

PERCEPTION OF NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM ON PARENTING STYLES AND DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract. Perceived parenting style captures adolescents' interpretations of parental behaviour, it risks oversimplifying complex parent-child dynamics by neglecting broader cultural, social, and structural factors that shape both parenting and adolescent perception. Among the range of parenting approaches, the authoritative style characterized by a balance of high responsiveness, firm expectations, and constructive feedback is widely recognized as the most effective globally. This study investigates how Nigerian immigrant parents in the United Kingdom perceive and apply different parenting styles and how these perceptions influence their children's deviant behaviour. Adopting a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research seeks to understand the lived experiences of parents and explore how cultural, social, and environmental factors inform their parenting practices. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve Nigerian immigrant parents to examine the intersection between traditional Nigerian parenting values and British societal norms. Through thematic analysis, key themes such as parental authority, disciplinary approaches, and the influence of the UK educational system on parenting were identified. The findings underscore the ongoing cultural negotiation Nigerian parents engage in as they adapt to a new sociocultural environment while attempting to maintain cultural continuity. This study reveals how divergent understandings of discipline and behavioural expectations shape parenting decisions and children's behavioural outcomes. By offering insight into these experiences, the research contributes to wider academic discussions on immigration, acculturation, and the interplay between cultural identity, parenting practice, and child welfare frameworks within a multicultural society.

Keywords: *Nigerin immigrants, parenting styles, deviant behaviour, adolescents, acculturation*

Introduction

In 2015, Africans constituted 1.4% of the child population and approximately 0.8% of the overall UK population (National Statistics, 2017). The majority (78%) resided in London, indicating a strong geographic concentration. Post-World War II labour shortages prompted migration primarily from Commonwealth countries such as Ghana and Nigeria during the 1950s and 1960s. In subsequent decades, African migration diversified to include individuals from a broader range of countries, often shaped by differing colonial legacies and political instability. Additionally, Africans have migrated to the UK for various purposes, including education, family visits, and asylum (Mason, 2003). The perceptions of parenting styles among immigrants and their potential relationship to child misbehaviour or deviant behaviour represent a topic of considerable scholarly interest. Every society establishes normative standards to which its members are expected to adhere. Deviance, in essence, refers to behaviour that diverges from or fails to conform to these prescribed norms. While cultural variation significantly influences what is classified as deviant across different societies, the

broader recognition of certain behaviours as forms of 'deviance' or 'misbehaviour' appears to be a universal phenomenon. As noted by Adams (1996), all cultures possess a framework of norms, customs, rules, and laws that members of society are generally expected to follow. Nonetheless, deviant behaviour is considered an inevitable aspect of social life, as some individuals will invariably resist conforming to these established guidelines. Importantly, deviance is not inherent in the act itself but is largely shaped by the social responses of groups to particular behaviours. Illustrative examples of deviant behaviour include speaking loudly on a mobile phone in public, singing during a formal class session, or playing music at a volume disruptive to others, are often perceived as abnormal, offensive, immoral, harmful, or socially inappropriate (Lim, 2013). In secondary schools, commonly observed forms of deviant behaviour include theft, dishonesty, sexual harassment, truancy, academic dishonesty, substance use, defiance, carelessness, and vandalism. Loromeke (2007) classified deviant behaviours into minor and major offences. Minor offences are considered relatively insignificant, such as truancy, loitering, excessive noisemaking, defacing school property, dishonesty, and avoiding school assemblies. In contrast, major offences are those that pose a serious threat to the effective functioning of the school or hinder the achievement of its educational objectives. These include examination malpractice, theft, bullying, insubordination toward teachers or school authorities, immoral conduct, and acts of religious extremism (Loromeke, 2007). Many of these behavioural issues, particularly when exhibited by adolescents, are frequently linked to parenting practices and parenting styles.

Nigerian immigrants typically uphold cultural values that emphasize communal respect, obedience, and moral integrity in child-rearing practices (Ajayi, 2017). However, upon resettling in the United Kingdom, these individuals encounter a sociocultural environment governed by different normative expectations and legal frameworks concerning parenting. The tension between maintaining one's cultural identity and adapting to the norms of the host society often gives rise to what Berry (1997) describes as "acculturative stress." This form of stress can affect both parents and their children. Factors such as systemic discrimination, social isolation, economic challenges, and the pressures of adaptation may influence parenting approaches, thereby shaping the behavioural outcomes of children. Parenting styles play a pivotal role in shaping children's development and behaviour, particularly within migration contexts where cultural traditions intersect with the norms of the host society. Nigerian immigrants in the United Kingdom, who often maintain strong familial structures, must negotiate the balance between traditional parenting practices and the expectations of British society. This complex interaction provides valuable insight into how Nigerian immigrant parents perceive the influence of parenting on their children's engagement in deviant behaviour within a diasporic context. During migration, individuals often experience "double consciousness," a concept introduced by Du Bois (1903), which describes the struggle of balancing native cultural identities with the need to assimilate into the host society. Nigerian immigrants in the United Kingdom face distinct parenting challenges as they strive to reconcile traditional Nigerian parenting practices characterized by an emphasis on discipline, respect for authority, and communal values with the more individualistic and rights-oriented parenting approaches prevalent in Western societies. This cultural divide influences both the disciplinary methods Nigerian parents use and their perceptions of and responses to their children's misbehavior. Academic research has consistently highlighted the link between parenting

styles and children's behavior, including potential misconduct (Yusuf et al, 2021a; Rinaldi and Howe, 2012).

Perceptions of deviant behavior vary across cultures, what is considered deviant in British society may differ significantly from Nigerian cultural norms (Elechi et al., 2009). For example, corporal punishment, often viewed as a necessary disciplinary measure in Nigerian culture, may be seen as abusive and carry legal consequences in the UK. As a result, Nigerian immigrant parents may face uncertainty and challenges in disciplining their children effectively while avoiding negative perceptions or legal repercussions. Understanding Nigerian immigrants' perspectives on parenting and deviant behaviour in the UK is crucial for both academic and practical purposes, thereby highlighting cultural transmission, adaptation, and identity within immigrant groups while offering insights for social work, education, and policymaking. As global interconnectedness grows, such research is essential for fostering inclusive communities that respect diverse parenting practices. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the perspectives of Nigerian immigrants residing in the United Kingdom concerning their parenting approaches and the associated behavioural outcomes in their children, with particular attention to deviant behaviour. By examining these perceptions, the research aims to deepen understanding of how immigrant families navigate the challenges of cultural adaptation and how these processes shape family dynamics and influence child development.

