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Child abuse and kinship guardianship: social work and indigenization perspectives in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Indigenization was an essential issue in social work; however, it was hardly explored in previous studies on child abuse related to kinship guardianship. This article aimed to describe the assessment of eligibility of the alternative caregiver and examine the intervention for the permanency plan of the abused child. The abused child was removed from Western culture to his grandfather living in the Eastern context. This study employed a qualitative approach with seventeen participants. Data-gathering techniques included document search, in-depth interviews, observation, and drawing analysis. The assessment of the eligibility of the grandfather that applied systems theory and indigenization showed that the grandfather was eligible as the alternative caregiver. At the intervention phase, an emphasis on indigenization led to guardianship -not adoption- as an option for the child's best interest. The implications for social work practice and education were that indigenization should be given more space, especially in multicultural societies; when alternative care is required, Indonesian and African social workers should encourage the kinship form, considering strong community ties as the social capital; future research should focus on indigenization in permanency plan for abused disabled children.

KEY TERMS: child abuse, indigenization, Indonesia, kinship guardianship, poverty, social work.

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INTRODUCTION

Social work profession's practice, theories, curricula, and values originated in the West. Because of these beginnings, many critics argue that the profession's underpinnings are incompatible with non-western orientations and need to be adjusted to local cultures. This process of alteration is called indigenization. Many social workers, primarily African and Asian, are concerned about this issue. Indigenization is social work response to incorporating cultural sensitivity and is crucial in practice, especially in alternative care for abused children. Alternative care addresses guardianship, adoption, and foster care issues when a family cannot safely care for a child. This study focuses on the guardianship. The article aims to describe the assessment of the eligibility of the alternative caregiver and examines the intervention stage of the permanency plan for the abused child. This study uses systems theory, a problem-solving model, and indigenization perspective. The research methodology employs a qualitative approach. The problem raised is unique because the abused child from Western culture is removed to his grandfather in the Eastern context. This article consists of an introduction, background, methodology, results and discussions, discussion conclusion, recommendations or implications, and conclusions.

BACKGROUND

Child abuse, social work and poverty.

Many tend to regard family as a social institution where love abounds; sadly, the reality is often the opposite. Referring to Global Report 2017, as many as 73.7 percent of Indonesian children aged 1-14 experienced discipline by violence and physical punishment at home. This was confirmed by data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (Gerintya, 2017). Social work practice with children experiencing abuse incorporates the professional code of ethics of social work, human rights, and children's rights. Related to the universal value of human rights, every human has the right to be free from violence (Ife, 2012). Social workers are defenders of children's rights to be free from violence for their well-being.

Physical abuse is defined by Miller-Perrin (2007) in a broad sense. 'Child Physical Abuse (CPA) is defined as visible injuries that last at least 48 hours. Children without visible injuries may also be considered abuse victims if they are substantially at risk for injuries and endangerment.'

Global data confirms that most cases of physical violence occur in low-income families. 'The international evidence about the relationship between poverty and child abuse and neglect is much stronger now than five years ago' (Nuffield Foundation, 2022). Although child abuse also occurs in families with higher incomes, child abuse rates are 5 (five) times higher for children in low-income families than those with higher socioeconomic status (www.dosomething.org/us/facts/). These organisations reveal global data and the comparison of child abuse rate between high- and low-income families. Study conducted in Malaysia shows that in the short run, poverty has a significant relationship with the number of reported child abuse cases (Yob et al., 2022). A study in Korea shows that 'the risk of child maltreatment during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic was significantly associated with male unemployment in Korea (Kim, 2021).

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

According to Greene (1999) and Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2018), 'social work's primary focus is people's social connections and relationships;' therefore, the system perspective is crucial to social work. This study uses systems theory as the main theoretical foundation, the problem-solving model in social work, and indigenization as a refining concept. The theory explains the relationship in family and community; indigenization leads to local dimensions; the model guides the assessment and intervention stages. They offer a robust framework for data gathering.

