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Domestic violence against children

- Views from social workers

Yuxin Wang
Mengbing Zhang

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Handledare: Anders Hydén
Examinator: Fereshteh Ahmadi

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Authors: Yuxin Wang & Mengbing Zhang

Abstract

Domestic violence against children is well known on the social problem aspect, and Sweden has become the first country clarifying its stance on physical punishment and child abuse since established “anti-spanking” law in 1979. The purpose of this research was to investigate how Swedish social workers deal with the issue about domestic violence against children. The research was developed with hermeneutics approach and ecological systems theory, and carried out by four respondents from Social Services Gävle. With the answers claimed by the respondents, constitute the results and conclusions, that is all kinds of tackling methods about child abuse should be regulated by laws, and cooperate with police or citizens comprehensively, especially in the period of investigation. This paper might be a general pattern, but we do hope it could make people rethinking about child abuse issues, that probably may reduce a little bit pressure to children in the future.

Key words: child abuse, domestic violence against children, social worker, law

Forward

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Child abuse is a major public health problem and social welfare issue all around the world. As stated in the Convention of Children's rights (Art 19:1 in the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN 2011):

States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Violence against children is a violation of children's right. However children's corporal punishment was frequently happened in both schools and homes, lots of families didn't provide right parenting and couldn't aware of the risk of child family violence. A report from United Nations claims that only 2.4% of the world's children are legally protected from corporal punishment in all setting, including schools and homes (Annerbäck et al., 2010b, p.1229). Therefore authors decided to explore this subject.

The authors explored child protection related laws and related organizations in Sweden. In 1979 Sweden published "anti-spanking" law and became the First country clarifying its stance on physical punishment and child abuse. (Annerbäck, Wingren, Svedin&Gustafsson, 2010b, p.1231; Lindell & Svedin, 2004, p.17; Durrant, 1999, p.435).

In Sweden, there are several organizations working on child abuse filed, for instance, Children's Ombudsman, BRIS and Social Services. Three organizations are working on different levels of protecting children system.

Ombudsman is an international organization which has offices in a majority of countries including Sweden. Children's Ombudsman is a branch department of Ombudsman, which concerned with matters affecting the rights and interests of children. This international organization provides information interchanging between countries. BRIS (Barnens Rät i Samhället, translated as Children's Right in Society) is a non-governmental organization whose goal is 'strengthen the rights of children and young people and improve their living conditions, which is working under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a guide' (BRIS homepage, page61) .

Social Services (Socialtjänst in Swedish) is a governmental organization of strengthen the capability and opportunities for social and culture participation of vulnerable group. Strengthen the protection of children at risk is one of the important contents of its goal. When there is a report of child abuse coming to the police, Social Services need to investigate the reported case. Social Services also have responsibility for “providing support and help to the children and their families either by offering assistance from the department or by referring to other institutions” (Annerbäck, 2011, p16). In this research, the authors had interviews with Social Services Gävle, which is an regional office of Social Services.

This research of children domestic violence is a serious social problem in nowadays, which needs we social work profession learners and social workers take a deep explore about how to control and prevent the deterioration about this issue, and this problem even should be put more attention by the general public. As this study is complicated in some way, the authors would unfold the research in the following chapters after these brief introductions.

1.2 Aim and research questions

Since child abuse is one of the most serious social problems and children rights should be put more effort on, and also Sweden is one of the most developed countries in social work profession, especially in human rights protection, thus inspired the authors to take a deeper understanding in this research. This study purposed to explore three orientations in order to reach the aim: first is related law and national child protection system; second is the organization’s management of child abuse; third is social workers practical experience and professionalism.

The aim of this study is to find out how Swedish social workers manage issues about children domestic violence.

1. What’re social workers’ views and how do they know about prevention of family violence?
2. How social workers remain professional when the suspected perpetrator is a parent, and what kind of service can they provide?
3. In a condition of child abuse, what would the social workers do to stop or prevent deteriorating?

1.3 Essay disposition

There are six chapters in this essay: the first chapter Introduction presents basic information of the whole study, including field background, research aim and question setting. Second chapter Early Research summarized previous literatures into themes which relevant to the study. In Method part, is the research process, including philosophy position, method of selecting early researches and samples, and analysis tool. The result and its interpretation are in chapter five Results, and Analysis part is in chapter six. The results are summarized into four themes and analyzed with system ecological perspective and hermeneutics approach. The last chapter is Discussion. In this chapter, the main findings of the study are discussed and compared with previous research. There are researchers' suggestions for further study as well.

2. Earlier research

Family violence against children is not a new issue. There were lots of researches explored this issue with different methods and perspectives. For instance, a population based research to examine prevalence rates of child physical abuse perpetrated by a parent or caretaker (Annerbäck et al, 2010b); Lindell & Svedin (2005) made a four years follow-up research to investigate the extent and content of mental health services to physically abused children; Tingberg et al. (2008) made a qualitative research to identify clinical care of abused children.

Previous researches provide rich materials of this field, and we summarized related information into four themes in these chapters. And in methodology part, researchers explained how those earlier researches are selected.

2.1 Situation of child abuse, both global and Sweden

Child abuse is an international issue. It's difficult to compare prevalence rates of child abuse between countries, since different studies use different measurements. But data from previous literatures present how serious the issue is. A report from United Nations claims that only 2.4% of the world's children are legally protected from corporal punishment in all settings, including schools and homes. (Annerbäck et al., 2010b, p.1229)

In 1979, Sweden published Anti-spanking Law banning corporal punishment of children. It is the first country to do so. (Annerbäck et al., 2010b, p.1231; Lindell & Svedin, 2004, p.17; Durrant, 1999, p.435) Since then the violence against children had been prohibited. Therefore, the percentage from Sweden is lower than this global statistic. Annerbäck et al. (2010b) carried out a population-based survey faced to all pupils in three grades in school in Södermanland County, Sweden. Totally 8494 pupils participated in. 15.2% of all children reported they had been hit by their parent or caretaker, and 41.9% of those children had been hit more than once (Annerbäck et al., 2010b, p.1231).