Literature review

All human societies establish certain behaviours as forms of deviance that violate the commonly accepted social norms. Deviant behaviour refers to any conduct that diverges from these shared societal expectations. Given the growing Nigerian immigrant population in the United Kingdom, examining their parenting practices and the resulting behavioural pattern in their children offers valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and social scientists. This review aims to advance understanding of how Nigerian immigrants adapt their parenting strategies within the UK context and how these adaptations influence behavioural outcomes in their children.

Deviant behaviour

The concept of deviance has been characterized as both a social pathology and a reflection of environmental adversity (Bibi et al., 2021). It refers to behaviour that deviates from the accepted norms, expectations, and values of a given society. Deviant behaviour is not innate but learned through social interaction, as individuals are not born with deviant tendencies; rather, such behaviours are acquired through processes of socialization (Yusuf et al., 2021b). Consequently, those who engage in deviant acts do not inherently possess any mental, emotional, or physical abnormalities. Individuals are typically born with normal developmental needs, including the need for security and affection. When these fundamental needs are unmet by society, it can lead to psychological and behavioural maladjustment, particularly during adolescence. This lack of support and social fulfillment may contribute to the emergence of deviant behaviours that conflict with cultural and societal norms (Fergusson et al., 2003).

Parenting styles

According to Baumrind (1967), parenting styles are classified into three primary categories: authoritarian, authoritative (or democratic), and permissive (or indulgent and uninvolved). This typology continues to serve as a foundational framework for understanding parent-child interactions. The authoritarian parenting style is characterized by parents who adopt a strict and controlling approach (Ang and Groh, 2006). Children raised under this style often exhibit signs of frustration, low self-esteem, fear, anxiety, learning difficulties, and a tendency to withdraw socially. Authoritative parents demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness to their child's needs, while also maintaining reasonable behavioural expectations. This approach acknowledges the child's rights and fosters autonomy, provided it does not interfere with their well-being or opportunities in life. In contrast, permissive parenting is characterized by minimal constraints, rules, or limitations, granting children excessive freedom. Parents who adopt this style exert little to no control over shaping appropriate behaviours and lifestyles in their children. Permissive parenting has been associated with higher rates of delinquency, truancy, and other antisocial behaviours in children.

Different caregiving contexts and parenting styles

Nigerian immigrants often adhere to cultural norms that emphasize communal respect, obedience, and moral integrity in their parenting practices (Ajayi, 2017). However, upon resettling in the United Kingdom, they encounter a society with distinct social norms and legal frameworks that govern parenting approaches. The tension between maintaining cultural identity and adapting to the host culture can give rise to "acculturative stress" (Berry, 1997). This stress affects both parents and children, with the combined challenges of discrimination, social isolation, and economic difficulties potentially influencing parenting strategies and, in turn, shaping children's behaviour. A preliminary review of the literature reveals a significant gap in knowledge regarding the normative parenting practices of African families in the United Kingdom, with limited attention given to the parenting styles and daily experiences of these families in the child welfare literature (Graham, 2007; Bernard, 2002). The importance of understanding how diverse cultural values shape the rationale behind parental discipline, particularly concerning behaviours deemed harmful (Dutt and Phillips, 2000). The adoption of new cultural norms may, however, pose a challenge to traditional parenting practices. Nigerian immigrants in the UK may find it necessary to adjust their parenting strategies to navigate a cultural environment that differs from their home country. Research indicates that many Nigerian immigrant families adopt a hybrid approach to parenting, blending elements of their traditional upbringing with Western values (Ukaegbu, 2019). To support their children's integration into British society, parents may, for example, encourage greater flexibility and individualism, while still upholding strong principles of respect and obedience.

Life within a typical Nigerian family is characterized by ambition and a well-defined hierarchy, where parents and older family members enforce norms through discipline, which may include physical punishment (Ekane, 2013). While these norms are widely accepted in Nigeria, the younger generations of Nigerian children raised in the United Kingdom may face challenges in adapting to certain family traditions. Respect for parents and elders is a fundamental expectation, and children are also tasked with taking responsibility for their younger siblings (Onwujuba et al., 2015). The lack of social security in Nigeria often compels parents to adopt a strict approach to ensure their children make the most of available opportunities, particularly in more affluent

households (Irukwu, 2014). A study by Cyril et al. (2016) on African immigrant families in Australia highlighted similar challenges. In the UK, the negative impact and controversial nature of physical punishment further complicate these issues. Additionally, parenting practices within immigrant families may become further strained by experiences of marginalization, social isolation, and racism. According to Amato (2010), parenting in traditional Nigerian culture is characterized by authoritative and collectivist approaches that prioritize discipline, respect for elders, and familial responsibilities. In the Nigerian home, parents typically hold considerable authority, and children are expected to adhere to strict behavioural rules. Children are often taught to comply with parental authority unquestioningly, with corporal punishment sometimes employed as a disciplinary measure (Mandara, 2006). The parenting practices of Nigerian immigrants are notably influenced by acculturation. Families undergoing the process of cultural adaptation may experience acculturative stress, which can lead to shifts in parenting styles and family dynamics (Berry, 2003). In navigating the balance between diverse cultural norms and practices, parents may encounter stress that compels them to modify their parenting approach.

In immigrant families, the generational divide can influence parenting styles. First-generation Nigerian immigrants often raise their children according to traditional customs, maintaining strong connections to their cultural heritage. In contrast, second-generation immigrants, born or raised in the United Kingdom, are more likely to integrate into British culture and adopt parenting approaches that blend Nigerian and British cultural elements (Adepoju, 2009). Parenting styles among Nigerian immigrants also vary based on factors such as socioeconomic status, educational background, and religious beliefs. For example, well-educated Nigerian immigrants may prefer a parenting style that emphasizes communication and reasoning rather than punitive measures (Ogunnaike et al., 2015). Additionally, religious affiliations, such as Christianity or Islam, can significantly shape parenting ideals and practices, influencing aspects ranging from moral instruction to family traditions. Providing insights, and suggesting ways to mitigate this, hence this leads to the research question RQ: How do Nigerian immigrants in the UK perceive the effectiveness of their traditional parenting styles in preventing or managing deviant behaviour among their children, what challenges do they face in balancing these methods with the expectations of British society, and to what extent do they associate cultural adaptation with changes in their children's behaviour, particularly misbehavior, while also considering the role of cultural identity in shaping behaviour within a multicultural environment and the strategies they employ to uphold their parenting values?

