

# Navigating Parenting Challenges in Two Different Worlds: Insights from Zimbabwean Parents

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## ABSTRACT

Parenting challenges faced by immigrants around the world have been documented in various studies. However, to date, researchers have not taken the time to compare parenting challenges between Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong, Australia and those in Harare, Zimbabwe. In this study, I aimed to do just that. Methodology: Through a phenomenological approach using mixed method study, the researcher interviewed some participants and grouped their responses into 8 different thematic approaches, while others we asked to fill out questionnaire forms. Thematic and content analysis was done to identify common themes and patterns in the participants' stories. Data coding based on the identified themes was done. Microsoft Excel was used for statistical analysis, resulting in descriptive statistics presented in charts, tables and graphs. The results of this study highlight the importance of taking into account cultural, social and environmental factors that contribute to the differences in parenting challenges across different settings.

**Keywords:** Parenting challenges, Zimbabwean immigrants, Perception, Cultural values, Norms.

## INTRODUCTION

Parenting constitutes a multifaceted and intricate journey, shaped by diverse factors such as cultural heritage, societal norms, and the dynamic socio-economic landscape. In the era of globalization and migration, parenting encounters novel challenges as families navigate two distinct worlds. This research endeavors to scrutinize and analyze the experiences of Zimbabwean parents residing in Wollongong, Australia, and Harare, Zimbabwe, aiming to discern the similarities and differences in their parenting challenges. Acknowledging parenting challenges as a noteworthy concern in the digital age, especially amid the ever-evolving socio-economic milieu, becomes imperative. The confluence of economic survival pressures and the aspiration to instill cultural values in children demands a delicate balancing act from parents. The strains of parenting are palpable, prompting inquiries into potential divergences in perceived challenges between Zimbabwean immigrants in Wollongong, Australia, and those in Harare, Zimbabwe. This study seeks to address this query, contributing to the literature on parenting challenges among immigrants, specifically focusing on Zimbabwean immigrants in Wollongong, Australia.

The hypothesis posits no significant differences in the perception of parenting challenges among Zimbabwean immigrant parents in Wollongong, Australia, and Harare. To scrutinize this hypothesis, the researcher collected data through individual interviews, focus group discussions, and structured questionnaires, subsequently analyzing observations using a thematic approach. The study aims to offer valuable insights, augmenting existing knowledge on parenting challenges among Zimbabwean immigrants in Wollongong, Australia. Ultimately, the findings aspire to aid policymakers, professionals collaborating with immigrant families, and community organizations in crafting targeted support programs tailored to the unique needs of Zimbabwean immigrant parents in Wollongong, Australia.

In recent years, the economic upheaval has propelled millions of Zimbabweans to seek opportunities abroad,

leaving their spouses to navigate child-rearing responsibilities, care for elderly parents, and manage other domestic challenges (Majome, 2013). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2009), parental migration stems from economic hardships, prompting individuals to seek better prospects. This was starkly evident in 2008 when Zimbabwe grappled with economic turmoil, resulting in severe food shortages and hyperinflation. It is crucial to recognize that poverty and social strife are primary drivers of parental migration. In divorce cases, one partner may find solace in starting anew in another country. Cross-border movements in Zimbabwe are often attributed to economic deprivation, with political turmoil exerting significant influence on parental migration, notably during the 2008 elections. Consequently, individuals have migrated from Africa to other continents, exemplified by the number of Zimbabweans relocating to various African and European countries (Rupande, 2014).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is a critical foundation for understanding the parenting challenges of Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong, Australia, and Harare, Zimbabwe. Notably, there is a discernible gap in the literature specific to this demographic, necessitating the reliance on broader research encompassing immigrant parents but not distinctly focused on the Zimbabwean context in Australia. This void underscores the need for a targeted exploration of the experiences unique to Zimbabwean immigrants, allowing for a nuanced understanding of their intricacies and specific challenges in navigating parenting across two different worlds. Despite the scarcity of literature directly addressing this population, insights gleaned from related research on coping with divorce, balancing multiple jobs, preserving culture, conflicting parenting styles, social support, extracurricular activities, electronic gadgets, and child rights and discipline will be integrated to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing knowledge landscape.

### Divorce

Research consistently links divorce with challenges (Shimkowski & Ledbetter, 2018; van Dijk et al., 2021; Leys et al., 2020; Turunen et al., 2017; Afifi et al., 2007; Amato & Afifi, 2005). Immigrants in the US from diverse regions exhibit a lower likelihood of divorce compared to non-Hispanic white adults (Ryabov, 2021), while research in Southern Africa, including Zimbabwe, identifies urbanization and female employment as divorce rate influencers (Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015). Mavaza (2017) underscores the emotional toll of parental separation within diaspora communities, impacting a child's confidence and emotional well-being. In Australia, where annual parental separation affects thousands of children, outcomes are worse than intact families, leading to long-term behavioral, educational, and mental health issues (Cherlin & Fomby, 2019; Sheahan, 2023). Post-divorce, parents grapple with challenges in helping their children adapt, and co-parenting complexities contribute to emotional hurdles (Blessing, 2023). The literature enriches understanding through various studies. Lee and Chen's (2017) longitudinal analysis highlights the lasting impact of parental divorce on immigrant children. Nguyen, Kim, and Le (2019) emphasize cultural factors contributing to co-parenting conflict. Wang, Rodriguez, and Kowalski (2019) highlight parenting stress and coping strategies among immigrant mothers post-divorce. Martinez, Merz, and Runions (2017) reveal changes in parenting practices and child adjustment difficulties in immigrant families experiencing divorce.

Gao, Nieuwenstein, and de Rooij's (2015) study establishes the negative impact of parental divorce on immigrant adolescents' emotional well-being. Liu, Zhou, and Shen (2021) identify cultural norms, language barriers, and legal constraints influencing custody arrangements. Chung, Wei, and Shulman (2018) explore acculturation's role in post-divorce parenting practices among immigrant families. Li, Yeh, and Bullington (2019) correlate higher co-parenting quality with improved mental health among immigrant mothers. Wu, Wu, and Wu (2017) highlight heightened parenting stress and strained relationships post-divorce in immigrant families. Kim, Kim, and Kim (2020) reveal parenting coordination's positive impact on communication, conflict resolution, and co-parenting collaboration, enhancing child well-being. This

synthesis provides a nuanced understanding of divorce and parenting challenges among Zimbabwean immigrants, forming the basis for targeted research in this specific demographic.

## Multiple Jobs

The impact of work-life balance on parenting has been a significant focus in recent research, particularly concerning working mothers and fathers (Zhi, P., et al., 2022; Iztayeva, A., 2022; Wang, W., 2023). Recognizing that maintaining a work-life balance is crucial for dedicating quality time to children, the literature sheds light on the complexities and challenges parents face, especially within African families. In African cultures, well-defined roles for men, women, and children contribute to gender and role challenges, potentially creating stress within families (Ikafa et al., 2022). Traditionally, African men assume the role of family heads, responsible for providing material and financial support. However, the evolving dynamics of work and family life present both positive and negative aspects of parental employment. Carolyn Heinrich (2014) introduces a nuanced perspective on the impact of parents' work, mainly focusing on its ambiguous benefits. While working parents can serve as positive role models and contribute to improved living standards, challenges arise, significantly when long working hours or evening shifts disrupt the parent-child bond. The stress brought home from work can impede parenting skills, affect the home atmosphere, and introduce stress into children's lives.