There are debates about systems theory. The proponents claim that systems theory provides social workers a tool for comprehending the interconnection of various complex elements, including physical, social, and psychological aspects. The approach offers guidance to social work assessment and intervention (Greene, 1999). Healey (2005) maintains that systems theories 'remain key conceptual frameworks for contemporary social work practice.'

However, Gallant and Thyer (1999) critique suggests that 'it hangs in the air without any substance, it cannot help in identifying the nature of the problem...the perspective's claim to be an assessment instrument is therefore spurious.' It would be challenging to see how the debates about systems theory are in this research's implementation of assessment.

According to Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2018), the social work problem-solving model consists of assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, termination, and follow-up. This study emphasizes the process of assessment and intervention stages. Termination and follow-up phases will be explored briefly in the end. Assessment is an

activity undertaken to identify the client's problems, strengths (resources), and needs by collecting relevant data. Intervention is the implementation of plans to achieve goals.

Indigenization is 'an adaptation process of Western social work practice theories so that they can become more suited to the local cultures in non-Western developing countries' (Ling, 2014; Gohori and Someya, 2021). Indigenization is integrating local tradition into mainstream social work practices and adapting mainstream approaches to fit the local context (Ling, 2014). It includes generating knowledge and practice models from the ground up, drawing on values, beliefs, customs, and cultural norms. In indigenization's terms, local culture is the primary source of knowledge to make social work practice more effective.

There are indigenous philosophies, theories, and practices from Africa called Ubuntu. Today Ubuntu is recognized internationally. It reflects a fantastic process. Usually social work from the West is practiced by non-Western social workers; nowadays, through Ubuntu, a change occurs: non-Western theory is also recognized by Western social work practitioners and educators. For example, we can see that the celebration of World Social Work Day in 2021 had a theme of "Ubuntu: I Am Because We Are". It also illustrates 'how social workers have successfully integrated Ubuntu's philosophy into developing community systems of social protection, child protection, and social justice' (<https://www.ifsw.org/>). Mugumbate and Chereni (2019) introduce an integrated framework of Ubuntu which exists at five levels: the individual, the family, the community, the environment, and the spirit. They are interrelated. The community's role is essential in African society (Olaore, 2021; Chilwalo, 2020). Nyerere introduces Ujamaa philosophy, derived from Ubuntu, means 'collectivity as opposed to individualism. The individual is part of the whole' (ASWNet, 2021).

Literature review

Research by Fahrudin and Yusuf (2016) notes that child abuse can affect personality development and later adult behavior. This impact confirms the fact that most perpetrators of domestic violence were physically and emotionally abused in their childhood (Nugroho et al, 2018). Child physical abuse incidence occurs more often among disadvantaged families. Research conducted by Lee and Goerge (1999) discovers that poverty is one of the robust predictors of child maltreatment. Crosson-Tower (2007) asserts that poverty causes families extreme stress. With this high pressure, parents find it more difficult to control their emotions, resulting in abuse. Poverty, lack of social support, and the stress of a single-earner and single-parent household all contribute to feelings of alienation and depression that can generate aggressive responses in a child (Gardner, 2003). Parton (2014) argues that addressing child abuse issues must involve a policy with a child's rights perspective as its core.

Several studies have explored the impact of alternative care on children. Children with more moves in foster care without siblings had a higher chance of experiencing problems. In contrast, children placed with siblings in foster care had fewer problems (Rolock and White, 2017). White (2016) identifies problems after adoption or guardianship, e.g., child behavior problems and family adjustment. Carers who are better prepared regarding the child's needs are more able to support the child, which reduces the risk of placement instability (Brown et al., 2019). The current study focuses on guardianship. A Special Guardianship Order (SGO) is a formal court order which permanently places a child who cannot return to live with their birth parent and for whom adoption is unavailable. It gives the carer long-term parental responsibility for a child's upbringing. The carer could be a grandparent, a close relative, or a family friend.