Parenting and deviant behaviour

In criminology, the fundamental concept of parental socialization practices is recognized as both comprehensive and universally applicable (Gillies, 2008). Criminologists frequently view the complex dynamics within the family as both a cause and a potential solution to crime (Shaw and Bell, 1993). According to Hirschi (2015) social control theory, to raise non-deviant children, parents must exercise sufficient direct control by closely monitoring their children's activities and friendships, establish indirect control through the development of strong emotional bonds, model and reward appropriate behaviours, and appropriately discipline antisocial conduct. Criminologists often describe "bad parents" as detached and permissive, while "good parents" are characterized as affectionate and disciplined. Parenting is seen as both a contributing

factor to and a potential solution for criminal behaviour, if properly nurtured. As such, legislators across the political spectrum, along with many scholars, particularly criminologists, advocate for policies that address family-related issues and their broader societal implications (Welsh and Farrington, 2007). Despite their differing perspectives, policymakers across the political spectrum generally support interventions for high-risk families and recognize the state's proactive role in monitoring, assisting, or holding parents accountable when they fail to meet basic societal expectations for child-rearing. Recently, the idea that parenting behaviour is the primary factor influencing child outcomes has come under scrutiny (Faith et al., 2012). While it may seem counterintuitive to question the impact of parental influence on the development of criminal and other behaviours in children, a growing number of scholars are challenging this widely held cultural assumption (Lin et al., 2023; Lansford, 2022; Papoudi et al., 2021). Much of the existing research on parenting and antisocial behaviour focuses on childhood behavioural issues or adolescent delinquency (Li et al., 2023; Wallace, 2023; Yusuf et al., 2021a). However, it is equally important to explore the relationship between parenting practices and adult misconduct.

Some scholars challenge the widely accepted notion of family influence, contending that parenting does not significantly affect specific personality traits (Rowe, 1994). Others argue that factors such as genetics and peer relationships have an equal or even greater impact on child development than parental involvement (Wright and Beaver, 2005). This essay provides an opportunity to critically examine the evidence surrounding the role of parental factors in child development. Family dynamics play a crucial role in shaping childhood behaviour, as supported by numerous empirical studies that affirm this relationship. We propose an alternative perspective on the family's involvement in misconduct, which challenges a key element of existing research on the influence of parenting on children's socialization toward criminal behaviour. In doing so, we present both theoretical and empirical insights for understanding the connection between family structures and crime. Despite a substantial body of research on the relationship between parenting and child misbehavior, there remains a significant gap in scholars' understanding of the nuances of parental. It is undeniable that "bad parents" exist, and children raised in such environments face multiple risk factors that are often absent in the homes of "good parents" (McGuire, 2003). Consequently, it is frequently assumed that inadequate parenting plays a significant role in fostering children's antisocial behaviour. While the likelihood of antisocial behaviour increases in children from such homes, it is not a deterministic factor. Severe, persistent delinquency remains relatively rare, even among highly dysfunctional families. Many children seem to demonstrate resilience against criminogenic influences, whether they stem from familial or external sources. Furthermore, numerous "good" parents have navigated the complex legal and financial challenges that arise when their children engage in criminal activities, while several "bad" parents have seen their children rise to positions of respect and authority. This highlights the fundamental diversity of individual experiences and outcomes.

Parenting can lay the groundwork for adult criminality by subtly shaping cognitive frameworks that make illegal behaviour more appealing. Several developmental and social psychological theories suggest that social schemas, dispositions, and cognitive patterns, formed through repeated social interactions, shape situational definitions and actions (Meisenhelder, 2006), thereby linking past experiences to future behaviour (Bauldry et al., 2016). Drawing on evidence from previous theories and research, three

key criminogenic schemas have been identified: a focus on immediate gratification (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1993), a tendency to critically assess individuals and relationships (Dodge et al., 2008), and detachment from established social norms (Akers et al., 1989). These three concepts are rooted in a common set of adverse social conditions (e.g., inadequate parenting, unsafe neighborhoods, and racial discrimination) and influence one another in interconnected ways. Research indicates that African American parents often adopt strict, authoritarian parenting styles as a response to the ongoing discrimination and marginalization their children are likely to encounter in a racist society (McLoyd and Smith, 2002). The repercussions of this approach can be severe, as a child's disobedience to parental rules may lead to significant social consequences and physical punishment. Within this social framework, it is suggested that many African American children interpret their parents' strict and authoritative discipline as an expression of love and concern (Simons and Conger, 2007). The author hypothesized that parenting approaches characterized by high levels of demandingness would be most effective in reducing adult misconduct, even when corporal punishment is applied. In contrast, situations characterized by low demands were expected to increase the likelihood of misconduct within the African American community.

Ultimately, research on family intervention has consistently shown a correlation between changes in parental behaviour and subsequent modifications in children's conduct. Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber (1984) empirically demonstrated that reducing parental involvement in the "coercive exchanges" between delinquent children and their parents led to a significant decrease in the child's misconduct. Subsequent intervention studies have further confirmed that alterations in parenting approaches are linked to changes in child behaviour (Welsh and Farrington, 2007). However, psychologists also recognize that peer relationships exert considerable influence on young people's decisions. Numerous factors beyond parenting contribute to adolescent behaviour, making it difficult to quantify the precise impact of delinquent peers on criminal conduct. Personal, family, and societal factors all play crucial roles in shaping adolescent behaviour. Modern research supports these views, highlighting the social and emotional benefits provided by peer interactions. For instance, Davis (2021) found that peer rejection acts as a social stressor, increasing the likelihood of aggressive reactions in children. Yusuf et al. (2021b) further suggested that the fear of social isolation motivates individuals to join peer groups and engage in delinquent behaviour, highlighting that time spent with peers and the attachment formed within these groups contribute to adolescents' involvement in such acts. Additionally, a study by Temitayo et al. (2013) concluded that common disciplinary issues observed in secondary schools in the study area included drug addiction, fighting, truancy, and absenteeism. The survey also identified several contributing factors to these behavioural issues, including the influence of peer groups, the school environment, the curriculum, as well as political, social, and economic factors, alongside parental and home influences in Nigerian secondary schools.