The influence of working parents on their children is multifaceted. On one hand, positive role modeling and financial support contribute positively to children's lives (Radha, 2022). On the other hand, children may experience adverse outcomes, such as loneliness, social withdrawal, and mood swings, mainly when there is limited interaction with their working parents. As children grow older, the lack of quality time may strain their relationship with parents. Transitioning to the challenges faced by immigrant families with multiple jobs, many factors come into play. Social support systems, as highlighted by Kawinska and Stefan (2023), Javeline (2023), Gibson and Mugford (2023), and Nida and Alfiasari (2023), are crucial across life stages. However, African migrants, explored by Machaka et al. (2021), grapple with unique challenges due to the absence of extended family support, leading to isolation and heightened stress. Mugadza et al. (2019) emphasize the critical role of the extended family in African cultures, extending beyond biological ties to encompass non-biological relations and kinship networks. The interplay between cultural variations, exemplified by the contrast between Australia's individualistic values and Sub-Saharan Africa's collectivist backgrounds (Bukuluki, 2013; Hofstede, 2004–2015), significantly impacts childrearing practices. Chen's study (2022) further demonstrates the influence of familial immigration backgrounds on children's time use within immigrant families, indicating distinct patterns such as increased reading time. The challenges faced by Arabic-speaking immigrant parents in Sweden, as outlined by Attaallah (2019), highlight the need for tailored support structures to address the intricacies of parenting in a migration context.

Specifically addressing parenting challenges in families with multiple jobs, Lee and Kim (2019) reveal that holding multiple jobs increases work-family conflict, contributing to higher levels of parenting stress among immigrant workers. Chen et al. (2018) expand on this, showing that juggling multiple jobs is associated with less time for parenting activities and challenges in maintaining consistent parenting practices. Gonzalez et al. (2017) delve into parenting challenges and coping strategies among immigrant families with multiple jobs, emphasizing the difficulties in balancing work and family responsibilities. Liu et al. (2020) find that having multiple jobs is negatively associated with parenting satisfaction among immigrant fathers, highlighting the need for supportive policies and resources. Nguyen et al. (2019) explore the work-life balance and parenting challenges experienced by dual-earner immigrant families, revealing that the demands of balancing multiple jobs significantly affect work-life balance and pose challenges for parenting responsibilities. Park et al. (2018) investigate the relationship between job strain, work-family conflict, and parenting stress among immigrant workers, showing that job strain is associated with higher levels of work-family conflict, contributing to increased parenting stress. Rodriguez et al. (2017) delve into parenting

challenges and family functioning in immigrant families with multiple jobs, highlighting the strain due to limited time for parenting and its impact on overall family functioning. Smith and Brown (2019) explore the influence of holding multiple jobs on parent-child relationships in immigrant families, providing insights into the complexities and dynamics of these relationships. Wang et al.'s (2018) longitudinal analysis indicates that increased workload due to multiple jobs is associated with reduced parental involvement and less consistent parenting practices over time. Finally, Zhang et al. (2016) investigate the impact of holding multiple jobs on parental stress and well-being in immigrant families, revealing that balancing multiple jobs contributes to higher levels of parental stress and lower overall well-being among immigrant parents.

## Culture

The dynamism of culture (Lansford et al., 2021) extends to parenting, which has been recognized for its adaptability over time (Bodroski-Spariosu & Senic Ruzic, 2020). Acculturation, altering a minority culture while preserving its unique characteristics, poses complex challenges (Atmadzhov, 2020; Bornstein, 2017; Williams, 2017). Studies indicate acculturation challenges undermining parental roles, threatening family cohesion, and alienating children (Baghdasaryan et al., 2021). Despite blending in, African youth in the U.S. express concerns about communication with their African parents (Habecker, 2016). Increased residence in a host country does not guarantee smoother integration and challenging assumptions (de Haan, 2011). Acculturation stress, associated with culture shock, affects individuals' well-being (Millán-Franco et al., 2019). Cultural distance hinders the acculturation experience, influencing the social inclusion of immigrants (Wilson et al., 2017). Children in the diaspora face challenges related to their social background (Mavaza, 2022). Gendered experiences contribute to family dynamics, with family violence being a significant concern (Abur, 2018; Heger Boyle & Ali, 2010). A CRT perspective on skilled African migrants parenting in Australia reveals complexities in navigating 'African' and 'Western' values (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2021). Child-rearing practices of sub-Saharan African migrants in Australia are deeply influenced by cultural values (Mugadza et al., 2019).

## Parenting Different Styles

Research consistently establishes a positive correlation between democratic parenting styles and comprehensive child development across various life stages (Yao, 2023; Carapito et al., 2018; Vasiou et al., 2023). Extending this understanding to immigrant populations reveals the connection between parenting styles and child development across distinct phases, including infancy, early childhood, and late childhood (Chen et al., 2012; Salami et al., 2017; Lim et al., 2023; Netshikulwe et al., 2022; Lanjekar et al., 2022). Parenting clashes and inconsistent messages for children emerge from differences in parenting styles, causing confusion and potential conflict within relationships (The GoodTherapy Team, 2018). The diversity in parenting styles stems from unique parental personalities, experiences, attitudes, expectations, and perspectives (Matthews, 2022), emphasizing the need for collaborative approaches to problem-solving. Tailoring parenting programs is essential, recognizing the specific needs of participants, particularly with cultural sensitivity to attract immigrant parents (Osman et al., 2019). Children often serve as primary sources of information for their parents in navigating cultural challenges, underscoring the importance of understanding acculturation processes (Kim et al., 2013; Roche et al., 2014; Sun & Li, 2016).

Studies highlight the positive association between authoritative parenting styles and better psychological adjustment outcomes in adolescents from immigrant families (Calzada & Eyberg, 2019). The meta-analytic review by Szapocznik et al. (2018) suggests that authoritative parenting is generally associated with positive child outcomes in immigrant families, while authoritarian and permissive parenting styles show mixed effects. Research examining parenting practices, acculturation conflicts, and adolescent adjustment in immigrant families provides nuanced insights (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018; Calderón-Tena et al., 2020). The protective role of familism values in Latino immigrant families is evident, buffering the negative impact of certain parenting practices on adolescent adjustment (Gonzales et al., 2016). Longitudinal studies emphasize



the dynamic nature of parenting practices influenced by acculturation among Arab immigrant families (Smokowski et al., 2019). Positive parenting styles, characterized by high support and control, are associated with better academic achievement in immigrant youth (Drogalis et al., 2016).

## Support System Networks

Parenting among immigrant families, particularly those from Africa, unfolds within a complex web of challenges marked by the absence of extended family support (Machaka et al., 2021). The resulting isolation intensifies the stress of losing homeland connections, family ties, friendships, and social networks. Mugadza et al. (2019) stress the expansive nature of African family institutions, extending beyond biological connections to non-biological relations, extended family, and kinship networks. This collective cultural space assumes responsibilities vital for family security and overall well-being, underscoring the intricacies of parenting dynamics (Machaka, 2023). Cultural variations in child-rearing practices further complicate the immigrant parenting landscape. Australia, with its individualistic values, contrasts with the collectivist backgrounds prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa, shaping child-rearing practices rooted in communal foundations (Bukuluki, 2013; Hofstede, 2004–2015; Mugadza, 2019). The nuanced differences impact familial relationships and, consequently, child development. The influence of familial immigration backgrounds is evident in children's time use within immigrant families, such as the increased reading time observed in these settings (Chen, 2022). This demonstrates the profound impact of cultural backgrounds on daily activities and, subsequently, child development. Challenges faced by Arabic-speaking immigrant parents in Sweden highlight the need for tailored support structures, given the unique difficulties they encounter, including acquiring knowledge about the host society's language and culture, balancing parental responsibilities, and facing a lack of social network support (Attaallah, 2019).