Even though, the number of reports to police about domestic violence against children quadrupled between the beginning of the 1980s and the end of the 1990s. And this number does not present tendency of decrease (Annerbäck, Svedin & Gustafsson, 2010a, p. 174).

2.2 Social workers' practices on child abuse

In previous literature, it is found that reports often failed to mention domestic violence as an issue to be considered. There are two strategies for dealing with domestic issues ("domestic issues" here include both witnessing and experiencing violence of a child). One is reporting domestic violence case but not named, the other is to name other issue as problem, and concentrate on it rather than children's witnessing or experiencing violence (Humphreys, 1999, p.80). In Lindell & Svedin's (2005) four years follow-up research, it is found very few children (six children of all samples, which are 5% of the study) get an individual treatment. The research found the abused focused therapy is rare (Lindell & Svedin, 2005, p.183).

But not all files tried to minimize domestic violence. Humphreys (1999) found "there appears to be a marked trend over the last two years to name some issues of domestic violence more directly (Humphreys, 1999, p.82)."

Social work explores the issue rather late than other health care profession (Nicky, 1997, p.135). Social work practice can benefit from other profession. Tingberg (2008) studied the child abuse with nursing perspective. The study presents: there exists emotional ambivalence among care workers of abused children, since they were contradictory roles of both policing and nursing. Their role is not to judge the parents but to take care for the abused children in the best way. Tingberg thought clear guidelines, for both caring abused children and reporting domestic violence against children could be helpful for care workers to keep professional during tackling. And having knowledge about the entire management of a child abuse crime would be good for practice in child abused issues (Tingberg, 2008, p.2722). Even though Tingberg's research is not particular in exploring social work profession, it is a good lesson for social workers.

2.3 Prevention

In section 2.1, we have seen that people try to minimize family violence and child abuse cases. It could be easier for protecting children if people could speak openly about the existence of those cases in community.

Annerbäck et al. (2010a) thought prevention of the child abuse should consider several areas: schools, parent groups, and refugee reception. Strengthening parenting and families is the basic way to prevent risk of child abuse. These include enhancing parenting knowledge, attending to parenting education and strengthen the marriage.

From this way, parents could learn scientific parenting method from classes and realize risking behaviors, and also could provide more stable growing environment of the child.

“Children’s right not to be subjected to violence should be an integrated part of conversations in the schools when discussing values in the society and human rights (Annerbäck et al., 2010a, p.166).” Schools should have enough communication with children’s family, providing enough information of correct parenting. At same time, schools have to give attention to child abuse issues regularly and be aware of possible child abuse. At last, the refugee reception, it is important to address new refugees with respect for their individual differences and difficulty. And at the same time, social workers have to convey to those children that our society has decided to repudiate violence against children (Annerbäck et al., 2010a, p.166-167).

Lindell and Svendin (2004) argued that child abuse prevention programs are an important way to prevent child abuse. There is the necessary developing and sustaining prevention programs or the programs will have less effective than it should be. For instance, the home nurse visitation, one of child abuse prevention programs, had been found to be less effective when domestic violence is present (Lindell & Svendin, 2004, p.2)

2.4 Child protection system, national policy and law

As mentioned in section 2.1, Sweden passed a law abolishing all kinds of corporal punishments of children in 1979, and Sweden was the first country to do so. Even though supporting corporal punishment is not stabled (Durrant, 1999, p. 438-439), it plays an important role in protecting children.

In Sweden, there is a mandatory reporting system whenever a professional social worker suspects a child in the situation of being abused or neglected, and any reports made to police must be recorded in the official statistic, no matter how minor they are (Cocozza, 2007, p.23; Durrant, 1999, p. 439; Lindell & Svedin, 2004, p.15). The social services department should get involved through the report according to Social Services Act to protect the child from further abuse and explore other needs for supporting or treatment (Lindell & Svedin, 2004, p.15).

This system is useful for both preventing child abuse and stopping abusing at the beginning. But not all countries have mandatory reporting system. Hiatt et al (cited in Cocozza, 2007) collected data from 47 countries about ways of handling child maltreatment, 22 counties having mandatory legislation, 13 counties having voluntary and 12 countries having neither (Cocozza, 2007, p. 23).

3. Theoretical Perspective

3.1 Ecological systems theory

Ecological system theory is focusing on the connections between families and their effective functioning, to see if it is harmonious between individuals and their surroundings. Systems are existing within the boundaries of both physical and mental energies, and this boundary idea makes the relationships clear between the networks of the clients (Payne, 2009, p. 143-144).

According to the ecological development theory in ecological systems, the three levels' connections could be explained for a better understanding about the relationships of individuals and the big environment. The three levels developments are summarized as: micro-level, this is always been seen as an individual level, and in the case of domestic violence against children, the abused children carrying inner psychological problems and physical damages are the micro-level in the related social problems; meso-level, which could be briefly summarized as environmental interactions. In this study, meso-level exists in the connections between people and groups which are in the condition of domestic violence or dealing with such kind of issues; macro-level, briefly speaking, it is the value, norms and laws in society, in the other way it also could be seen as the origins of social problems and social political interventions. These three levels interpret how the systems exist within boundaries of individual clients and environment networks.

Systems theory emphasizes how relationships and interactions come out, as well as details and outcomes. It may also be helpful for figuring out how systems are interacting with each other to create problems for an unexpected reason. For example, bad relationships within a family may reduce the influence of the family in helping a child to overcome difficulties at school or the other social occasions.

System theory deals with the situation of working with others; it explains the influence and effect on the clients with a connection between the families and networks on the individuals (Payne, 2009, p. 146-147).

Ecological system theory keeps the balances of society, such as in clinical and health care settings, social workers are always the members of the professional team that concerned better functioning of families and communities as a whole (Payne, 2009, p. 143).

Ecological systems theory is an approach to study of human development that consists of the 'scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active, growing human being, and the changing properties of the immediate

settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded (Voydanoff citing Bronfenbrenner, p. 188).

However, it may be important to initially explain a number of key concepts and the systems theoretical perspective fundamental building to further understand application in practice and it follows such a more understandable statement.