Materials and Methods

The study employs an exploratory qualitative research approach, focusing on the acculturative experiences of Nigerian immigrants in the UK and their perceptions of how traditional parenting styles influence the prevention or management of deviant behaviour among their children. It aims to capture the subjective meanings individuals

assign to these experiences, which is essential for understanding the key aspects of parenting in relation to deviant behaviour. Practically, due to the small and somewhat concealed nature of the study population, conducting a quantitative study would be challenging. Purposive sampling technique was employed in selection of participants in the study to ensure that only participants capable of providing rich insights into how Nigerian immigrants in the UK perceive their traditional parenting styles in effectively preventing or managing deviant behaviour among their children. As such, criteria for selection were based on heteronormative adults who were born and raised in Nigeria, but now living with or without immigration restrictions in the UK, having raised or were currently raising their own children in UK. The parents are married and living together, another criterion married but other partner is away in another country due to work status but comes home every 6 months, to ensure a diverse range of perspectives. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and thematically analysed using an interpretivist approach to make sense of participants' cultural consciousness and learning. The interview guide was developed based on the objective of the study and priming theory perspective, ensured participants stayed on topic. The research questions provided specific answers to questions and the interview questions were pilot tested with eight students for vocabulary uniformity prior to the main study.

The study focused exclusively on Black/African parents residing in the United Kingdom to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to specifically select Nigerian parents through networks such as neighborhoods, religious institutions, and community groups. The sample comprised 12 participants which includes 4 men, and 8 women aged between 30 and 55 years, with the youngest in her early thirties and the oldest in her early fifties. All participants held university degrees (B.Sc. or M.Sc.). To enhance participant recruitment, the researcher actively engaged with Nigerian community and religious groups. Eligibility criteria required participants to be conventional adults or parents whose children were initially born and raised in Nigeria before migrating to the UK. Thematic analysis was used in the study which followed a constant comparative approach, involving the classification, comparison, and refinement of text segments to inductively develop categories or themes (Tesch, 2013; Lincoln, 1985). This method emphasized constructing themes from the data itself rather than relying on pre-existing theories, ensuring systematic and transparent qualitative analysis. Interviews, structured into five sections, were transcribed and printed for manual coding. Each transcript was read repeatedly, with keywords and phrases highlighted to generate initial codes, which were then grouped into broader themes. The study's theoretical lens of recognition informed further interpretation and coding. Similar codes were merged into thematic clusters, which were refined into higher-level organizing themes such as 'parenting in fear,' religious support,' and 'fear of social service,' forming a hierarchical framework aligned with the research questions (King, 2012). Participant confidentiality was ensured through anonymization of all data.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study, based on an explorative qualitative approach, highlight the acculturative experiences of Nigerian parents residing in the United Kingdom, with a particular focus on parenting styles and responses to deviant behaviour. Participant narratives revealed nuanced insights into how immigrant parents interpret and navigate

their new socio-cultural environment. Emerging themes from the data reflect parents' perceptions of traditional Nigerian parenting methods, challenges in managing deviant behaviour, adaptations in parenting practices, and responses to British social and policy frameworks. These findings underscore the complexities involved in parenting across cultural contexts and the dynamic negotiation between maintaining cultural identity and adapting to new societal expectations.

Theme1: Disciplinary approaches and legal limitations

The interviews primarily focused on the application of traditional Nigerian parenting methods within the sample group. Nigerian parents often employ strict disciplinary practices, which can sometimes conflict with the legal standards for child-rearing in the UK. In Nigeria, corporal punishment is commonly viewed as a fundamental aspect of discipline. However, in the United Kingdom, such practices are regulated by strict laws and, in some cases, are considered illegal. Nigerian parents residing in the UK face the challenge of reconciling their traditional disciplinary approaches with the legal limitations imposed by the host country. Participant D shared that, in Nigeria, she disciplined her children with "light spanking," a method she considered effective in addressing misbehavior. However, after moving to the United Kingdom, she realized that such practices could trigger intervention by social services. As a result, she adopted alternative strategies, such as time-outs and verbal reprimands, although she found them less effective. Participant F argued that children in Nigeria have a greater understanding of chastisement compared to those raised or born in Britain. What is considered normative in one culture may be perceived as abuse in another. In an ethnographic study of African American parents, Young (1974) identified a parenting style he termed "no-nonsense parenting." Similar to authoritative parenting, this approach emphasizes high levels of attention and demandingness but also includes the use of corporal punishment. Another participant remarked on the fine line between physical punishment and child abuse:

"Disciplining a child is not inherently harmful; however, when it threatens the child's physical, psychological, or emotional well-being, it crosses into the realm of abuse. This perspective has both positive and negative implications. Some children may develop anger, seek independence, or experience psychological challenges. Conversely, other children may align with their parents' expectations and grow into productive members of society. From my perspective, employing unconditional love and non-violent forms of discipline is a more effective parenting approach."

Baumrind et al. (2010) suggest, based on their research, that children develop positive behaviours and understand the consequences of negative actions through distinct methods, requiring discipline that is tailored to their learning styles. There is significant public and professional opposition to physical punishment, particularly in cases where children have suffered harm or death (Thoburn, 2014). Participants in the study strongly agreed that certain forms of physical punishment should be discouraged, especially those considered inappropriate, harsh, or severe. The participants indicated that lawful physical discipline, when characterized by minimal force, infrequent use, age appropriateness, and the avoidance of sensitive areas, plays a key role in their parenting approach. However, they expressed concerns regarding the grey area between light physical discipline and behaviours that may blur the line between discipline and

child abuse, as outlined in the Children Act 1989 (revised 2004, Section 58). This discussion will contribute to a more thorough understanding of discipline in child-rearing, particularly among Black African parents, by incorporating perspectives that have been marginalized. The Act is founded on several key principles, including the "paramountcy principle" (s.1(1)), which prioritizes the child's welfare in all decisions regarding their upbringing, including legal proceedings. It also outlines the principle of parental responsibility, defined in Section 3 as the legal rights, duties, powers, and responsibilities a parent holds concerning their child and the child's property. Additionally, Section 47(1)(b) of the Act grants local authorities the power to investigate when there is reasonable suspicion that a child is at risk of significant harm.