Addressing broader challenges, Lopez et al. (2018) pinpoint a significant obstacle immigrant families face – a lack of social support. This emphasizes the pivotal role of enhancing support networks to improve parenting experiences among immigrants. Nguyen et al. (2019) delve into the intricate relationship between perceived social support and parenting stress among immigrant mothers. Their findings indicate that higher levels of perceived social support are associated with lower levels of parenting stress, highlighting the crucial role of support systems in mitigating stressors for immigrant mothers. In the context of immigrant Latino families, Cruz et al. (2016) investigate the impact of social support on parenting stress, revealing a noteworthy correlation. Higher levels of social support are linked to reduced parenting stress among immigrant Latino parents, emphasizing the positive influence of support systems on stress management. Owen et al. (2017) specifically address African immigrants' parenting challenges and support needs. Their research identifies a lack of social support as a significant challenge, emphasizing the importance of culturally appropriate support services for African immigrant parents. Examining the role of social support in the parenting stress experienced by immigrant mothers, Kim et al. (2020) find that higher levels of social support are associated with lower levels of parenting stress, reinforcing the positive impact of support networks on maternal well-being.

Liu et al. (2018) explore the relationship between perceived social support and parenting efficacy among immigrant mothers. Results indicate that higher levels of perceived social support are associated with greater parenting efficacy, emphasizing the empowering influence of supportive social connections on maternal confidence. Gonzalez et al. (2019) delve into the impact of social support on parenting practices in immigrant families, revealing a positive correlation. Higher levels of social support are linked to positive parenting practices among immigrant parents. Investigating the relationship between social support and parenting challenges among Asian immigrant families, Wu et al. (2017) find that higher levels of social support are associated with lower levels of parenting challenges, emphasizing the protective role of support systems in navigating parenting difficulties. Rodriguez et al. (2019) explore the role of social networks in parenting stress among immigrant families, finding that more robust social networks are associated with

lower levels of parenting stress, highlighting the buffering effect of robust social connections in mitigating stressors for immigrant parents.

Lastly, Karam et al. (2020) focus on Middle Eastern immigrants' parenting challenges and social support needs, emphasizing the lack of support as a significant challenge. The study underscores the importance of tailored support services for Middle Eastern immigrant parents. These studies contribute to a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between social support and parenting experiences among diverse immigrant communities, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive and tailored support systems.

### **Extracurricular**

Research has consistently emphasized the broad-ranging impact of extracurricular activities on children's development, particularly within immigrant families (Olivier et al., 2022; Jiang & Peguero, 2016; Kim et al., 2023). These activities, spanning academic, social, and emotional dimensions, are recognized as crucial for holistic child development, prompting active parental engagement in enrolment decisions (Olivier et al., 2022). In the context of immigrant families, extracurricular activities play a pivotal role in facilitating adaptation and integration into the host society (Aydeniz ve Sarıkaya, 2021; Bozan ve Kaştan, 2018; Bourgonje, 2010; Börü ve Boyacı, 2016; Cerna, 2019; Dryden-Peterson, 2017; Matthews, 2008; Kovinthan, 2016; Obiakor, 2007; Öngören vd., 2017; Sural ve Arı, 2017; Telsaç et al., 2022). However, the benefits come hand-in-hand with unique challenges, including language acquisition hurdles, communication skills development, and cultural adaptation complexities specific to immigrant children (Aydeniz ve Sarıkaya, 2021; Bozan ve Kaştan, 2018; Bourgonje, 2010; Börü ve Boyacı, 2016; Cerna, 2019; Dryden-Peterson, 2017; Matthews, 2008; Kovinthan, 2016; Obiakor, 2007; Öngören vd., 2017; Sural ve Arı, 2017; Telsaç et al., 2022). Financial constraints emerge as a significant barrier for immigrant families seeking to provide extracurricular opportunities for their children, particularly when parents bear substantial financial burdens to support their participation (Henriques-Gomes et al., 2021). The intersection of financial challenges and the desire for educational enrichment underscores the complex landscape immigrant families navigate.

Delving into school activities, the literature sheds light on the stressors parents face when enrolling their children in multiple school activities. This includes heightened time demands and logistical challenges, resulting in elevated parental stress and the intricate task of maintaining a work-life balance (Lopez & Martinez, 2021). Furthermore, the strain extends into parent-child relationships, with excessive involvement in school activities diminishing quality time and potentially introducing conflicts within the family dynamic (Nguyen, Kim, & Chen, 2020). Acculturation stress emerges as an additional layer of complexity for immigrant parents, as the pressure to engage children in numerous school activities contributes to elevated stress levels, impacting overall well-being (Gonzalez, Ramirez, & Hernandez, 2019). Lee and Wang (2018) further elaborate on the nuanced balance between benefits and challenges associated with extracurricular activities, highlighting intricate issues related to time constraints, financial burdens, and conflicting cultural values. A specific focus on maternal well-being reveals a negative association between high levels of school activity involvement and maternal stress, fatigue, and reduced self-care opportunities (Tran, Martinez, & Smith, 2017). This highlights the gendered dimensions of parenting challenges within the context of school activities. For families with highly involved school-aged children, cultural adjustment experiences become particularly pronounced. Navigating cultural expectations, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with the education system adds complexity to parenting challenges (Park, Liu, & Zhang, 2019). The intricate relationship between parental involvement in school activities and work-family conflict takes center stage in Rodriguez, Garcia, and Brown's (2020) study. Their findings underscore the association between high parental involvement in numerous school activities, increased work-family conflict, and its subsequent impact on overall well-being and parenting experiences among immigrants.

Immigrant families employ diverse strategies and coping mechanisms in response to these challenges. These include prioritization, seeking support networks, and implementing effective time-management techniques

(Wu, Kim, & Li, 2016), showcasing the resilience and adaptability of immigrant parents in managing the complexities associated with enrolling their children in numerous school activities.

### **Electronic Gadgets**

Hawi and Rupert (2014) highlight the adverse effects of excessive screen time on children's physical health, linking it to sedentary behavior, obesity, and poor sleep patterns. Perrin et al. (2020) emphasize its impact on cognitive development, affecting attention span, academic performance, and language skills. Psychological and social issues, such as depression, anxiety, social isolation, and impaired social interactions, are associated with unrestricted screen time (Abd Samad & Haron, 2023; Donthu et al., 2023; Shivakumar & Sivaraman, 2022). The concern extends to potential addiction, with Zain et al. (2022) noting the risk of children relying on gadgets without proper parental guidance. The easy accessibility to gadgets and the internet has contributed to the development of internet addiction among this cohort (Rashid et al., 2021). Disparities in technological device use and internet access exist between urban and rural areas, impacting gadgets' educational and recreational use. Chawarura et al. (2022) note that 90% of students in rural areas need access to technological devices, primarily using them for communication rather than learning during the pandemic. In Zimbabwe, digital technology has not replaced social relationships entirely, as adolescents are typically restricted to 2-3 hours of device usage (Chawarura et al., 2022).

Parents, particularly those juggling work and childcare or managing multiple jobs, may feel they need more support in providing alternative entertainment options for their children (Fischer, 2019). Despite the perceived lack of better options, parents express concerns about unexpected and questionable content that may arise during their children's screen time. The NIH study data further reveals that children spending more than two hours a day on screens tend to perform lower on thinking and language tests (Fischer, 2019).