Some previous studies have emphasized kinship alternative care, the placement of children with their relatives. Results show that kinship arrangement is better for the child's development than non-kinship placement (Rosenthal and Hegar, 2016; Winokur & Holtan, 2018). Matching placement services to the needs of kinship caregivers is a crucial issue (Scannapieco and Hegar, 2002). It gives children a sense of stability and a positive relationship with a caregiver.

Moreover, several studies have been conducted on social work, child protection in general (without specific reference to child abuse), and indigenization, particularly from an Islamic perspective (Ahmed et al., 2017; Khan, 2017; Rotabi et al., 2017; Ragab, 2016; Abdullah, 2015; Ridho, 2015). However, further research on indigenization related to kinship guardianship for abused children is needed to refine social work. Therefore, the current study aims to describe the assessment and intervention stages in dealing with child abuse, which are led to the kinship guardianship option based on indigenization and system perspectives. My expertise in poverty and child welfare makes me concerned about the placement of poor, abused child in a safe environment.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive type to obtain in-depth data from research participants. The qualitative research emphasized socially constructed processes, realities, and cultural meaning and focused on the interactive events and the intimate relationship between the researcher and those being studied. The researcher could see the detailed social realities by understanding the participants' points of view related to ideas and thoughts in the specific social context. Qualitative data consisted of actual events documentation,

recording the participants' statements (words, gestures, and tone), specific behavior observation, and written documents search. Therefore, in qualitative research, quotations of the participants' statements were crucial; this data was highly meaningful. These all were regarded as concrete aspects of the world (Neuman, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Canterbury Social Services (in England) requested the Indonesian social worker's assistance in assessing an abused child's grandfather as a prospective alternative caregiver. The child custody litigation took place in the UK Court. The author obtained permission to publish the case; the use of pseudonyms followed social work ethics and the research's confidentiality principle. The research was mainly located in Gala Village (East Java, Indonesia) where the grandfather lives. The research participants were selected using the purposive sampling method. Before meeting the participants, researcher visited the Village Head and the Religious Leader as the respected persons, requesting their permission to research in the village. It was part of the cultural values. The participants gave oral consent and understood the issues of voluntary participation, research aims, no-risk involvement, and confidentiality principle. The selected participants were 17 (seventeen) people.

Data-gathering techniques included document search, in-depth interviews, observation, and drawing analysis. A semi-structured interview guide was prepared. With the qualitative research format, the researcher built a relationship with the participants and did probing; for example, the grandfather stated that his two stepchildren were excited about the idea of his abused grandson living with them. When the researcher interviewed his two stepchildren about this aspect (for triangulation purposes), they expressed excitement. Further, the two children were asked to draw pictures of the grandchild with his new family. Their drawings confirmed the previous verbal and non-verbal data. All data recorded using a recorder and documented using a logbook was well managed and stored securely. Data was presented and confirmed to the participants. There was feedback from the grandfather that his wife had the idea to care for his abused grandchild. Then, data was processed through data classification and coding. The data was interpreted and analyzed with theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections will present data and discuss poverty as a broader context of child abuse and several themes under the Assessment and Intervention subheadings. Poverty is discussed to show that it is closely related to child abuse incidence.

A brief description of child abuse incidence

The social worker of Canterbury Social Services, England, finds wounds and bruises on Willy. He only lives with his mother (Sarah) in a tiny, dirty apartment. Willy's mother is a single parent with Social Security benefits as her only income. Sarah lacks a supportive social network and family. The medical examination proves that Willy, age three, is physically abused by his biological mother. Then, Willy is placed in foster care.