Furthermore, evidence indicates that the outcomes of physical discipline are shaped by the level of parental support. When physical discipline is applied by parents who are generally nurturing and supportive, it tends to have little, if any, negative impact (Hicks-Pass, 2009). These findings highlight that the effects of physical discipline vary depending on the broader context of parenting practices, emphasizing the need to assess overall parenting styles rather than focusing solely on individual disciplinary methods. A key finding in this study is that Black African immigrant parents often experience a sense of fear, which is further reinforced by their interactions with authorities upon arriving in the UK. These concerns appear to be exacerbated by negative perceptions and interactions with social workers and other child welfare professionals, as well as worries about how children understand and may use child welfare policies against parents. Participants also expressed concerns related to experiences of racism and prejudice, highlighting the impact these challenges have on their families and communities. According to control theory, this parenting style strengthens the bond between the child and authority figures (parents) by establishing clear expectations and consequences for misbehavior. Strong family bonds and the fear of retribution can act as deterrents for unacceptable behavior, as children internalize the need to follow these standards. For example, a Nigerian adolescent raised in a strict environment may avoid behaviors like disobedience or substance abuse out of fear of parental punishment. Their commitment to academic success and respect for family honor serves as an internal regulatory mechanism, reducing the likelihood of deviant behavior. However, a Nigerian parent who fears the involvement of British social services may avoid using physical discipline, even though it plays a significant role in Nigerian parenting. As a result, the child may perceive a decline in parental authority, which could lead to an increased likelihood of deviant behavior.

Theme 2: Compliance with British Child Protection Welfare

Several interviewees expressed strong support for fully complying with British child protection laws and welfare guidelines. They embraced the customs and behavioural expectations of their new country. Participant B, a mother of two teenagers, encouraged other immigrant parents to adapt to their new environment by aligning themselves with the social norms and values of the host culture. In a similar vein, Participant F stated:

"You act Roman in Rome, as the saying goes. When children learn about their rights and engage with their peers, they become less tolerant of physical punishment or spanking. This can lead to behavioural changes we might label as deviant. In Nigeria, spanking a child makes them cry and move on it's rarely discussed further. But here, it becomes a much bigger issue. Children may withdraw and think, 'This

punishment is too much,' which creates further complications, explained Parent A. Participant F, however, firmly rejected the idea of culture being simplified to the phrase "this is how things are done here." He argued that such a mindset reflects a perspective that overly promotes the assimilation of immigrants into British cultural norms, particularly when it comes to child-rearing. "I completely reject the idea that we should adopt another culture at the cost of losing our own identity," he said. "Africans often behave this way abandoning our values in search of acceptance. This leads to a lack of respect for our traditions and communities. Britain's economic foundation is rooted in racism and slavery, which still affects how we are perceived today. The rush to discard our heritage under the guise of integration only strengthens the dominance of others over us-people who don't share our cultural convictions."

The statement highlights the nuanced issue of cultural assimilation, and the pressure often placed on immigrants, particularly Africans to conform to dominant cultural norms in countries like Britain. It reflects the widely held notion that integration frequently demands the abandonment of one's cultural beliefs and practices, which many view as a form of cultural erosion. This expectation is seen to contribute to a diminishing respect for one's heritage and community. Africans are often perceived as sacrificing their cultural identity in pursuit of social acceptance or integration into Western societies. This can lead to reduced self-worth and weakened communal bonds. As a result, African communities may gradually relinquish their core values and traditions, creating space for external influences to gain economic and cultural dominance over them. The assertion that "this is how we do things here" reinforces the implicit notion of the superiority of British cultural norms and presupposes their universal applicability. This perspective echoes a historical legacy rooted in colonialism, racism, and slavery, during which African cultures were systematically devalued and marginalized. The continued expectation for cultural integration sustains this legacy by subtly pressuring African communities to conform, thereby weakening their cultural foundations and serving as a mechanism of control that impedes their social and economic empowerment. In accepting integration under such terms, African immigrants may inadvertently validate a system historically designed to subjugate them. Therefore, rather than advocating for total assimilation, it is essential to promote the preservation of cultural identity and values. This approach challenges the prevailing assumption that success or societal acceptance in Britain necessitates the erasure of one's cultural distinctiveness. Achieving this requires a critical balance between active participation in the broader society and the intentional preservation of cultural heritage.

Theme 3: Social networks and community support

Another critical area of focus is the role of community support and social networks. Nigerian immigrants frequently depend on their community for guidance and assistance in navigating parenting challenges, especially those related to managing deviant behaviour. However, these networks can also reinforce traditional parenting ideologies that may not align with the legal and cultural expectations of raising children in the UK. The utility of such support systems often hinges on their ability to assist parents in adapting their methods to suit their new socio-cultural context. For example, Participant J shared that she turns to fellow Nigerian parents in her neighborhood when her son begins to isolate himself or display behaviours she perceives as concerning. The advice

she receives often leans toward implementing more rigid discipline, consistent with Nigerian cultural expectations. Yet, such responses may fail to address underlying issues, such as bullying or racism within the school environment, which call for more context-sensitive and psychologically informed approaches appropriate to the UK setting. The researcher successfully engaged with a Nigerian community group through both online (WhatsApp) and offline interactions, providing opportunities to observe patterns of communication, mutual assistance, and collective support. The researcher was added to the WhatsApp group by the administrator through a current member, granting access to a range of shared information aimed at assisting group participants. In several instances, members requested temporary childcare support, which others willingly provided free of charge—an encouraging and valuable example of community solidarity. Daily monitoring of the WhatsApp discussions revealed that housing issues were often addressed by sharing rental opportunities and landlord contacts among members. Additionally, the researcher observed that members regularly shop at a well-known Nigerian market in Glasgow, where they purchase food in bulk at affordable rates. These items are then redistributed among group members every quarter, typically packaged in bags or boxes. This practice not only significantly reduces their food expenses compared to retail prices but also ensures a lasting supply that can sustain them for months. Furthermore, the researcher noted that within this community, there is a strong cultural expectation that formal interactions include time for greetings and inquiries about family well-being, reflecting deep-rooted Nigerian social norms.