### **Child Rights**

The literature extensively explores child discipline within the Child Rights framework, emphasizing the adverse consequences of traditional methods such as capital punishment (Martínez Sainz, 2020; Morris & Smith, 2022; Mackenbach et al., 2014). The criminalization of these practices highlights the violation of children's rights (Martínez Sainz, 2020), advocating a shift towards alternative approaches aligned with Child Rights principles. Parenting, a profound blessing, introduces challenges, especially for African immigrants navigating the Western world's parenting landscape. Values and strategies differ, necessitating a steep learning curve (Orwenyo, 2021). Legal clarity against corporal punishment challenges traditional practices, emphasizing children's rights, including the right to be heard (adultism) (Orwenyo, 2021). Australian studies underscore an increase in notifications regarding abuse within migrant families, indicating potential disempowerment (Mugadza et al., 2019). The incorporation of sub-Saharan African cultures into Australia complicates the understanding of child abuse within the Child Protection Framework (Mugadza, 2019). "Disciplining Immigrant Children: Cultural Perspectives and Challenges" (Lee, Su Jin, et al., 2021) delves into cultural perspectives, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive approaches to uphold child rights (Lee et al., 2021).

### **Problem Definition**

Parenting challenges represent a complex interplay of cultural, social, and environmental factors, with variations often observed across geographical settings. However, existing literature lacks specificity regarding the experiences of Zimbabwean immigrants in Australia, necessitating targeted research in this domain. The present study contributes to bridging this gap by examining the parenting challenges encountered by Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong, Australia, juxtaposed with their counterparts in Harare, Zimbabwe. While acknowledging the limitations of a small sample size, the findings underscore the need for future research to explore this demographic comprehensively. This study aimed to

comprehensively analyze the parenting challenges faced by Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong, Australia, and Harare, Zimbabwe, focusing on identifying similarities and differences in their experiences. The primary objective was to document and understand the varying perceptions of parenting challenges in these two settings. Additionally, the study sought to explore potential explanations for the observed differences and, crucially, proposed strategies to enhance parenting practices among Zimbabwean parents residing in Wollongong, Australia.

## **METHODOLOGY/APPROACH**

This study employed a comprehensive mixed methods (Dawadi et al., 2021) research design to investigate parenting challenges among Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong, Australia, and Harare, Zimbabwe—the qualitative component utilized triangulation, integrating various data collection techniques to explore experiences thoroughly. Thematic and content analysis extracted insights from open-ended interviews, focus group discussions, and literature, unveiling recurring patterns and themes in participants' narratives (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). For the quantitative aspect, data coding based on identified themes was performed, and Microsoft Excel facilitated statistical analysis, generating descriptive statistics presented through charts, tables, and graphs (LaPolla, 2020). This dual-methods approach aimed to triangulate findings, enhancing the validity and reliability of the research outcomes. Overall, the mixed methods design provided a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of parenting challenges, establishing a robust foundation for informed support programs and policies for Zimbabwean immigrant parents in Wollongong, Australia.

### **Data Collection:**

Utilizing triangulation in qualitative research aimed at addressing the study's objectives involved a combination of personal interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires. Triangulation's strength is its ability to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research topic by capturing diverse perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Eight thematic variables, identified through an extensive literature review, formed the basis for data collection.

1. **Personal Interviews:** In-depth insights into individual experiences were obtained through personal interviews. These interviews, guided by the eight identified themes, added richness and depth to the qualitative data.
2. **Focus Group Discussions:** Interactive and dynamic exchanges within focus group discussions facilitated the capture of collective views and generated insights on the eight themes. The discussions were recorded, and the identified themes were used to categorize and summarize the collective perspectives.
3. **Questionnaires:** A self-administered questionnaire, constructed based on the eight identified themes, provided standardized data for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. This method allowed for a broader perspective on parenting challenges.

### **Data Analysis:**

Thematic and content analysis were employed to extract meaningful patterns and themes from the qualitative data gathered through interviews and focus group discussions. The eight identified themes served as the foundation for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Microsoft Excel facilitated statistical analysis, generating descriptive statistics presented through charts, tables, and graphs.

### **Research Rigor:**

Triangulation was instrumental in overcoming the limitations associated with a singular data collection method, contributing to the study's credibility and comprehensiveness (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This



methodological choice enhanced the trustworthiness of the research outcomes by cross-validating and corroborating the findings from different sources.

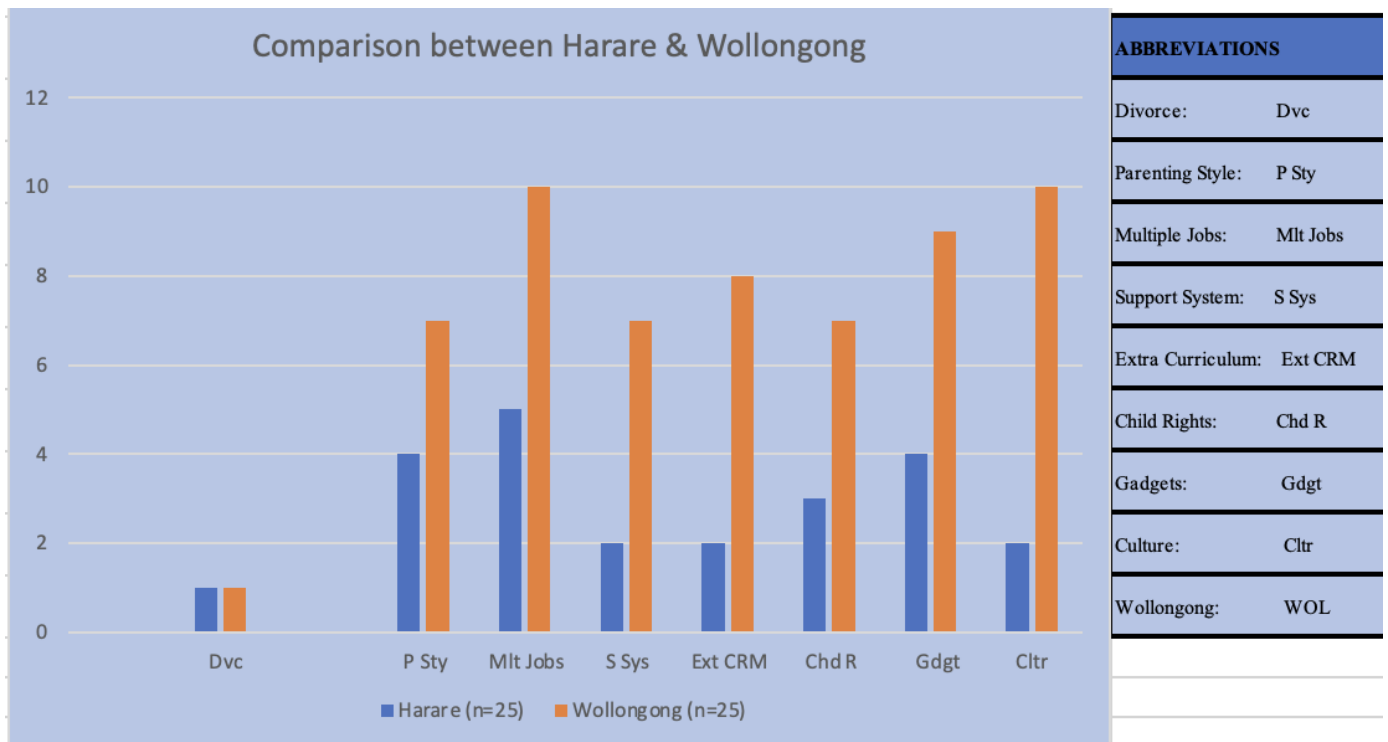
**Phenomenological Approach:**

The study adopted a phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of Zimbabwean migrant parents systematically and rigorously. This approach focused on studying phenomena from the viewpoint of the experienced person, providing a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences (Becker, 1992). With a qualitative emphasis, the mixed-methods design employed triangulation to comprehensively explore parenting challenges. This approach addressed the study’s objectives and laid a robust foundation for developing informed support programs and policies for Zimbabwean immigrant parents in Wollongong, Australia.