Systems theory assumes that organisms, and really what it may be, in our environment that can somehow transfer energy between them, can be divided into systems that constitute entity. The dependent relationship that exists between the systems is not one-way street but a system that consists of smaller sub-systems as well as being a part of a larger overall system. Looking at this in a social perspective, systems theory is based on the assumption that the individual and society consists of part of the complex system in which all affect each other (Payne, 2009, p. 143-159).

3.2 Systems validity

There are five main points why ecological systems theory is the best interpretation in this research: Systems theory is focusing on individuals as part of the whole and connecting with other systems. In this research, the abused child is an individual part of the whole case that would concern the surroundings, such as family and school, and the responding from some governmental or non-governmental systems; Systems theory is interacting with each other in complicated ways. It explores the understanding about how individuals interact with other people in families or the communities, which compactly expresses how the family violence come out; Systems ideas have been particularly used in the cases within families. They are popular and convictive and constantly used in such social issues; Systems theories are used for supposing that everything fits with a social order, and that everything is under the regulation of the order; Developing support through and by social network is an important outgrowth of systems ideas, which ensures that safety or financial aids from all sides of the society would be provided towards the abused child in a well-organized system (Payne, 2009, p. 142-143).

3.3 Analytical model

There are three concepts about the structure of systems theory: Systems are existing within boundaries of physical and mental energy; there is no exchange of the boundary in closed systems, such as in a closed vacuum flask; on the opposite, in the open

systems, energy of physical or mental is permeable to cross the boundary, such as the principle of making tea with a teabag, hot water's in, tea out of the pot, and tea leaves inside the pot (Payne, 2009, p. 144). The boundary ideas help us to get a better understanding of the relationships within the network of the clients.

The systems theoretical perspective is divided into two branches: the general systems theory and the ecological systems theory.

In ecological systems theory, according to Germain and Gitterman (1980, 1996), there is a "life model" that could be used in social work practice as the major formulation:

The life model is based on the analogy of ecology, in which people are interdependent with each other and their environment: they are 'people-in-environment' (PIE). The relationship between people and their environment is reciprocal: each influences the other over time, through exchanges (Payne, 2009, p. 150).

In this life model, the three levels among system theory could also be used to declare the relationships of PIE, briefly concluded as: life stressors of macro-level, the stressors from society effect on the groups of people of meso-level, once the unexpected stress were hard to carry, individuals from micro-level would show a feedback no matter from physical change or psychological aspects.

The empirical data in the study were analyzed by using the life model and the concepts in ecological systems theory. The use of the holistic perspective of life model and the ecological theory advocates are significant for understanding the impact of various factors across and among the institutionalized child.

Figure 3.3 sets out the life model.

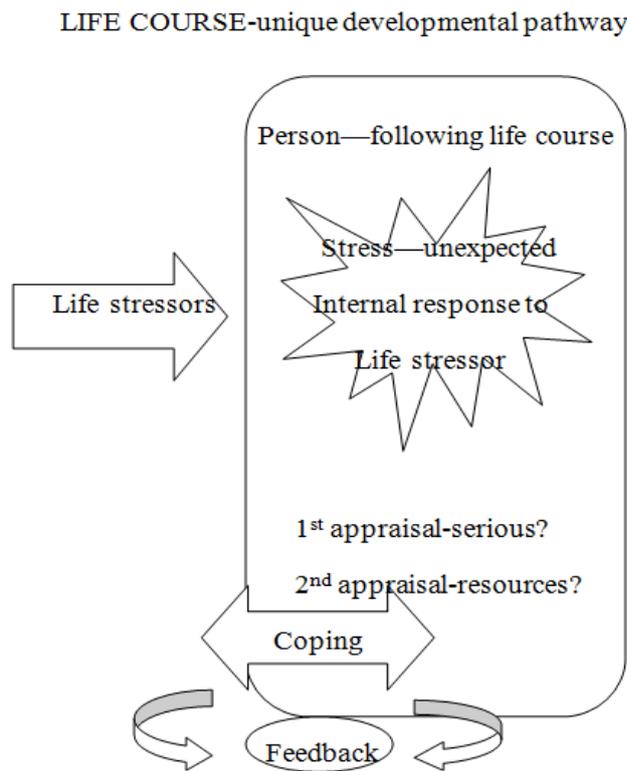


Figure 3.3 The life model of social work practice (Payne, 2009, p. 150-151).

Considering from Payne’s point of view of the life model: life stressors are that people experienced from the society that disturb their fit with the environment, this causes an unexpected disturbance in their capacity to adapt to their environment, such as they feel they cannot cope with it; then people move through two stages of appraisal of the stressor and stresses, they will judge how serious the disturbance is, and then they will look at measures they might take to cope and the resources they have to use for help; in order to fit for the environment, people will try to cope by changing some aspects of themselves; finally, signals from the environment and people’s physical and psychological responses would show them feedback about the success of their efforts of coping.

According to Gitterman & Germain’s contributions, The Life Model is based on ecological concepts that emphasize different factors in shaping the individual, such as individual's relationships within environment and the individual’s biological, cognitive, emotional, social orientation and the surrounding environment influences. These are in turn dependent on the individual's ability of managing stress, adapting to the environment,

recovering and making use of other protective factors. In addition life model of including concepts such as stressors, recovery and protection factors (Gitterman & Germain, 2009, p. 51).

There are the three main factors in the Life Model, which are briefly stated below:

Life model places great emphasis on the alignment between the individual and the environment, for example, individuals constitute the society and environment, on the contrary, how and what the individuals turned to be are the consequences of the environment's impact, this is a person individual factor in the life model. How a client perceives the situation and handles it depends largely on his self-perception of his adjustment. One way might be to work as an individual and change to fit into the surroundings. Otherwise, one can change the environment so that it lives up to his needs (Gitterman & Germain, 2008, p. 54). The individual's development can vary from a great degree; life has many paths and predictability to how they appear to be low. All factors affect how we fit in race, gender, economic status, religion, and sexual orientation, physical and mental health. This means individual personal and collective experiences with self-confidence and self-governing individual (Gitterman & Germain, 2008, p. 57).