His grandfather remarried and has lived in Indonesia for nearly ten years. Harry lives with his wife Diah and her two children (Nisa and Tia) from her previous marriage. Usually Harry visits Sarah and Willy in England for holidays. Harry maintains contact with Willy after he is placed in foster care through video calls regularly. When Harry and his family visit Canterbury, Willy looks happy staying with his grandfather. This is real case study.

Child abuse: poverty as a broader context

This section explains why poverty can be one of the contributing factors to child abuse. With poor economic conditions, Sarah and Willy live in a tiny, dirty apartment. As claimed by Crosson-Tower (2007), living in poverty causes high pressure. With this high pressure, parents find it more difficult to control their emotions, resulting in abuse. Stress caused by lack of access to resources is one of the explanations for a higher rate of child abuse in low-income families than in high-income families. Furthermore, Sarah lacks a supportive social network and family. Poverty, lack of social support, and the stress of single-parent households all contribute to feelings of alienation and depression that can increase aggressive responses to the child (Gardner, 2003). This current study is consistent with research conducted by Lee and Goerge (1999), showing that poverty is one of the robust predictors of child maltreatment.

The Assessment phase

The system theory suggests that a person is part of a family and a larger community. It provides social workers with a tool to understand interconnections of the case's physical, social, and psychological aspects (Robbins et al, 2006; Greene, 1999). Based on this theory as the main framework, grandfather's eligibility is assessed

Relationships within the family

According to Greene (1999), the systems theory suggests that ‘...to understand a family, it is necessary to examine the relationships among family members...’. The following section will discuss the relationships in Harry's family.

The interdependent and close relationship

This research finds that Diah, Nisa, and Tia depend financially on Harry, as Diah earns no income. However, as Harry is a foreigner in Indonesia, he primarily relies on his family members to have a sense of affection and security. Being with a family is very important, especially at his age, and Diah and her kids are his only family in Indonesia. It can be stated that family members have interdependent relationships (Greene, 1999). The family also has fun traditions, such as playing their favorite games. Tia expresses very positive feelings about her family life. Furthermore Nisa maintains: ‘Harry and Diah's relationship is harmonious; their disagreements are minor.’ The family watches movies together, then Harry explains the film's meanings. They also go to the beach on weekends. It appears that the relationship among the family members is warm, and they are closely knit.

Rules and roles of family members

In families, individuals take on ‘roles’ that enable the system to function and carry out various tasks (Greene, 1999; Lesser and Pope, 2007). Two types of role systems operate in families: Instrumental roles are related to socioeconomic duties, such as caretaking, wage-earning, and household management; Expressive roles deal with emotional tasks. Harry plays instrumental roles in socioeconomic responsibilities, such as caretaking, wage-earning, and household management. Diah also plays an instrumental role, focusing on caretaking and household management. In the local culture, there are more traditional role definitions and social norms, such as that a wife must respect her husband and serve all of his needs. The two girls play expressive roles related to emotional tasks, such as meeting parental expectations. The parents encourage the two kids to be ‘good children’ by obeying their parents, helping their mother do housework, and diligently studying.

Based on the interviews and observations, the family has rules, such as respect for privacy, politeness, and good nutrition. Moreover, the couple applies a reward and punishment system for doing good and bad things (creating norms) and meeting expectations. If Tia shouts at her mother, Diah punishes her by ignoring her and keeps quiet until her child apologizes. In local culture, the norms suggest that a child must be respectful, polite, and obedient to parents. Shouting at parents is viewed as a form of impoliteness and disrespect. Further, Diah states:

I am worried about Willy's bad eating habits. He overeats junk food. Nevertheless, I am optimistic he will quickly adapt to his new family's values and rules. I intend to support and make Willy feel loved and gradually become more responsible and independent.’ (Diah).

The social system, including the family system, requires its members to adhere to rules (Greene, 1999). Harry and Diah maintain a structured family life where the established values are enforced; some rules must be obeyed. If Willy joined the family, he would join a system with regulations already in place; good eating habits are a priority. From the system perspective, the effort to influence Willy's habits is an attempt to balance the system.