**Sampling design**

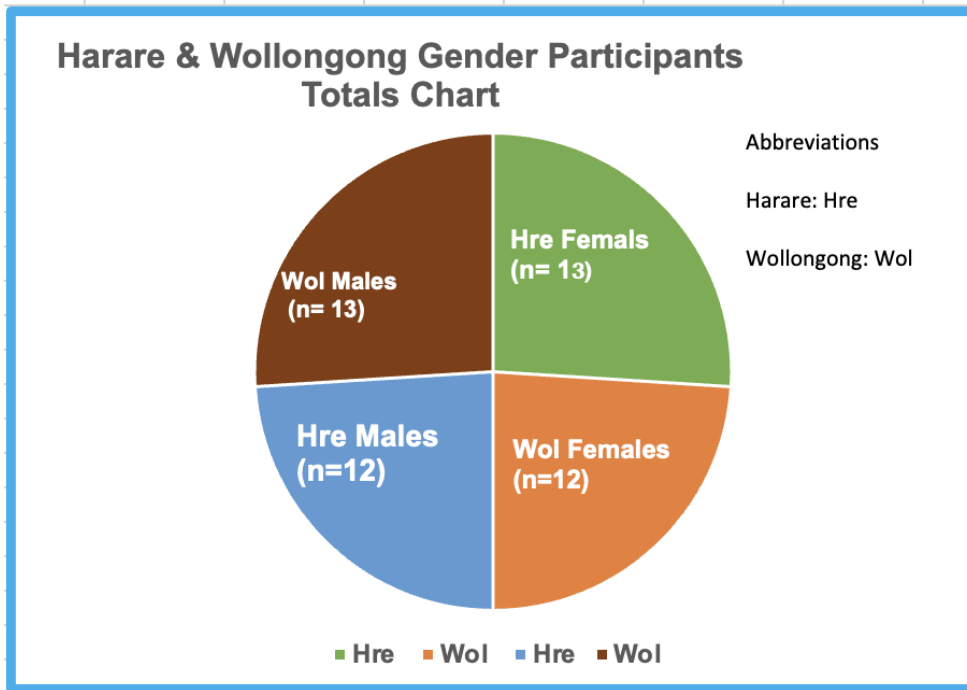
The study utilized purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to select participants who met the specific criteria of being Zimbabwean parents residing in Wollongong, Australia. Purposive sampling is commonly employed in qualitative research as it allows researchers to select participants with the desired characteristics or experiences relevant to the research topic (Palinkas et al., 2015). This study included 50 participants, 25 from Wollongong and 25 from Harare, Zimbabwe (Creswell, 2013). The total sample size of the study is expressed in **Chart 1** below.

**Chart 1**



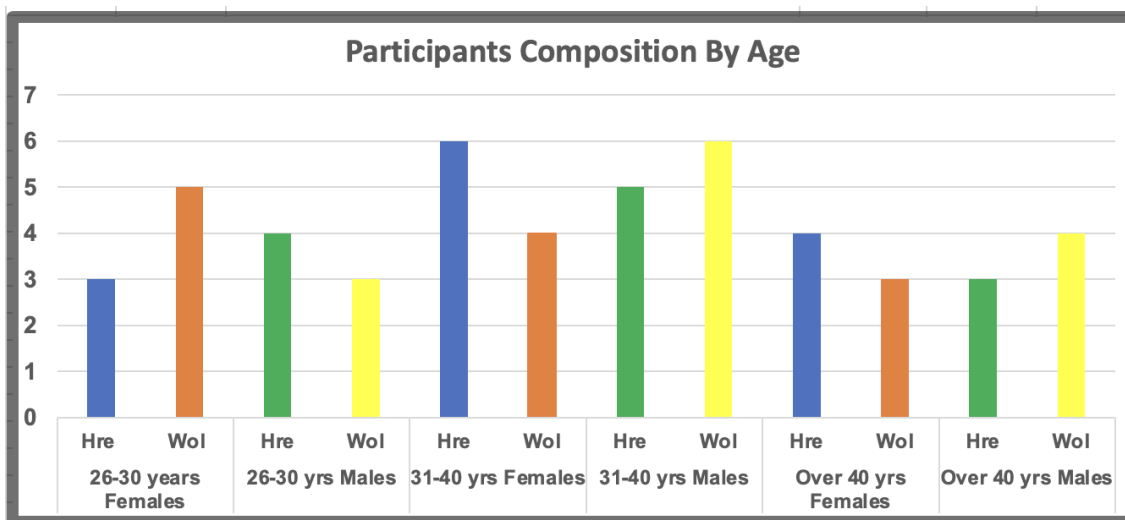
In terms of gender there were 12 females and 13 males in Wollongong while Harare was comprised of 13 females and 12 males. Figure 1 exhibits the gender participants numbers between females and males in Wollongong, Australia and females and males in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Figure 1.



In terms of age the study participants were made up of three age categories. The 26-30 years age category had a total of 15 participants (3 females and 4 males from Harare and 5 females and 3 males from Wollongong). The 31-40 age group had a total of 21 participants (6 females and 4 males from Harare and 4 females and 6 males from Wollongong). The over 40 year old age group had total of 14 (4 females and 3 males from Harare and 3 females and 4 males from Wollongong). The researcher was able to target specific participants who could provide rich and in-depth insights into the research topic (Palinkas et al., 2015). The participants’ sample sizes within each age group are reflected in Chart 2.

Chart 2.



**ABBREVIATIONS and Color Coding**

Harare - Hre

Wollongong - Wol

Blue - Harare Females

Orange Accent 2 - Wollongong Females

Green - Harare Males

Yellow - Wollongong Males

The researcher was aware of the potential for sampling bias in selecting participants (Teddle & Yu, 2017) which was overcome by using different data collection tools. The researcher also avoided generalizing the findings to the broader population, as purposive sampling does not provide a representative sample (Palinkas et al., 2015). By acknowledging the strengths and limitations of this sampling method, the researcher ensured transparency and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the research findings.

### **Focus groups**

The researcher orchestrated three (3) distinct focus group sessions, each assembly comprising five participants. To enable open and unimpeded discussions among the attendees, the discussions were hosted through the ZOOM platform. This virtual avenue fostered an environment wherein participants could freely communicate their individual experiences and grapple with the challenges associated with parenting (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Using focus group discussions is widely embraced in qualitative research, replete with strengths and limitations. This approach offered participants the chance to engage in substantive conversations, facilitating the exchange of ideas and the mutual building upon each other's responses. As a result, it facilitated a more profound exploration of the research subject matter (Morgan, 2016). The group dynamics generated diverse perspectives and insights that might not emerge through individual interviews alone. Focus groups enable exploring participants' shared experiences and social interactions (Liamputtong, 2019). Through group discussions, participants could validate and challenge each other's viewpoints, providing a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Morgan, 2016). The researcher was aware of the potential for dominant voices or group conformity, where certain participants could influence or inhibit the expression of diverse opinions (Liamputtong, 2019). The researcher carefully facilitated the focus groups, recorded the discussions, and analyzed emerging themes later. The sample size in focus group discussions was smaller than in surveys; the researcher did not generalize the findings to a broader population (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The goal of using focus groups was not a statistical representation but to gain insights and understanding through collective perspectives.