Another factor that life model emphasizes are stressors that arise in life. There are two sides' impacts between individuals and environment, one is the good impact, but the other side is the headstream that caused many social problems. Such as the inevitable elements: employment pressure, economic problems, recourse allocation, and so on. These stressors from the society pushed the individuals directly, and it would be usual to see that the individuals' living pressures are growing together with the life stressors. These are negative factors that disturb the relationship between the individual and the environment and disrupt the alignment between them. Exposures to lives stressors often receive emotional and physical influences. Stresses that arise in difficult situations make it difficult to mobilize to deal with events. This makes us feel anxious, guilty, angry, and helpless, etc. Besides personal characteristics, stressors also play the significant role of environment and the individual networks. This reproduction may involve a family member for the whole family (Gitterman & Germain, 2008, p. 60).

Protective factors allow an individual an adaptation to the surroundings, despite the setbacks in life due to stressors. These may be of biological or psychological nature and environmental processes which may either prevent a stress factor or at least mitigate the effects of it (Gitterman & Germain, 2008, p.63). Such protective factors may include the

child's family relationships, access to support from other individuals in the environment such as the teacher, social worker or other persons.

3.4 Implications for the study

In domestic violence against children cases, life model could also be used. Children are moving through their own lives, they experience the happiness in childhood, while someday they were abused physically or mentally by their families. This totally disturbs their fit with the environment, and this causes an unexpected disturbance in their capacity to adapt to their environment, such that the children feel shocked, lonely, frightened. Then they will try to cope by changing some aspect of themselves, the environment or the exchanges between them. They may become wordless, silent, sensitive, insecure, even choleric and violent.

How social workers take care those abused children could influenced by national law and regulation, their professional education or training, and their previous experiencing on taking care abused children. In Payne's (2009, p.144) concepts, it's called *processing* in system, which is the way how system works and how the system may change.

There are several concepts of processing: Input—put the information from the clients into the systems; Throughput—after fed into the information, this affects how to behave and how the energy is used; Output—effect on the environment of energy through the boundary of a system, and how the behavior changes through the environment; Feedback loops—after those, is the feedback from what have been heard and understood (Payne, 2009, p. 144).

In this research, the processing reflected as following: when social workers got profession education, leant relative law and regulation, and listening abused children talking about their experience, those information had been fed into the system (input information into system). This effects how social workers behave in child abuse cases (throughput in the system), they have deeper understanding about taking care abused child and their behavior ruled by law and regulation (output). And their professional treat methods, which they decide to do for abused children, are feedback loop to children.

4. Methodology

4.1 Preliminary understanding

Before we started the systematic investigation of the research about domestic violence against children, first we got the imaginary view about child abuse; those images came from the news and information which we learnt before from internet and magazines. We thought the domestic violence against children might happen mostly in the families that were less educated or where at least one parent probably has the issues on alcoholic intemperance or other mental disease. With wide reading, we realized family violence against children is a serious quiet and popular issue. From UN reports (Annerbäck et al., 2010b, p.1229), only 2.4% of the world's are legally protected from corporal punishment from both schools and homes.

Child abuse should appear since families first formed in the history, and the situations became serious at the time of industrial revolution, or the periods of economic crisis. Then with the development of human pressure unconsciously increased, which society could cause domestic violence against children. In the development process of child abuse, the society always played the role of producer and corrector, so the social workers started to work in the field of child abuse and so does the police, under the guidance of children protection laws.

4.2 Research design: Philosophy of science

Hermeneutics approach is the philosophy of science we used in the research. The entire processes of the hermeneutic circles are between parts and whole, pre-understanding and understanding. They are different, but they may well be connected together in the same research process, hereby, with interpreting parts by parts, the interpretation of the whole text could be successively developed; on the other hand, so does the similar alternation between pre-understanding and understanding during the interpretive process. A pre-understanding or first sight of a new text must happen before understanding; they might happen at the same time. After that, when some information has been understood, the process has been developed, Meanwhile new pre-understanding comes out, so that forms the circle (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, P104-105).

In our research, domestic violence of children could be closely linked to this hermeneutic approach. For example, before we started the research, we got a pre-understanding of child abuse, and during the interviews, old questions were solved while new perceptions came out, so does the relationship between pre-understanding

and understanding kept operating. Since we structured five themes of the research and each theme has several specific questions, we cut the whole into parts. When we figured out all the parts, it became a whole again.

4.3 Mode of procedure

The following are detailed description of the selection of the early research and interview institution, and process of gathering and analyzing the data:

4.3.1 Selection of the literature

The research aimed to study how Swedish social workers manage issues of children domestic violence from family. Getting deeper understanding of Swedish children protection system, related law and previous research about social workers' working experience were necessary for exploring the subject. Therefore following keywords were used: professionalism, social work, children protection, domestic/family violence, Sweden, and child abuse.

Various databases were used, for instance Swedish University Dissertations, ProQuest, SAGE Press, and library's database. Google scholar (<http://scholar.google.com/>) was used to search related articles as well.

Totally ten theses and one book were used for getting deeper understanding and inspiration. Two theses had similar aim and research orientation with our research. Humphreys (1999) and Nicky (1997) explored social work practice in relation to child abuse and domestic violence. They demonstrated a good example to do the research. Five theses of all materials studied child abuse in Sweden, including characters of child abuse in Sweden, prevention and management, parenting situation of Sweden, and evaluation of Swedish children protecting system. Those articles were close to the research content. They were helpful for authors knowing deeper about the research field. One book and two more these discussed general information about child abuse and child protection. There's also one article explored relation between nursing profession and child abuse, which was not directly connect with our research, but it had similar structure with our research that explored professional work and child abuse issue. This article came up lots of useful information about what practical difficulties during taking care of children, and it inspired authors in research.

Those relevant materials were summarized into four themes. The early researches helped the authors to set interview questions.

4.3.2 Selection of interviewee

We planned to interview social workers from BRIS (Barnens Rätt i Samhället, Children's Rights in Society) at beginning. BRIS is a famous NGO which deals with children issues in Sweden. We searched BRIS's home page, we couldn't make sure if there are social workers within organization from the website. We called the organization several times, but there is automatic reply only, and there is no regional office located in Gävle. We failed to get touch with this organization. At same time, our supervisor suggested Social Services (Socialtjänst) to us.