Resources and social support to the family

Related to indigenization, the relationship with extended family and community members in Indonesia is close; therefore, they are also assessed to understand Harry's social system.

Social support

Harry and Diah's social network, community members, extended family (Diah's mother and uncle), and friends support the couple's decision. They contribute ideas about supporting the family and Willy through visiting frequently, providing respite care, and other activities for the children. The community member participants describe the couple's positive behavior:

Harry and Diah are a good couple and affectionate with children. I can feel it, especially when we take our grandchildren to their home.’ (Mr. Amir).
‘The village children often play sports at Harry's place. They are friendly. They always attend the villager's events’ (Mr. Ahmad)

The teachers of Nisa and Tia confirm that:

The family is actively involved in school and community activities and well respected in the community. Diah is active and supportive of her children. The kids are happy they will have a brother' (Wati and Hira).

Moreover, a participant says that,

Diah is a person who always respects other people even though they are of lower socioeconomic status. She is always helpful. I support her decision to look after Willy, and I will help her when required' (Ms. Marni)

Ealdama (2019) asserts that the main indigenized features of South East Asian culture include harmony and collectiveness or communitarianism. In Indonesian culture, communal ties still exist, especially in villages. It represents Ubuntu: 'I am because we are.' In Africa, Ubuntu as indigenous philosophy is integrated into developing community systems of child protection. The community's essential role has been explored by several African authors, like Mugumbate and Chereni (2019), Olaore (2021), and Chilwalo (2020). This research is also relevant to Ujamaa, the other African philosophy, where collectivity is crucial; 'The individual is part of the whole.'

The relationship between Harry's nuclear family, extended family, and community members is solid and supportive. It complies with Greene's statement (1999) that it is crucial to determine how well the family fits with the environment in conducting the assessment. Harry and Diah participate in communal events. The research participants of community members speak of Harry teaching English to the village children. Harry's family can be categorized as an 'Adaptive Family.' This family has the following aspects (Greene, 1999):

positive, dynamic interactions with external environments to optimize their internal organization and communication. The Adaptive system produces effective responses to the demands of the environment.'

As part of an adaptive family, Willy would feel accepted by the community, and it can support Willy's adjustment to his new environment.

Available resources

A crucial resource/strength in caring for Willy is the financial aspect. According to an informant (Harry's close friend):

Harry used to work as an expatriate in many countries with a high salary. A financial consultant has managed his income and expenditures; therefore, until now, his financial condition has been excellent...much richer than me.' (Anton).

Based on the professional diagnosis, Willy experiences Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder and speech and language delays. The current study is consistent with research conducted by Fahrudin and Yusuf (2016), which identifies that child abuse can affect personality development. The grandfather has sufficient financial resources to cover these treatments' costs and fulfill the family's present and future needs.

Nisa and Tia intend to give tremendous support to Willy. They are enthusiastic, knowing that Willy will live with them. This support is a crucial resource. The parents understand that they must reassure their daughters and help them understand that Willy has special needs as he adapts to a new life/environment.

Harry and Diah have other resources; their house has facilities for family gatherings and sports. These physical home conditions comply with the national standard of childcare as regulated by the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Regulation of Social Minister no. 30/HUK/2011). In Indonesia, the law ensures that a caregiver must facilitate child development (Law on Child Protection, no. 35, 2014).

Indonesian local culture and policies

The Indonesian and British social workers evaluate the above data with the child's best interest. They conclude that Harry (grandfather) is eligible as Willy's caregiver. This study supports previous research indicating that the kinship arrangement is better for the child's development than non-kinship. (Rosenthal and Hegar, 2016; Winokur; Holtan, 2018).

However, a question is raised: What alternative care is most appropriate, adoption or guardianship? To come to one option, the social workers from the two countries seek to explore more the indigenous aspects, namely, the Indonesian local culture and policy (laws).