Sub theme 3: Religious supports

Participant C also discussed the importance of raising her children in a respectful and religious manner. She stated, *“Nigerians are both devout and disciplined; we prioritize everything under the authority of God, the supreme being and creator of the universe. Our children are taught proper behaviour through church attendance, listening to God’s word, and reading the Bible. These practices guide how they interact within society, as well as with family and peers. Religion is deeply embedded in our upbringing. We believe that every challenge can be overcome through prayer, as it is the ultimate solution to all problems.”* The statement by Participant C highlights that religion forms a core component of their parenting approach. Other participants echoed this sentiment, affirming that faith-based guidance has been instrumental in teaching their children the ways of the Lord, with the aim of steering them away from immoral or deviant paths.

Sub theme 3: Community influence and peer pressure

The communal nature of life in Nigeria fosters a shared responsibility among members of a village, tribe, or community for the upbringing of children, with the expectation that all adults contribute to guiding or correcting a child, regardless of biological connection (Yusuf et al., 2024; Okechie-Offoha and Sadiku, 1996). Additionally, children are socialized through traditional sociocultural learning methods, where older siblings teach younger ones’ essential skills, such as dressing appropriately and using respectful body language when engaging with elders. For immigrants who were raised within these communal frameworks, the expectation that only parents should shoulder the responsibility of child-rearing can be particularly challenging. In this context, the Nigerian community continues to play a crucial role in shaping

parenting practices and influencing children's behaviour. Parent C explained, *"Parenting is a communal responsibility. In Nigeria, neighbors, extended family members, and relatives all participate in supervising and disciplining children. In contrast, here in the UK, the sole responsibility for childcare lies with the parents. For example, when I had my second child in Nigeria, we would drop the children off with their grandmother on our way to work, and she would care for them until we returned by 4 pm. Additionally, neighbors, cousins, uncles, aunts, and siblings all played integral roles in assisting with childcare."* Parent A's remarks reinforce the idea that Nigerian approaches to parenting theory and practice differ markedly from the predominant perceptions of parenting in UK culture. Participants noted that in the UK, individuals tend to "mind their own business," which results in a lower likelihood of publicly correcting children's behavior. Conversely, in Nigeria, any observer who notices a child's misbehavior or difficulty is likely to intervene immediately to guide or correct the child. In the UK context, however, witnessing a child's misbehavior often leads to deliberate non-intervention due to concerns about how one's actions might be misinterpreted and uncertainty regarding how the parent might react to such involvement.

"I recall an incident on a bus on my way to work, where I observed a group of teenagers creating a disturbance by shouting, making various noises, stamping their feet, and even vaping clandestinely. I was extremely frustrated by the disruption yet felt powerless to intervene. Ultimately, the bus driver had to stop the bus, get up on board, and issue a stern warning, after which the noise subsided almost immediately, and calm was restored. In contrast, in a Nigerian context, an adult or parent would likely have intervened directly to stop such behavior."

The Nigerian community in the UK provides parental support through organizations such as the Nigerian Youth Organization for Christians and the Arabic Learning Institute for Muslims. However, British peer influences may foster behaviours that undermine parental authority. Participant M recounted how she depended on the Nigerian community to help discipline her children, noting that a fellow Nigerian parent might intervene to correct her child's misbehavior a practice that reinforces a communal approach to discipline. In contrast, her child's British friends often encourage him to question or resist this collective form of control, which conflicts with established social norms. In keeping with their Nigerian upbringing, participants expressed strong support for a "large community" approach to parenting, emphasizing communal child-rearing. This model posits that an extended community not only offers greater protection for children but also promotes values such as respect, sharing, and compassion while reducing antisocial behavior outside the home. Implementing this approach would require the public, especially neighbors and individuals, to share confined spaces like buses and trains to adopt a collective attitude towards the care of all children. Essentially, it embodies the belief that "the protection of children is a collective obligation." In Nigeria, it is commonly said that "every adult is a parent." However, fostering this large community model poses significant challenges within contemporary British cultural contexts.

Theme 4: Perception of deviant behaviour

Nigerian parents may apply different cultural standards when identifying what constitutes deviant behaviour, which may contrast with broader societal norms in the UK. Actions such as challenging the authority of elders, adopting certain fashion styles, or criticizing figures of authority may be viewed as inappropriate or disrespectful within Nigerian culture, whereas these behaviours are often more accepted or even encouraged in the UK as expressions of individuality. This cultural disconnect can lead to frustration and a sense of diminished parental authority. For instance, Participant H voiced concern over his teenage daughter's clothing choices, viewing them as inappropriate and indicative of disrespect.

"The saying 'you are addressed by the way you dress' is a well-known proverb in Nigeria. I cannot permit my daughter to adopt the local style of dress here—not to criticize their choices, but because my cultural and religious values forbid such attire. In my culture, garments that reveal certain parts of the body are unacceptable; modesty is a deeply ingrained value that must be upheld."

Although these judgments might be perceived as typical in the UK, he viewed them as a departure from the modesty and decency expected in Nigerian society. This divergence led to persistent familial conflicts, with the daughter feeling misunderstood and the father experiencing a perceived lack of respect. According to Akers et al. (1989) social learning theory, associations with deviant peers significantly influence individual behavior. A substantial body of research demonstrates that exposure to inadequate parenting increases the likelihood that adolescents will form relationships with delinquent peers. Moreover, friendship patterns tend to persist over time, meaning that those who associate with antisocial peers during adolescence often continue to do so in early adulthood, serving as strong indicators of future criminal and antisocial behavior (Akers et al., 1989). Consequently, antisocial friendships may mediate the relationship between poor parenting and criminal behavior in later life. Additionally, the threat of being "returned home" is sometimes used as a deterrent for children who exhibit misbehavior. Parent C stated:

"I am considering sending my son to Nigeria after receiving complaints from his teachers regarding his behavior at school. In Nigeria, his grandparents as well as his aunts, uncles, and other relatives will ensure he is well cared for, and I will provide an adequate monthly allowance to cover his maintenance and educational needs. I believe he has become too comfortable here and has taken for granted the privileges available, especially when compared to the hardships experienced in Nigeria. Once he reaches a certain age and demonstrates improved behavior, he will return."