Compared with BRIS, Social Services is a governmental office which is under the supervision of National Board of Health and Welfare. Social Services recruits volunteers and social workers every year. Phone number and local address of the regional office, Social Services Gävle, was found from Gävle kommun website (<http://www.gavle.se/Kontakt/Kontakt-Socialtjanst-Gavle/>). Since language problem, we had same difficulty as we contacting BRIS. Neither of the two authors spoke Swedish, and we called the office several times, there was Swedish automatic reply. We couldn't get contact with the office by ourselves. Our supervisor helped us with the call, and found a contact person's phone number, therefore our research could continue.

Since child abuse is a sensitive issue, interviewing with abused children could remind their hurtful memory. And the research intention is to explore social workers' opinions and experiences of working with abused children, the interviews were designed to do with professional social workers. During contact with the organization, we asked if some social workers would like to participate in our research. Those social workers should have experience of working with abused children who received violence within families. Finally, four social workers participated into the interviews.

All those four social workers came from Social Services Gävle. All of them are females. Their work is dealing with taking care of children issues, and more over working with abused children. Since the institution could only provide a very limited time, interviews were done in one day.

4.3.3 Data collection

When we first contact with the institution, we explained who we are and what our research aim is, and they were confidentially participating into the research. With their approval, we started to arrange time and place with the institution. The interview time and place was arranged according to the institution's time schedule and convenience.

Since the time was limited, and they were very busy, all interviews were required to be finished in one day, individual interviews changed to group interviews. We met two groups, and each group had two social workers.

In order to get deeper understanding on the issue, the interview designed as semi-structured interview. We started with easy and interesting questions, and then deeper questions. The interview lasted 91 minutes in total. One interview lasted 45 minutes, and the other one is 46 minutes. We used two recorders during the interview, in case one of them didn't work. And both of us made notes during the interview.

During the interviews, we did not get the information directly from the interviewees; the reason is that the interviewees spoke Swedish while we didn't, so we had to rely on the Swedish-English translator, we received the answers from the translator's version.

4.3.4 Transcription and analysis

“There is one basic rule in transcription - state explicitly in the report how the transcription were made.” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.180) As mentioned in the last section, we used two audio recorders in case of technical defects. Interview content had been transcribed twice and done before officially analyzing interviews.

There is no standard form of doing a transcription, as Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, p.180) said “the answer (chose which transcription form) will depend on the intended use of the transcript, for example whether for a detailed linguistic or conversational analysis or reporting the subject's accounts in a readable public story.”

Our transcription is only used for analysis and won't be published. In order to fully understand the interview conversation and analyze them in a correct way, the statement was transcribed word-by-word, captured non-verbal communication, and recorded pauses during conversations. There's circumscribed correction of grammar mistake during interviews, but we kept them unchanged.

“The forms of interview analysis can differ as widely as ways of reading a text.” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.14) After transcription was finished, the transcription was read in several times and discussed with our supervisor. We chose hermeneutic circle to analyze collecting materials. This approach has been used to describe participants' emotion and experience of working with abused children, and this approach can connect these with deeper understanding of strategy and management of protecting abused children. The analysis processes are explained more in the next section.

4.4 Tools of analysis

The study was in the process permeated by a hermeneutic perspective, whose essence is to understand the sentence through the whole and the parts from each other. Pre-understanding is highlighted as an important part of the hermeneutic perspective, and then it affects everything from the choice of problem area, the collected data's content, and how the data is then analyzed (Alvesson & SköddBerg, 2009, p. 211).

To be able to take advantage of a semi-structured understanding of hermeneutic approach, we used interview approach to gather data for the analysis. We interviewed four social workers in total, and separate them into two groups for the two-time interview, so that we could get two viewpoints from these two groups, which made the data more unprejudiced and comprehensive.

During the interviews, the interviewees themselves gave us their first sight of interpretation to the questions. In the process of their statement, they might discover or develop new ideas from their experience. While the interviewees kept telling their points, we interviewers were just listening with no interpretation. After gaining all the information that the interviewees wanted to tell us, we could have our own thinking about the information. Then we condensed the meaning of what the interviewees described, and gave the information back to ask them if we understood in the right way (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 195).

With that procedure, we got two recorders from the interviews to transcribe. First we transcribed separately, which could speed up our process, Then in order to make sure all the information were mastered, we combined those two transcription together to start the analysis.

After the process of transcription, the elementary analysis “proper involves developing the meanings of the interviews, bringing the interviewees’ own understanding into the light as well as providing new perspectives from the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 196).” In case we might possible mix our own points together with the interviewees. We made re-interview back to the interviewees. The re-interview was that we sent back our transcription to the interviewees, and they gave their comments on our interpretations to see whether we had caught the correct ideas.

During the analysis, one of the main tools we used is meaning interpretation. The particular interpretation of meaning is focused on the small segments of interaction; it goes going deeper into the situation beyond the directly worked out structures. In this approach, we used hermeneutical canons of interpretation, which goes back and forth between parts and the whole, as figure 4.4 shows:

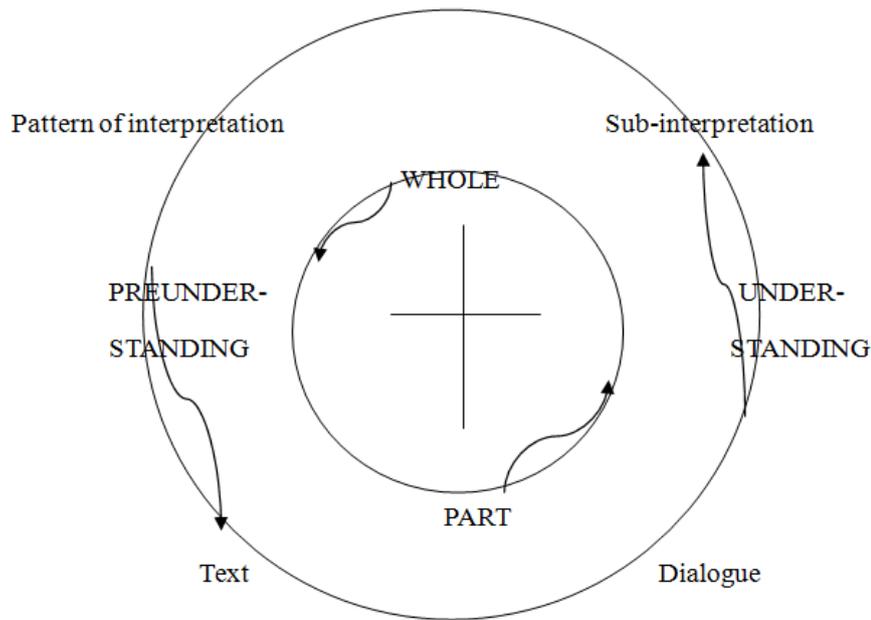


Figure 4.4 the hermeneutic circle: basic version (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, p. 104)

According to the hermeneutic principle, researchers look for interpreting patterns in its text, interpreting the pattern of the outcomes of the text parts assembled into a unit (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, p. 204). In practical terms, we have done this by first reading through the text so unconditionally, and distanced as possible from our pre-understanding to let the texts talk to us and see what the central parts of the texts indicate. In transcription, we found that the structure repeated. When we compared with the other interview, we could see that they were talking about the structure most in common, although not as frequently mentioned. We could see them talking about the structure in different ways and so arousing various elements in which we sorted into the theme of structural aspects. By switching between elements and the text's overall structure each review provided us with new understanding on the basis of the former one. The completion of the interviews reflected on our prior understanding of being acutely aware of its impact on the dialogue we had with the text.

Dialogue with the text material by asking questions provide us with answers until no new interpretations. We got as far as we could in this mode. New interpretations often arise because individuals have different pre-understanding and pre-understanding is continuously changing. With the interpretation achieved, we attached parts and the whole again together (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p. 205). The results of the

interpretations are presented with quotes and comments, as well as our analysis related to the selected theory.

By using this hermeneutic circle, we obtained four main processes in this research: *Pre-cognitions*, before we started this study, we had a plan about how should we develop this theme of child abuse, which is all based on our pre-understanding. *Laws*, this is an important subtitle in child abuse issue after we looked into some related earlier researches, children should be protected under laws and regulations, which supposed to be the most assignable approach in children protection, from reading those earlier researches, our pre-cognitions got improved and the study process became more comprehensive, that the framework of this research developed methodically. *Management*, this is the strategies in child abuse social work of the interviewed organizations in this study, this part was obtained during the process of our research, with the pre-understanding about child abuse and limited cognitions from the earlier researches, we came up with several questions contributed to the study through interviews, this process is the most important in our study and it reached our aim about how social workers manage issues about children domestic violence. *Current situation and prevention*, according to the hermeneutic circle, this process is the dialogue of our own after the understanding. From getting the knowledge and the actuality about children domestic violence that we planned to reach, we made a new dialogue through the results, which could be named the pre-understanding about prevention of child abuse.

These above developed by the hermeneutic circle are the main themes of the research consequence, which also helped in the data analysis. Therefore, this circle is a significant tool of the research.

4.5 Essay credibility

The essay credibility is a key to science of the study. Therefore, we researchers tried to make it reliable and valid in every process. This section will discuss the four parts of objectivity of researchers, reliability, internal validity and generalizability.

4.5.1 Objectivity of researchers

The objectivity is highly connected with the credibility of the study. The question “whether the knowledge produced through interviews can be objective” would influence the reliability and validity of the essay (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.242). Researchers searched lots of previous literature before interviews; enough early knowledge helped

us set questions and leads to a semi-structured interview. On the other hand, recalling previous knowledge will also affect the objectivity of the study. It's impossible to keep absolute objectivity in qualitative research (Patton, 2002, p. 93). But researcher tried to keep neutral during interview and analyzing process, and tried to minimize influence of previous understanding, and to maximize objectivity.

4.5.2 Reliability

Reliability is one of basic requirement of a research. Reliability refers to the consistency and trust worthiness of a research. To examine reliability in research, several methods had been applied into research.

During interview, reliability concerns “whether the interview subject will change their answer during an interview and whether they will give different replies to different interviewers” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.245). Therefore reseachers asked the same question seveal times during interview to check if the answers to check if answers are consistent; sometimes using leading questions to assess interviewees’ stability in the statements. Reliability also had been improved by transcribing interview twice by both of the researchers.

During the interviews, all of our interviewees spoke English, but the office still hired a translator, and answers were translated from Swedish to English. Since the translator is not familiar with social work, some key words, including some regulation and law’s name are not correct. What we did is to keep the original text when transcribing, and had a feedback sent to the interviewees.

4.5.3 Internal validity

Before the interview, the interview guide was carefully discussed and modified, and interview questions were surmised into themes. The interview was carried out according to the interview guide. During the interview, the researchers repeated and summarized conversation when each theme was finished, in this way, researchers tried to check if they understood and interpreted the respondents correctly.

4.5.4 Generalizability

Generalizability is external validity which checks “whether the results are primarily of local interest, or whether they may be transferable to other subjects and situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.261).”

Since it's a qualitative study and we had only four interviews, it's not possible to draw general conclusion about how Swedish social worker taking care abused children.

However, there is abundance previous researches can be used as additional materials of the research. Through analyzing similarities and differences between our results and earlier researches, it's possible to find common characters of child protection profession, for instance law and regulation related to child abuse case, strategies and management of the organization. In this sense, some pattern of result can be generalized.

4.6 Ethical standpoints

The study concerns children abuse from parents or caretakers. It's a sensitive question and more things need to be considered. The authors interviewed social worker only, instead of both social workers and abused children, since interview with abused children could remind their memory of abusing.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.68), there are four ethical guidelines researchers need to follow with: informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and the role of the researcher.