### **Self-administered questionnaire**

Self-administered questionnaires were utilized in this study to collect data from the selected participants, including 25 Zimbabwean parents residing in Wollongong, Australia, and 25 Zimbabwean parents residing in Harare, Zimbabwe (Dillman et al., 2014). Participants received hard copies of the questionnaire with instructions and links to Google Forms for anonymity and confidentiality. Participants could complete the questionnaires at their convenience and in their own time, which reduced the need for direct interaction with the researcher (Bowling, 2018). Self-administered questionnaires provided standardized and structured data collection, enabling the researcher to obtain quantitative information and qualitative insights (Dillman et al., 2014). To address the problems of low response rates and non-response bias (Bowling, 2018), the researcher followed up with the participants and kept reminding them. The researcher knew self-administered questionnaires may not capture the richness and depth of participants' experiences as effectively as other qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus group discussions (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

### **Personal interviews**

The researcher employed personal telephone interviews to collect data from 15 individuals within the participant pool, providing an opportunity to explore their experiences and perspectives on parenting challenges (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Through direct interaction with participants, the researcher explored their thoughts, emotions, and personal narratives in-depth and identified themes that formed the basis of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The researcher utilized a semi-structured approach to offer flexibility, enabling the researcher to probe extensively into particular points of intrigue and pursue additional clarification or elaboration based on participants' input. This approach also facilitated the capacity to probe

participants' answers for elucidation or expansion. In addition, personal interviews promote rapport and trust between the interviewer and the interviewee, facilitating open and honest communication (Brinkmann, 2017). However, the researcher was aware of the potential social desirability bias, where participants may provide socially acceptable responses or align with societal expectations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The researcher employed techniques to establish rapport and create a non-judgmental atmosphere to encourage participants to share their authentic experiences. Few interviews were scheduled and conducted due to the time and resource-intensive nature of personal interviews. Individual interviews required significant time and effort in scheduling, conducting the interviews, transcribing, and analyzing the data (Brinkmann, 2017).

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The data analysis section aligns with the methodology, focusing on thematic analysis and its application across various data collection techniques. The dual-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analyses, aimed to enhance the validity and reliability of the research outcomes.

### **Qualitative Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis served as the primary method for examining the amassed qualitative data, derived from focus group conversations, questionnaires, and one-on-one interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The researcher systematically organized qualitative responses under the eight themes or study variables, emphasizing the extraction of recurring patterns and themes from participants' narratives. This process involved coding and categorizing data to explore the phenomenon under investigation comprehensively. Thematic analysis provided flexibility and adaptability to different research contexts and data types, allowing the researcher to uncover patterns, themes, and meanings inherent in the data (Nowell et al., 2017). It facilitated a rich and nuanced understanding of the research topic, allowing for an iterative and systematic approach to data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Eight themes emerged for analysis: divorce, support, extracurricular activities, child rights, culture, parenting style, multiple jobs, and electronic gadgets.

### **Quantitative Analysis**

Data coding based on identified themes was performed for the quantitative aspect, aligning with the qualitative findings. Microsoft Excel facilitated statistical analysis, generating descriptive statistics through charts, tables, and graphs. This dual-methods approach aimed to triangulate findings, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of participants' experiences.

### **Addressing Subjectivity**

The researcher acknowledged the potential for subjectivity in identifying and interpreting themes (Nowell et al., 2017). To mitigate this limitation, literature review, peer debriefing, and member checking were incorporated to enhance the reliability and validity of the analysis. These measures aimed to minimize bias and ensure a more objective data analysis, considering the researchers' subjective judgments in the coding and theme development process.

### **Efficient Management of Qualitative Data**

Given the modest sample size, the researcher strategically managed the analysis of qualitative data to avoid spending excessive time scrutinizing substantial volumes of information (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This approach ensured a focused and efficient examination of the qualitative data within the study context.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study supported the alternate hypothesis, revealing that Zimbabwean parents in



Wollongong and Harare, Zimbabwe, encounter distinct parenting challenges. Notably, the only variable exhibiting no significant contrast between the two locations was how individuals managed parenting responsibilities post-divorce. However, seven other variables demonstrated significant differences: balancing multiple jobs and parenting responsibilities, preserving culture against changing lifestyles, conflicting parenting styles, lack of social support systems, enrolling children in numerous extracurricular school activities, difficulties associated with electronic gadgets, and balancing child discipline and rights. These results shed light on critical aspects of parenting challenges in the two settings, offering valuable insights for developing targeted support programs and policies for Zimbabwean immigrant parents in Wollongong, Australia.

The study's outcomes underscore the significance of accounting for cultural, social, and environmental influences that contribute to the disparities observed in parenting challenges across distinct settings.

### **Coping with parenting after divorce**

There was no difference in the divorce experience as a parenting challenge between Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong, Australia, and Harare, Zimbabwe. Only 4% of Zimbabwean parents in Harare and Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong reported experiencing divorce as a challenge to parenting. Despite geographical distinctions, it was observed that the experiences of divorce as a parenting challenge were remarkably similar among Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong, Australia, and Harare, Zimbabwe. This parallel was attributed, in part, to the small sample size within each site. However, the ramifications of divorce and its associated intricacies are significant contributors to parenting complexities within non-immigrant and immigrant family settings. Prior research has underscored the universal nature of parenting challenges arising from divorce. Studies by Shimkowski & Ledbetter (2018), van Dijk et al. (2021), Leys et al. (2020), Turunen et al. (2017), Afifi et al. (2007), and Amato & Afifi (2005) have all affirmed the profound impact of divorce on parenting. However, nuanced regional differences emerge. While immigrants in the United States are reported to have lower divorce rates compared to US-born non-Hispanic white adults (Ryabov, 2021), research in Southern Africa, including Zimbabwe, reveals that urbanization and female employment are linked to higher divorce rates (Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015). These findings underscore the intricate interplay of cultural and contextual factors in shaping divorce rates and parenting challenges, necessitating tailor-made interventions and support structures.

Participants in the focus groups and personal interviews conveyed multifaceted challenges associated with divorce. Emotional turmoil, affecting both parents and children, was a prominent theme, emphasizing the profound impact of parental separation on children's well-being, emotional stability, and overall development. Navigating co-parenting relationships post-divorce posed significant struggles, with participants highlighting the complexities of effective communication, coordinating parenting decisions, and maintaining a unified approach to parenting despite the end of the marital relationship. Financial stress emerged as a common challenge, with participants discussing economic strain, legal expenses, and the difficulties of managing two households, impacting their ability to provide for their children. Changes in parent-child dynamics were emphasized, with participants noting the need to adapt to new roles and redefine boundaries within the context of a single-parent household. Additionally, some participants shared experiences of societal judgment and stigmatization associated with divorce, underscoring the importance of supportive communities, access to counseling services, and dispelling societal misconceptions about divorced parents to build a robust support system.

The upheaval caused by divorce disrupts the dynamics of the family unit, induces geographical separation, and necessitates cultural adaptations. For immigrant parents, these challenges are further exacerbated by the need to harmonize cultural norms with legal requisites. These multifaceted challenges encompass sustaining

effective co-parenting relationships, ensuring consistent discipline and communication, navigating custody arrangements, trailing international borders, and reconciling cultural values with legal mandates. The cumulative effect of these factors underscores the profound complexities that immigrant parents encounter in their parenting journey following a divorce. Recognizing the unique parenting challenges that migrant families face within the context of divorce is of paramount importance. These challenges can impact the well-being of both parents and children alike. Thus, it is imperative to develop targeted interventions and support systems that cater to the distinctive needs of these families. By addressing the intricacies posed by geographical separation, cultural adaptation, and legal compliance, these interventions can play a pivotal role in promoting the holistic welfare of families navigating the intricate landscape of post-divorce parenting.

