so much due to partners’ disagreement on where to worship as a family, as to what people do or believe, their attitudes about what is perceived as right or wrong, and their philosophy of life stemming from the background of religion.38

Child care is not limited to the biological parents alone. The extended family, the family head, and the community all have a major role to play in every child’s upbringing. It is the communal way of life that gives room for shared responsibility in child care, which is left for women, while discipline and provision for basic needs is left for men or household head. Such values impact the children in terms of respect for the elders, obedience, following instructions not only from biological parents, etc. This idea in most cases appears to lead to various opinions in spouses who are multicultural parents about instilling such values in the upbringing of their children. The theme “Relations with extended families” indicates that migrants are in most cases at disadvantage due to the distance from their hometown to their new destination. As much as they desire to continue with the family bonds, the distance and the requirements for travel make it difficult for their children to maintain connections with older family members. An informant said, “He isn’t quite happy

37 Akinsola E. F, Cultural Variations ..., op. cit.
38 Romano D, Intercultural Marriage ..., op. cit.
they are closer to most my family members alone”. This is because the involvement of extended family comprises a number of joint compounds, elementary and nuclear families occupying separate but nearby homesteads. Most African migrants grew up in this setting which is different from what is obtainable in their current environment which secludes external influences on child upbringing. Even though some of the parents from African backgrounds would have wanted their own parents to be part of the development of their children, they are unable to do so due to their spouses’ contrary stands not allowing grandparents from Africa to stay with them and be involved. This shows that closeness to one side of the extended family and environment gives one of the spouses the advantage of more closeness to the children over the other spouse and may result in issues if not properly managed. African migrants also believe that it deters their children from getting to know their history, values, culture, beliefs on the African foundation that they themselves enjoyed and knew while growing up back at home. The outcome also shows that conflicts arise due to divergent views about the level of involvement of the extended family members in child care. Some of the informants have shown hope that their parents could also be involved in the care of their children, which is not the case. For instance, one of the respondents said “My parent’s presence sometimes leads to conflict with the spouse in my home due to their different views on child upbringing”.

The theme “Suggestions of respondents based on their own experience in multicultural parenting relationship” indicates the importance of effective communication. In communicating effectively parents can hear each other’s opinions about why and how certain decisions should be made. It will also help to discuss and find out how to manage decisions about the involvement of external family members in their children’s upbringing. This is due to the fact that external family provides support, bonds, and a sense of security needed during the children’s developmental years. Communicating effectively also helps in finding solutions about differences in culture, upbringing, level of discipline instilled in children, parental styles choices, etc. It further helps in creating better bonds within the family and respect for each other’s views.

In addition, studying relevant materials on parenting and culture is helpful, as they may offer information or practical solutions needed for resolving issues of cultural differences in multicultural homes. Most cultures involve distinct ways of, among others, sharing, love, respect, and support for individual wellbeing. Therefore, it was suggested that the parents should attempt understanding each other’s culture and values to help make better decisions. Parenting interventions and classes might be beneficial for mothers and fathers who do not rely enough on authoritative parenting style and rely too much on authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. The quasi-experimental study by Jonyniene

39 Amos P.M, Parenting and Culture ..., op. cit.
and colleagues\textsuperscript{40} has revealed a number of positive effects of the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) parent education program. According to the researchers, after the intervention period, mothers reduced the use of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and perceived the targeted child’s behavior as less emotionally charging with a decrease in peer-related problematic behavior. Similar to mothers, fathers increased their childrearing knowledge after the intervention period. The follow-up assessment carried out 3 to 4 months later indicated that the changes were stable.

Also, it was suggested that parents of multicultural backgrounds can seek help from professionals for guidance or directions to resolve issues and teach their children to accept their difference and identity by first encouraging cultural acceptance through their own actions at home or outside the home [\textit{They should not be shy to get help from professionals when the need presents itself} (P2)]. The goal of parenting should be a driving force that helps them deal with their differences and seek the best choices, fairness about decisions, reach compromise, seek alternatives that help follow their agenda as a couple and as parents.

\textbf{Conclusions}

The identified challenges of multicultural parenting include mutual decision making, child discipline, child’s religious practices, involvement of extended families. To address some of the challenges of multicultural parenting, it was suggested that the couples should develop effective communication skills, learn about culture and parenting, and seek for professional help. These would enable the partners to know each other better, identify sensitive issues or principles, and decide what is vital for their home and upbringing of children.

The parents can function together by agreeing on values that best serve the development of their child because how their child turns out largely depends on their impact on their child during his/her early years. The unconditional love parents show to their children builds their self-esteem and this also has a multiplier effect on how they carry themselves and relate with others.

\textbf{References}


10. Divecha D, Why attachment parenting is not the same as secure attachment. 2018. Electronic source: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_attachment_Parenting_is_not_the_same_as_secure_attachment
Cultural norms about parenting practices naturally influence the way children are raised. These norms impact the beliefs and values that a parent teaches their children, what behavior is given appropriate consideration and what methods are used to teach these values and behaviors. Due to cultural differences, more conflicts over parenting are expected in multicultural families. Conflict is an individual's reaction to the perception that one's own and another party's current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously (Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim, 1994). The study aims to identify the main issues of conflicts by interviewing migrants from Africa and their Lithuanian spouses.

Qualitative content analysis was used for data analysis. The research revealed the following objects of conflicts over parenting: (1) decision making; 2) child discipline; 3) child's religious practices; 4) relations with extended family members. Ameliorating conflicts is possible if the spouses use effective communication, learn about culture and parenting, and seek professional help. Results emphasise that despite the cultural diversity, there are common parenting themes that emerge across cultures.