4.6.1 Informed consent

Informed consent “entails informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as any possible risk and benefit from the participation in the research project”. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.70) During preparation period, the authors contact the institution several times to explain our purpose, the study's aim and possible research process. Adequate information had been given to the institution and participants, and they could ask any question related to the study. And we also informed voluntary participation.

All participators from the institution agreed to participate. Before each interview, the researchers gave brief information about the aim of the study and interview questions again. It was informed again that it's voluntary to participate; they can skip questions they don't want to answer or withdraw the study at any time.

4.6.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality in a research implies identity information of participators will not be disclosed. We got agreement before recording the interview. We informed interviewee that we will keep their name private, and conversation of the interview only used to the research. We also clearly informed the content of interview is available to four participants, since “in studies where several parties are involved (e.g. in the case of individual interviews within organization...), it should be made clear before the

interviewing who will later have access to the interviews.” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.72)

4.6.3 Consequences

Informing consequences means fully informing participants possible harm as well as the benefits expected from their participation in the study. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.73) Researcher inform possible benefits from organization, for instance could let more people knowing the organization. Researchers didn't think there is possible harm to participants, but we still informed interviewees have right to withdraw the study when they think it could be harmful for them.

4.6.4 The role of researcher

“Qualitative interview research is interactive research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.75),” the role of researcher may influence the objective of the research. There need a professional distance between researchers and interviewees. Closely interpersonal relationship may cause problems with objective; all participants from the Social Services are stranger to researchers. Researchers used more oral words during interviews, to make sure the interview is not boring and the interviewees can understand researchers' meaning exactly.

4.7 Limitation of the Study

There are two limitations in our research, one is language, and the other one is time limitation. Since we didn't speak Swedish, there is problem of contact with the institution. When researchers called the institution several times, there was automatic reply in Swedish all the time. With the help of our supervisor, we finally got contact with the institution, and got the address of the office. But it wasted lots of time.

The other problem brought by language is, mentioned in reliability section as well, the institution hired a translator for the interviews. Using different languages might convey a lower reliability, due to the possibility of missing key phrases during translating. And since the translator is not familiar with the field, there were some mistakes in translating the name of certain organization, regulation and law. What the researchers did to fix the limitation is to send the transcription back to the interviewees. The second limitation of the study is time. We supposed to do three to four individual interviews. But the institution was busy, and they told us they wanted to do a group interview rather than individual. Therefore we couldn't get more interviews.

5. Results

This chapter presents the results from the interviews and the comments of them. The sections would be presented by three themes of the conclusions which were told by the interviewees, like how the system functions under regulations and the relationship between abused children and their parents and society. The respondents were named A-D, following the order they were interviewed, but in section 5.2 and section 5.3, there appear two dialogues which were labeled as “A and B”, “C and D”, that is because we got a translator in the group interviews, the translator might be possible to summarize these interviewees’ opinions together in one stated dialogue. And in order to show clearly how the interviewees expressed their ideas, we put the original dialogues directly into this results part, which were stated in a smaller character style and marked out with the interviewees’ code name in the end of their words.

5.1 Law and Regulation

All of the interviewees discussed the laws and regulations which should be used and observed in domestic violence of children. All of them claimed that there are two most important laws that they need to follow, which are Young Persons Act and Social Service Act. Besides these two, there are also some other laws which are supervised by Sociology Board.

5.1.1 Young Persons Act

Young Persons Act aims to make further provisions about the functions of local authorities and others in relation to children and young persons, and to enforce the development of care standards in relation to certain establishments or agencies connected with children. This regulation is also dealing with the provision about the independent review of determinations relating to adoptions (Children and Young Persons Act, 2008).

During the interview, one of the interviewees mentioned:

We worked with Young Persons Act that has to do with compassion and help. It was in the ‘Swedish Child Protection Law’, the law is dealing with youth (D).

This interviewee also raised an example about the cases which they might use the Young Persons Act for work. That is if a child is seriously abused by his or her parents, and he or she is really in need to be placed outside the home of the parents, but the

parents are not willing to cooperate with social workers or police, and with the help of Young Persons Act law, social workers can arrange the child in a safe place even without the parents allowance.

5.1.2 Social Service Act

Social Service Act is the relative regulation for social worker about providing social services. In previous researches, Social Services Act has been emphasized. All Social Services departments need to protect the children from further abuse and explore children's needs according to Social Services Act, and all professional workers need to make mandatory reporting according to the Social Service Act (Lindell & Svedin, 2004, p.15) During interviews, more laws had been discussed.

As one interviewee answered the research questions about laws and regulations in their profession:

We have lots of laws and regulations. We worked, first of all, from the perspective of child abuse, we use 'Social Service Act', if that the child probably in a risk situation, we make a risk assessment to see if he or she need us to start a new investigation or not. The reason for us is to be able to make an assessment with what the child need for help or protection. If it is obvious that the child need a lot of help, we are on obligation to start a new investigation, even if the parents do not want us to investigate (C).

From the answer interviewee C gives us above, we understood how 'Social Service Act' works in their actual cases of child abuse. They use it as a tool of measurement to give exact plans for help. With this Social Service Act, investigations could be developed to make risk assessment for children to get help or protection.

5.1.3 Sociology Board

Sociology Board is the leader and gives guidelines for the other related regulations and laws, which was told by two of the interviewees:

We also have other lots of laws and regulations can help. So there are lots of laws that we cannot explain one by one. But the supervisor of these laws is Sociology Board. The Sociology Board provides guidelines and directions about how we act (A and B).

In those basic laws, their social work about protection of child is intensively explained. From their answers, they gave us the result of how social workers tackle domestic

violence of children in law and regulation sections. Then we learned there are lots of laws schemed in the social work of child abuse, and each law plays its own role with an important and unnegetable part.

5.2 Management and Strategy

With the direction of laws and regulations, the social work about domestic violence of children could develop in a scientific way. In order to know how they had preceded a salvation in concrete cases, we came up with some questions about the interviewees' working strategies and how they manage the steps. The frame of the working strategies for social workers of Social Services is developed into two directions, which are the management inside Social Services and the cooperation between Social Services and other organizations or groups.