According to a participant, Ms. Puni (a Child Protection Authority of the Ministry of Social Affairs) :

The local cultural values are considered when making the Indonesian government regulations on adoption and guardianship (Ms. Puni)

Based on the interviews with Ms. Puni and Mr. Taufik (an Indonesian cultural and Islamic figure):

In Indonesian local cultural values, grandparents are not allowed to adopt their grandchildren because they are of the same blood lineage. Adoption is prohibited because it would affect the inheritance, as children are 'the second level' and grandchildren are 'third level'. If grandparents adopt the grandchildren, it would be confusing and create conflict when they become adults. The adoption cannot eliminate 'nazab' which consists of civil and identity rights.' (Ms. Puni and Mr. Taufik).

Indonesia has Government Regulations on adoption and guardianship. It complies with Parton (2014) who argues that addressing child abuse must involve policy. According to the Government Regulation Republic of Indonesia No. 54, 2007 on the Implementation of Child Adoption, Harry and Willy have fulfilled most of the requirements for the adoption procedure. For example, the primary priority is given to a child under six (Willy is three years old) and neglected. The prospective adoptive parent must be healthy, married, and financially stable. Harry fulfills these requirements. However, referring to the Government Regulation on Adoption, Willy cannot be adopted by Harry, because Willy is his grandchild. While, regarding the Government Regulation Republic of Indonesia No. 29/2019 on the Requirements and Procedure of Guardian appointment, Harry fulfilled all requirements. For example, Harry is Willy's family (grandfather). He is healthy, caring, ethical, has a supportive wife and stepdaughters, and is financially stable.

Data obtained from the research participants that grandparents cannot adopt their grandchild, reflects the Indigenization perspective in Indonesia, an Eastern country. Meanwhile, in non-conventional views or Western countries, the blood relationship option does not matter. Kirst-Ashman (2010) informs, 'the adoption is undertaken either by people related to a child by blood or by unrelated adoptive parents.' She gives one example of blood-related adoption, where a grandparent adopts his daughter's child.

Furthermore, based on the assessment previously described, this article argues that systems theory is an appropriate assessment instrument to assess the eligibility and suitability of the grandfather as an alternative caregiver. Thus, this study does not comply with Gallant and Thyer (1999), whose critique suggests that the systems theory cannot be an assessment instrument.

The Intervention Phase

Intervention and indigenization: decision making

This intervention stage covers the decision-making and advocacy of the decision (guardianship) to the Court. The permanency plan is prepared in England. Guardianship is an appropriate decision considering indigenization. The decision is also discussed with Harry and his wife; they are happy with the decision of guardianship. Willy shows his happiness about living with his grandparents. As the guardian is a grandparent, it is called kinship guardianship. The British social worker demonstrates cross-cultural sensitivity. Understanding the Indonesian local values and policy, she advocates this option to the Court of England. The Court accepts this plan.

The joint decision of the British and Indonesian social workers for the guardianship option demonstrates how indigenization and cultural sensitivity can influence the decision-making of permanency planning in child protection; this is similar to research conducted by Ealdama (2019) and Ling (2014).

Further intervention

The Indonesian social worker provides Willy and his new family further support after Willy arrives with Harry and his wife in Indonesia.

The social worker assists the family with the registration and documents for obtaining a permit for Willy to live in Indonesia, as Harry and Diah are unfamiliar with the Indonesian immigration system. The social worker mobilizes her network and available resources in Jakarta (Indonesia's capital city) for the family to complete registration and the permit. It is essential for the completion of the permanency plan. Moreover, the social worker facilitates the family's connection to psychosocial treatment services for Willy. Harry and his wife decide which of the benefits of Willy's treatment. They choose the clinic which is closest to their home with the expert having experience in working on attachment problems. Harry and Diah invite a therapist to do speech therapy at their house. The social worker gives an ample space for the couple to make decisions which are the best options; it seems that the social worker applies client's self-determination as a social work principle. Harry and Diah also

ask for information about child-rearing, the child's development, and needs. These informative materials and discussions support increasing their competence in parenting roles. In social work, enhancing the client system's capacity is crucial to the intervention phase. Thus, the social worker carries dual roles as a broker and educator. This research supports Brown et al. (2019), who assert that carers better prepared for the child's needs are more able to support the child.