### **Conflicting parenting style**

The literature review consistently demonstrates a positive correlation between the democratic parenting style and the holistic development of children, both in the general population and among immigrant populations (Yao, 2023; Carapito et al., 2018; Vasiou et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2012; Salami et al., 2017; Lim et al., 2023; Netshikulwe et al., 2022). Previous studies underscore the significance of parenting style in shaping various aspects of child development. The study's quantitative findings reveal that conflicting parenting styles were reported by 16% of Zimbabwean study participants in Harare and 28% of participants from Wollongong. This discrepancy highlights the variation in experiences within these immigrant communities, emphasizing the complexity of parenting challenges that Zimbabwean parents residing in different cultural contexts face.

The presence of conflicting parenting styles within immigrant families poses unique challenges as parents endeavor to reconcile their cultural heritage with the expectations and norms of the host society. Immigrant parents often bring traditional parenting practices from their origin, which may significantly differ from the prevailing parenting norms in the new culture. Comments from focus groups and personal interviews provide rich insights into the challenges posed by conflicting parenting styles. Participants expressed how differences in parenting styles lead to cultural clashes, struggles in co-parenting harmony, impacts on child discipline, generational shifts in parental expectations, and stress in decision-making processes. These thematic insights highlight the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by Zimbabwean parents, necessitating comprehensive and culturally sensitive interventions.

Acknowledging and addressing these challenges is crucial for providing culturally sensitive support and resources for immigrant parents. Effective interventions can bridge the gap between traditional parenting practices and the expectations of the host society. The findings underscore the importance of promoting parenting strategies that align with diverse cultural contexts, fostering an environment that respects and integrates various cultural perspectives.

### **Lack of social support systems**

Literature has consistently emphasized the crucial role of social support systems across all life stages in all contexts. Existing research by Kawinska and Stefan (2023), Javeline (2023), Gibson and Mugford (2023), and Nida and Alfiasari (2023) underscores the significance of social support from various sources such as government, church, family, friends, relatives, and neighbors. The study revealed that both locations experienced a lack of social support systems as a significant parenting challenge. The difference is that 8% of Zimbabwean parents in Harare against 80% of study participants in Wollongong reported experiencing a lack of a social support system as a challenge to parenting. Participants in the focus groups and personal interviews conveyed various challenges faced by immigrant parents. These challenges include feelings of isolation and emotional strain due to a lack of support, with significant impacts on mental well-being. Financial pressures were a prominent theme, with participants expressing the absence of adequate support systems and the resulting barriers to creating an optimal environment for their children. Single parents

emphasized the difficulties of parenting alone, including challenges in balancing work, parenting responsibilities, and the emotional toll of lacking co-parent or extended family support. Additionally, there were discussions about gaps in knowledge regarding available support networks, both formal and informal, and the challenges of cultural adjustment without sufficient support. The importance of having cultural support networks to understand unique parenting challenges and guide in navigating cultural nuances was also highlighted.

Immigrant parents often encounter multiple stressors and difficulties, including language barriers, limited social networks, and unfamiliarity with available resources and services in their new country. The absence of adequate social support further compounds their parenting challenges, such as limited access to parenting information, financial constraints, and a dearth of social connections. These findings underscore the pressing need for targeted interventions and community-based support programs that address the unique needs of immigrant parents. To alleviate the parenting challenges immigrant families face, policymakers and service providers should focus on providing accessible resources, language support, and opportunities for social integration. By doing so, they can empower immigrant parents with the necessary tools, knowledge, and social connections to navigate the complexities of parenting in a new cultural context. This approach promotes positive parenting practices and enhances the overall well-being of both parents and children.

### **Enrolling children in numerous extracurricular activities**

Research has consistently shown that engaging in extracurricular activities offers numerous benefits for children's development (Olivier et al., 2022; Jiang et al., & Peguero A., 2016; Kim et al., 2023). In line with this, the study examined the experiences of Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong, Australia, and Harare, Zimbabwe, regarding the challenge of enrolling their children in extracurricular activities. The results unveiled a distinct contrast in how extracurricular activities are perceived as challenges in parenting across the two examined areas. Specifically, enrolling children in numerous extracurricular activities was experienced and reported by only 8% of Zimbabwean parents in Harare, compared to 32% of research participants comprised of Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong. This disparity underscores immigrant parents' unique circumstances in managing their children's involvement in various school activities. Immigrant parents often hold high aspirations for their children's academic and social success, which may drive their desire to encourage participation in extracurricular activities. During focus group discussions, Wollongong parents acknowledged that extracurricular activities were draining their energy and resources, but they had no option as they wanted their children to have a better life. Juggling multiple school commitments can lead to heightened stress and time constraints for immigrant parents. Balancing work schedules, transportation logistics, and financial considerations alongside their children's activities becomes a complex task that requires careful coordination. The results underscore the conceivable influence of the difficulties on the holistic welfare of immigrant parents and the intricate dynamics that shape their family units.

Addressing the parenting challenges of enrolling children in numerous school activities among immigrant families requires adequate resources and support systems. Communities can play a pivotal role in alleviating these challenges by helping with logistical aspects, such as transportation and scheduling, and providing access to affordable options for extracurricular involvement. Moreover, fostering open communication channels between schools and parents can enhance coordination and understanding, facilitating adequate supervision and support for immigrant parents in managing their children's engagements.

### **Balancing child discipline and child rights**

Child discipline within the framework of child rights has been a subject of significant scholarly discussion, highlighting the potential adverse consequences of traditional disciplinary approaches, such as capital punishment (Martínez Sainz, 2020; Morris & Smith, 2022; Ryan et al., 2016; Mackenbach et al., 2014).

This study delves into the complex task of balancing child discipline and child rights among Zimbabwean parents residing in Wollongong, Australia, and Harare, Zimbabwe. In the quantitative findings, 12% of the Zimbabwean study participants in Harare reported experiencing challenges associated with balancing child discipline and child rights. In contrast, a higher percentage, 28%, of Zimbabwean parents from Wollongong reported similar challenges. This discrepancy underscores the varied experiences and perceptions of immigrant parents regarding child discipline and child rights. Participants reported challenges in immigrant parenting during the personal in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. They expressed facing a cultural clash in discipline practices, attempting to merge traditional Zimbabwean parenting norms with the diverse approaches prevalent in Australia. Participants highlighted an ongoing struggle to find an equilibrium between instilling discipline and respecting children's rights to autonomy, describing it as a delicate daily navigation. Navigating legal frameworks related to children's rights in Australia was discussed, with some participants noting conflicts with disciplinary practices from Zimbabwe. Concerns were raised about the impact of these challenges on parent-child relationships. Additionally, participants reported gaps in knowledge about children's rights, particularly within the Australian context, emphasizing the need for improved understanding and support in this area.

### **Difficulties associated with electronic gadgets.**

The literature review reveals the adverse effects of excessive screen time on children's physical health, cognitive development, and psychological well-being, supported by studies such as Abd et al. (2023), Donthu et al. (2023), Hawi and Rupert (2014), Perrin et al. (2020), and Shivakumar and Sivaraman (2022). This study explores the parenting challenges associated with electronic gadgets among Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong, Australia, and Harare, Zimbabwe. In quantitative findings, a notable difference in the prevalence of parenting challenges related to electronic gadgets was observed between the two locations. Specifically, 16% of study participants in Harare reported difficulties associated with electronic gadgets among their children, whereas a higher percentage, 36%, of Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong experienced similar challenges. This discrepancy highlights the varying degrees of exposure and impact of electronic gadgets on parenting in these distinct cultural contexts. Immigrant parents encountered difficulties in setting boundaries, monitoring content, and regulating screen time for their children due to language barriers that impeded effective communication. Cultural differences influenced parental attitudes and beliefs about technology, leading to conflicts within the family dynamics. Additionally, limited access to information and resources hindered immigrant parents' ability to stay informed about the latest trends and parental guidance related to electronic gadgets.