The execution of such a threat depends on several factors: the severity of the issue, the resources available to repatriate children, the readiness of families overseas to welcome them, and the willingness of local families to allow their departure with the child's own resistance also play a role. Although many parents assert that only a few of these threats are carried out, the potential for employing "transnational discipline" remains a significant method for regulating children's behavior. This cyclical process is sometimes initiated by sending children to assist relatives in their home country and can serve as a strategy to realign a developmental trajectory that adults perceive as deviating

from its intended course (Miller Matthei, 1998). Regardless of the underlying rationale, the migration of children across borders helps preserve the historical and cultural continuity between migrants and the communities that send them (Soto, 1989). Moreover, the sustainability of certain international networks depends on the active engagement and presence of children. In deciding whether to leave children behind, bring them along, or send them back, parents are actively engaged in the deliberate process of shaping their children in alignment with their values and long-term aspirations. At times, families may temporarily deprioritize their children's immediate needs or appear to do so from an outsider's perspective in the interest of securing better future opportunities. Some instances of international migration involve deliberate, strategic planning, while others stem from constrained choices and limited alternatives. Nigerian parents may face cultural tensions as they struggle to adapt their traditional parenting approaches to align with British norms that emphasize children's rights, limit the use of corporal punishment, and advocate for greater autonomy. These cultural differences can challenge and potentially weaken traditional systems of parental authority and control.

Theme 5: Fear of losing children to the dominant culture

Cultural change occurs when individuals migrate from one country to another and settle, particularly as subsequent generations of immigrants are born and raised in the host country, ultimately adopting it as their place of origin and nationality. In families where parents or grandparents have spent most of their lives in their home country, while the children are born and raised in the host country, differences in cultural beliefs, values, and social practices can lead to conflicts, negotiations, adaptations, or even profound transformations. Deol (2013) highlights the stress experienced by first and second-generation South Asian families as they navigate the tension between developing an independent identity and adhering to the collectivist values of their familial and community ties, to which they remain deeply emotionally connected. The study found that some family members may be striving to preserve their cultural heritage by strictly following the beliefs, values, and social practices of their country of origin, which can become difficult to maintain in the host country's changed environment. At the same time, other members may attempt to adopt the cultural values and social practices of the ethnic majority in the host nation in ways that are neither appropriate nor feasible. How families handle these challenges may lead to the emergence of new cultural expressions.

Many Nigerian parents living in the United Kingdom express concerns about their children overly assimilating into the local culture, fearing that this could result in a detachment from their Nigerian heritage and values. This fear is often fueled by observations of behavioural issues in the UK, such as increased substance abuse (e.g., vaping) and involvement in criminal gangs. In response, parents may implement stricter rules, which could inadvertently drive their children further away. Participant E, for example, mentioned that he might impose an earlier curfew than his child's British peers, fearing that late-night outings could lead to negative consequences. This approach may ultimately cause children to feel isolated or rebellious, potentially prompting them to engage in hidden behaviours to avoid their parents' perceived control. Although the idea of a blended culture is often suggested as the ideal approach for immigrant family acculturation (Berry and Sabatier, 2011), some participants expressed that, if given the choice, they would prioritize teaching their children

Nigerian culture due to its perceived higher value. Having been raised with principles such as diligence, perseverance, and accountability, they believe these qualities have played a significant role in their success. As a result, they view it as beneficial for their children to embrace these Nigerian cultural values as well. Parent C stated:

"I would prefer to blend both cultures, with 80% Nigerian and 20% British. This approach really helped shape who I am today because my father was a disciplinarian, and I want to pass on the same parenting style to my children. Eventually, we will find a balance in navigating both cultures. Nigerian culture is often misunderstood, but it's what sets us apart from other cultures."

Control theory also examines the broader societal influences on parenting and behavior. Nigerian immigrants in the UK often face challenges in reconciling traditional Nigerian cultural expectations with British social norms and regulations. This dynamic can either strengthen or weaken the control mechanisms within families. Nigerian culture places a strong emphasis on respect and hierarchy, particularly regarding deference to authority figures within the family. Parents are viewed as the ultimate authority, and children are expected to comply without question. This societal norm aligns with Hirschi's argument that conformity to authority is crucial in controlling deviance.

Sub theme 5: Education and expectations

Education holds significant importance in Nigerian society, often regarded as the most dependable route to social mobility and economic success. This emphasis is deeply ingrained in Nigerian culture, where parents often view academic achievement as a crucial pathway to their children's future prosperity and stability. Nigerian immigrants strongly uphold these values, which often results in heightened educational aspirations for their children. The focus on education is not only a cultural inheritance but also a response to the challenges of migration, where success is frequently associated with educational and professional accomplishments. Parent B offered further insights into the UK educational system.

"Their educational system here is excellent; children are provided with essential resources to support their learning, which I truly admire. They have access to tablets and other technologies that enhance their research and learning skills. However, I believe there is too much reliance on technology. It would be beneficial if they also incorporated more traditional learning tools, like reading books in the library, into the educational process."

Another participant D also gave her comment that:

"In Nigeria, parents are viewed as authoritative figures rather than companions. I find it difficult to imagine talking to my father or mother about my boyfriend, as it is considered taboo or a distraction. The only acceptable topic of discussion is education, with everything else being off-limits. As a teenager, your main responsibilities are focusing on your studies and showing respect to your elders. However, here, having a boyfriend is considered normal in society, and you can balance your social life with your education."

Nigerian parents typically have high educational expectations for their children, which can lead to anxiety and stress within the family. Education is highly regarded in Nigerian society, and parents often push their children to achieve outstanding academic success, sometimes setting expectations that surpass those in the UK. This pressure can create stress for children as they try to balance their academic responsibilities with social and extracurricular commitments. Participant C shared his expectation that his child would pursue a career in medicine or law, professions highly esteemed in Nigerian society. However, when his child expressed an interest in a career in the arts, it presented a challenge. The father found it difficult to accept this choice, concerned it might lead to financial difficulties and societal discrimination within the Nigerian community. He stated:

"You see, as parents, we often choose the professions we want for our children. For example, I have a deep admiration for the medical profession, so I would ensure that my son or daughter becomes a doctor in the future. When you tell your friends or colleagues that your child is a doctor, there's a sense of respect and pride that comes with such a noble profession. It feels really good, you know..."