Termination and follow-up

During the first three months of Willy's arrival in Indonesia, the British social worker still communicates with the Indonesian social worker, Harry, Diah, and Willy. This intended to evaluate the intervention results and monitor Willy's conditions and development (Walker and Horner, 2020). After this period, as Willy is making a healthy adjustment into the family, and Harry/ Diah adapt to their new roles as parents to Willy, the British social worker terminates her relationship with the family. This study differs from White's research (2016) identifying problems with the child or family adjustment after guardianship. The research results are different because, in the current study, the guardian is a biological grandfather who has interacted frequently with his grandchild. The grandson was also happy when he was informed that he would live with his grandfather. Therefore, there are no adjustment problems like in White's research. It seems that siblings also play an important role in preventing the problems. In Willy's case, Nisa and Tia treat Willy as their sibling, a biological brother. Willy plays with them and gets support. This current study is consistent with research conducted by Rolock and White (2017), which discovers that children placed with siblings in foster care have fewer problems.

The Indonesian social worker remains involved in supporting and monitoring the family. In social work, all the actions undertaken after the intervention and termination phases are called the follow-up or after-care phase (Kirst-Ashman and Hull, 2018). Willy has entered school in Gala village, together with his sisters. He has progressed in language development and speaks English, Indonesian, and Javanese. When Harry picks up Willy's school report document, the reports about Willy's behavior from his teachers are positive, stating that he is the most helpful, disciplined, and well-behaved child in the class. Likewise, his school grades are good. The research-based social work assessment and intervention through the follow-up phase have shown good-practice evidence to uphold a decision to close the case. The relationship between the social worker and Harry's family is warm; they still send her videos and pictures of what Willy has done lately, and she does respond positively. This continued communication is similar with research conducted by Ferguson and Kelly (2022), stating that 'the relationships are at the heart of this.'

A child of a poor family and previously abused, at present, is a happy child who grows and thrives in a supportive, safe family and community environment with his grandfather....

In summary, based on the Discussion above, this research contributes to social work; it fills the gap in previous studies. The findings show that the assessment and intervention deal with child abuse through kinship guardianship, which is chosen using the indigenization perspective. Moreover, previously, the system theory was criticized that it could not be used as an assessment instrument; in this study, however, it helps assess the eligibility of the prospective caregiver. The theory guides the assessment to explore, for example, the relationship, roles, and rules within the family, social support, and the relationship with the community.

CONCLUSIONS

This study highlighted how social work assessment and intervention were the foundation for decision-making in a permanency plan for the abused child. It demonstrated that systems theory was instrumental in assessing the strengths of each subsystem as support for the plan. Based on the assessment, the grandfather could be an alternative caregiver. The guardianship option was chosen based on indigenization (Indonesian local culture and policies), showing the connectedness of micro and macro (policy) levels. At the intervention stage, the social worker also supported the client system by mobilizing resources for the child and capacity enhancement for the guardian. Termination and follow-up phases were conducted after the assessment and intervention stages. The assessment and intervention above represent the biopsychosocial nature of social work for the attainment of child's well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS OR IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

- When alternative care is needed, Indonesian and African social workers should encourage the kinship form, considering strong community ties as the social capital of these societies.
- Future research should focus on social work and indigenization related to permanency plans for abused disabled children.

- Implications for global social work. Social work practice and education should give more space to indigenization, especially in multicultural societies; its application is essential for culturally-sensitive and effective assessment and intervention.

DECLARATIONS

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