The findings underscore the necessity for targeted interventions and support programs to address the challenges immigrant parents face in managing electronic gadgets. Culturally sensitive resources, language assistance, and educational programs are crucial components in empowering immigrant parents to navigate the complex landscape of electronic gadget use among their children. By providing the necessary support, communities can facilitate the successful integration of immigrant parents into the digital era, promoting the overall well-being of parents and children while addressing the unique parenting challenges associated with electronic gadgets.

### **Preserving culture against changing lifestyles**

Our quantitative analysis revealed a significant disparity in reported experiences of the parenting challenge of preserving culture against changing lifestyles. While only 8% of Zimbabwean participants in Harare reported facing this challenge, a substantial 40% of those in Wollongong acknowledged experiencing the same. These percentages highlight the varied experiences among Zimbabwean parents in different cultural contexts. The literature review accentuates culture, especially parenting culture, as a dynamic and ever-changing phenomenon. Studies on acculturation emphasize the adaptation and alteration of minority cultures while maintaining their unique characteristics (Atmadzhov, 2020; Bodroski-Spariosu & Senic Ruzic, 2020;



Bornstein, 2017; Lansford et al., 2021; Williams, 2017). These insights lay the foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of cultural change and preservation within parenting practices. Immigrant parents encounter a delicate balancing act, striving to uphold their cultural values and traditions while navigating the complexities of adapting to a new cultural environment. This challenge extends beyond preserving culture; it encompasses discipline, education, religious practices, and socialization. The tension arises from meeting the expectations and norms of the host society while respecting their cultural heritage.

The findings underscore the need for culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate support systems for immigrant parents facing the challenge of preserving culture against changing lifestyles. By providing access to culturally competent parenting programs, community services, and intercultural dialogue platforms, societies can assist immigrant parents in navigating these complexities. This support promotes the well-being of parents and children and fosters harmonious integration into the host community.

### **Balancing multiple jobs and parenting responsibilities**

The prevalence of balancing multiple jobs and parenting responsibilities varied significantly between Zimbabwean parents in Harare and Wollongong. While 20% of participants in Harare reported this challenge, 40% of Wollongong participants acknowledged the struggle. These percentages underscore the varied prevalence of this parenting challenge in different cultural contexts. A review of existing literature emphasizes the substantial impact of work-family conflicts on parents, both mothers and fathers, in various employment settings (Zhi et al., 2022; Iztayeva, 2022; Wang, 2023). The need for a harmonious equilibrium between professional and personal spheres is crucial for fostering meaningful connections with children. Juggling multiple jobs, driven by economic pressures and the pursuit of financial stability, poses common challenges among immigrant families (Zhi et al., 2022). The study findings indicate that the conflict between work and parenting responsibilities leads to time constraints, reduced quality time with children, and increased parental stress. Addressing the parenting challenges arising from the conflict between work and familial life is crucial for immigrant parents. Supportive workplace policies, including flexible schedules and access to affordable childcare options, can alleviate the difficulties faced by parents in balancing multiple jobs and parenting responsibilities (Iztayeva, 2022). Stakeholders, including policymakers and employers, play a pivotal role in creating an enabling environment that facilitates positive parenting practices and enhances the overall well-being of immigrant parents and their children. This study highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing immigrant families' unique challenges and promoting a more inclusive and supportive society.

### **Observations about gender differences**

Throughout focus group dialogues and individual interviews, the researcher discerned pronounced dissimilarities between genders in the manners by which male and female participants construe and encounter the parenting challenges encapsulated within the recognized variables.

**Coping with divorce:** Female participants in both locations often expressed emotional tolls related to divorce, emphasizing concerns for children's emotional well-being, and adapting to single parenthood. Two male participants who commented on divorce focused on practical challenges such as custody arrangements and financial responsibilities.

**Balancing multiple jobs:** Female participants frequently shared accounts of managing multiple roles, indicating that balancing work and family was particularly demanding. Male participants also acknowledged these challenges, albeit less frequently, focusing more on providing for their families.

**Preserving culture:** Female participants emphasized the role of culture in nurturing children's identity, often sharing insights into teaching traditions and values. Male participants occasionally highlighted cultural

preservation, often through participation in family rituals and events.

**Conflicting parenting styles:** Female participants frequently mentioned differences in parenting styles within couples, often voicing concerns over communication breakdowns. Male participants occasionally acknowledged these conflicts, focusing more on their role as disciplinary figures.

**Social support:** Female participants across both locations highlighted the importance of social networks for emotional support and childcare assistance. Male participants occasionally acknowledged social support, often stemming from close family ties.

**Extracurricular activities:** Female participants often discussed juggling children's extracurricular commitments, sometimes at the expense of their time. Male participants occasionally shared these challenges, though their narratives often centered on ensuring children's participation.

**Electronic gadgets:** Female participants frequently voiced concerns about managing children's screen time and potential negative impacts. Male participants occasionally discussed gadget-related challenges, often focusing on providing technological guidance.

**Child rights and discipline:** Female participants emphasized the importance of balancing child rights with effective discipline strategies, often mentioning open communication. Male participants occasionally shared similar concerns, focusing more on the role of discipline in shaping children's behavior. The detected gender disparities can be ascribed to the intricate intermingling of cultural conventions, societal anticipations, and roles inherent to these two disparate contexts. Traditional gender roles and responsibilities shape how parents perceive and address various parenting challenges. Economic factors and individual roles in families also contribute to these variations. Understanding how men and women navigate these parenting challenges leads to tailoring interventions and support systems that address the diverse needs of parents within their respective cultural contexts. Acknowledging these gender differences is essential for promoting effective parenting strategies and family well-being in Harare, Zimbabwe, and Wollongong, Australia.

## CONCLUSION

The differences in experiences of parenting challenges between Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong and those in Harare could be attributed to several factors identified in the study:

1. The findings revealed that Zimbabwean parents in Wollongong faced more challenges balancing multiple jobs and parenting responsibilities, indicating the economic pressures and need for financial stability that immigrant families often encounter.
2. The higher percentage of Wollongong parents identifying preserving culture against changing lifestyles as a challenge suggests the complexities of navigating cultural norms and expectations in a new host country. Conflicting parenting styles and the lack of social support systems were also reported as more significant challenges in Wollongong, pointing to immigrant parents' unique difficulties in adapting to their new environment's parenting practices and support networks.
3. The higher percentage of Wollongong parents facing difficulties associated with electronic gadgets and the issue of balancing child discipline and child rights highlights the complexities of reconciling cultural values and the expectations of the host society in the digital era.

These findings emphasize the importance of providing culturally sensitive support systems, resources, and guidance to assist immigrant parents in addressing the specific challenges they face in different parenting domains.

## Future Scope

The current study was based on promoting cross-cultural understanding and expanding the applicability of findings in different global contexts. While the study provides valuable insights into the contemporary challenges facing parents in Zimbabwe, future research can increase its impact by examining longitudinal trends, addressing potential biases, and combining comparative analyses with other cultural perspectives, contributing to a more holistic understanding of parenting dynamics. an increasingly interconnected world.

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My name is Elizabeth Ngwaru. I am a doctoral student who is passionate about cross-cultural studies, and family dynamics. I have a background in Psychology, and I am passionate about understanding diverse parenting challenges. I want to share my insights with the world. This article marks a milestone in my Ph.D. journey to advance scholarly understanding in the field of global parenting experiences.