Sub theme 5: Cultural transmission and adaptability

Nigerian parents often face the challenge of balancing the teaching of their cultural values while adjusting to the norms of their new environment. This pressure can impact their parenting approach. Participants expressed deep concern about children "talking back," a concept rooted in the belief that children should show respect toward elders and authority figures. "Talking back" goes beyond mere conversation; it involves body language, attitude, eye contact, and tone of voice during interactions. In Nigeria, children are considered disrespectful if they contradict or argue with a parent or adult, as this is seen as questioning the adult's character, integrity, judgment, and authority.

"Can you imagine my 5-year-old daughter telling me that 'you're talking too much or too loudly; you need to lower your voice'? I was shocked, and had to compose myself (laughs), it was funny. I later told her not to speak to elderly people like that next time, her environment and culture have clearly influenced her." (Parent B)

In Nigeria, parenting is viewed as a deeply spiritual duty that is crucial to the fabric and continuity of the community. Children are expected to respect and obey adults, with the level of authority increasing with older siblings, for example, hold some authority over their younger ones. Within this framework, parents have complete control, both culturally and legally, over all aspects of child-rearing, especially discipline. Harsh disciplinary methods are often endorsed in Nigerian society to correct misbehavior. However, study participants expressed the challenges they face when attempting to apply these traditional disciplinary practices in a society that is less accepting of such harsh approaches. Many Nigerian parents residing in the UK strive to instill traditional values in their children, such as respect for elders, the importance of education, and a strong sense of community. However, the UK's culture, which emphasizes individuality and upholds children's rights and freedoms, can sometimes conflict with these values. This cultural clash may create confusion for both parents and children. Participant B shared a personal experience highlighting their firm insistence that their children show

respect to elders, a practice deeply ingrained in Nigerian culture. However, their children, influenced by their British peers, viewed this as unnecessary and even embarrassing. The parents had to navigate this cultural discrepancy by explaining the significance of these traditions, while also giving their children space to adapt.

"In the UK, I found that when you tell your child to do something, the first question they ask is 'why?' It felt like they were questioning my authority, which was surprising to me. At first, I thought the child was being rude and disrespectful, and it was part of the cultural shock I experienced. However, I later realized that this is just how the system works here. Over time, I had to adjust and learn a new approach to parenting" (Parent F).

All the parents in the study emphasized the need to adjust their perception of absolute parental authority after moving to the UK, like West African immigrant parents in New York who reported relinquishing some of their parental authority due to prevailing parenting norms and child-abuse laws that required them to adopt fewer authoritarian approaches to child-rearing (Rasmussen et al., 2017). Some parents adopted new parenting styles after reflecting on the effectiveness of the methods they experienced during their own upbringing. The distinction between yelling and calmly speaking to their children may have led them to reassess the effectiveness of each approach. In summary, these parents appear to have undergone shifts in their parenting perspectives and practices as a result of their ongoing interaction with UK society. This cognitive and behavioural adaptation highlights the ability of immigrant parents to evaluate and adopt cultural norms that best serve their families' needs. However, the study presents the perspectives of educated Nigerian immigrant parents on parenting styles and deviant behaviour, acknowledging that these views may not represent the broader Nigerian immigrant population due to differences in education, socio-economic status, and personal experiences. A key limitation is the exclusion of institutional stakeholders such as social workers and teachers, whose child-centered frameworks may contrast with Nigerian parenting norms. Their absence limits a holistic understanding of how societal expectations intersect with immigrant parenting practices. Additionally, the small sample size (12 instead of the intended 15-20) and participants' reluctance to disclose sensitive information further constrained the study. Despite these challenges, the research highlights the need for future studies to include both diverse parental backgrounds and professional perspectives to provide a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of parenting and child behaviour within the UK context.

This study addressed the core research questions concerning how Nigerian immigrant parents in the UK perceive and navigate traditional parenting styles in relation to managing deviant behaviour, and how they adapt within the British socio-cultural environment. The findings indicate that while most participants acknowledged the limitations of their traditional parenting styles in effectively curbing deviant behaviour, many were able to adopt and integrate elements of both Nigerian and Western parenting approaches. However, this integration process was fraught with challenges, particularly fears surrounding social services, the criminalization of physical chastisement, and uncertainty about behavioural norms within British society. Parents frequently expressed that behaviours deemed deviant in Nigerian culture were often considered acceptable in the UK, complicating their efforts to discipline their children in culturally appropriate ways. To navigate these complexities, many parents sought to

strike a balance by adopting non-physical disciplinary methods such as grounding or restricting access to electronic devices while maintaining their cultural values through community and religious support systems. This dual approach reflects an ongoing negotiation between cultural preservation and adaptation. The study also highlights the emotional toll on participants, underscoring the need for future researchers to be equipped to manage the ethical and emotional complexities inherent in studies involving immigrant populations. The researcher's own identity as a Nigerian immigrant added an additional layer of reflexivity and ethical consideration in both data interpretation and participant engagement. Importantly, these findings suggest that child welfare professionals must move beyond a narrow focus on corporal punishment and work to understand the broader cultural context of immigrant parenting practices. Engaging with parents in a culturally sensitive manner could help bridge gaps between legal frameworks and cultural norms, fostering trust and collaboration. Finally, the concept of deviant behaviour is socially and culturally constructed, and what Nigerian parents view as problematic may not align with British legal or social definitions. Without input from child safeguarding professionals, the study may lack a comprehensive view of how these contrasting interpretations are negotiated in practice. Future research should therefore include both parents and professionals to better understand and address the cultural dynamics influencing parenting and perceptions of deviance in immigrant communities.

Conclusion

This study addresses a largely underexplored and undertheorized area by examining how educated Nigerian immigrant parents perceive, experience, and integrate British parenting styles with their traditional practices. It reveals the complex tensions they face particularly around physical punishment amid fears of social service interventions based on Western parenting norms. Participants expressed anxiety over navigating British child-rearing expectations, often viewing both child welfare professionals and their own children as sources of stress due to perceived threats of legal consequences. These findings highlight the need for culturally informed approaches that respect Nigerian parenting values while ensuring child protection. The study urges practitioners such as social workers, educators, and policymakers to adopt a dual-cultural perspective when engaging with immigrant families, promoting a more nuanced understanding of their parenting decisions and challenges.

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest in this study. This study was conducted without any commercial or financial contributions from external parties, except for the authors personal efforts and resources, ensuring the absence of conflicts of interest.

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