5.2.1 Management of Social Services

One interviewee motivated her points about the tackling methods toward child abuse protection:

The first thing is that we have group work together, what we do is to try to start a discussion or meeting with the individuals (abused children or parent who let the child being abused), this would allow us social workers to work as an organization here in Sweden (A).

From what interviewee A said, the aim of the discussion or meeting for the children who received violence is to let the abused children be excluded from the cruel condition as soon as possible, and to help the abused children realize that they should not feel guilty or despaired for what had happened to them. From the tiny examples raised by the other interviewees, we could sum up their next steps for providing help, such as they are trying to do every support for the children, and the question they always keep in mind is, can the child continue to live in the place where he or she was beaten by their parents.

Considering about the situations, if the child was seriously abused by his or her parents, and could not live at home, he or she could be placed in other relatives or social service institution. And on the other hand, in some families the father beats the child and the mother, in specific situation, the social workers they will try to move the mother and the child to a place that can work through the relationship.

5.2.2 Strategies of co-operation

The other important factor in their strategies is co-operation. In Sweden, every social worker has the duty and responsibility to report child abuse to the police, as one interviewee told us:

The school, preschool and the police are the three main groups report the child abuse cases here in Sweden, and here everybody works with children, in contact with children is on obligation that you must make a report. And if you are not professional, and it is in private for individuals, then you can do it voluntary (B).

From what interviewee B claimed the cooperation and relationships between society and domestic violence cases are compactly connected. And for citizens who kept that duty in mind, they helped and rescued the abused children from report.

The other cooperation is between the dispensers, such as the social service institutions, police or schools. The other two interviewees expressed the connection and how they cooperated with each other:

We usually try to work along together with all organizations or agencies that have things to do with children. We have an union that called it Barnens Hus, it is the children's home or house. It's located not so far from here in Gävle. In that house, it has social security; a preventative of police; and also it has children's right unite (C).

Yes! And sometimes it is very need a doctor, a room for examination, the examination is much needed. The child will be examined. And also it has a room that for meeting and talking with child, very child friendly. And also we have an interrogation room that usually for police do the interrogation. In that room you can video tapes, and other people can sit there and actually hear and see how the interrogation process going on (D).

This Barnens Hus could be seen as the epitome for the cooperation between organizations or police, which everybody is in integration with child, and then all professionals meet. And they decide what to do, each of them, how they go for the rescue tasks, what the police would do and what procedure would carry on, and so on. And for the cooperation within the Social Services Gävle, they also have a professional and precise system to work with.

We have the possibility to discuss with each other and ask for advice. Reports comes in every week, we meet and discuss. And different responsibility that one can have within the office, I think about, we maybe have 1200 workers, maybe not so many. The thing is someone received

the application and makes an assessment and we decide if we go on with this or not. And then the office and case manager, who now look into the investigation himself, make an assessment about what the child need, the parents, and then everybody involved, what kind of help do they really need. Then we have some other people who are in this therapy discussion group. And then we have people who worked with family to help them change their ways, if they need the family to change their attitudes. And if it happens eventually, that child will place outside the family, and then we will have another group that deal with it. So when we need, all the workers corporate and work together within the social service office (A).

From the expatiation from interviewee A, we got clearly informed about the structure how they cooperate with each other outside the office and within the office. They got a logical working strategy and plan, and with the help from the other social areas such the police and school, the advantages of protection system for abused children were well seen.

In early research, reporting system was discussed. According to Social Services Act, all social workers need to report when they suspect a child abuse case (Cocozza, 2007, p.23; Durrant, 1999, p. 439; Lindell & Svedin, 2004, p.15). The mandatory report system of professional worker helps stopping abuse and violence as soon as possible. Individual who is in private and does not work in this profession is voluntary to do the report, and other people can know who did the report. It may help prevent frame-up cases. However, this may cause some other possible issues, for instance, if a father beats his child with partner reasons, and the mother did report. When the father knew who did the report, it may actually lead more family conflict.

5.3 Current situation and prevention

5.3.1 Current situation

One who did not look into this kind of research before, might think the reports about child abuse should be decreased, but in reality, the amount of reports increased. As one interviewee said:

The number of the reports increased, than before and there might be two reasons of the increase. when the report comes in, it's difficult to see specific, because sometimes you could think that reports come in a lot, then one could think it's because the knowledge of protection children are increased so people are trying to make this report. So it's possible that cases are increasing than before. And also sometimes the flow of the reports come in also follows the trends of media, children's program, news, and something talk about this. People become aware that all of them can make this kind of reports to protect children from family violence (A).

This increase of reports does not mean the situations of children's family lives are becoming worse. It meant that people's cognition about children protection raised, and the different areas of society actively support the work of child protection.

Even though people's cognition of child protection increased, the prevention could not be ignored.

In our early research, it was mentioned: after 1979 Sweden published Anti-spanking law and became the first country banning corporal punishment (Annerbäck et al., 2010b, p.1231; Lindell & Svedin, 2004, p.17; Durrant, 1999, p.435). The number of reports to police about domestic violence against children was quadrupled during 1980s to 1990s (Annerbäck et al, 2010a, p. 174). That is what we have not expected before the research.

One possible explanation of this might be that people understand more of child abuse, and awake of protecting children. Another explanation might be that there is a slightly worse social and economic situation happened, and the child abuse cases may related to other social issues, economic crisis, employment and other social and economic reasons. But no matter what, there is a large divergence between figures of incidence in reported cases of police (6.8 per thousand children each year) and prevalence research (BRÅ, 2011) .

5.3.2 Prevention

Society produces issues, besides fixing the issues. Preventing the speed of problems from coming into being is quite important in social development. So does in child abuse issue.

As two of the respondents replied:

Prevention is important. And there is training lessons for parents. Another of alternative I know about, maybe it's not a big deal is that when women is pregnant that she goes for classes, the classes are for the pregnant mothers or parents, parts of what taught in this training class are how can you handle the situation when you are tired, when you lose your temper. I think they also repeal that come to Sweden, they just got general information in Sweden-- do not beat the children, but I don't think they had directly or specific information when you suspect violence (C and D).

The stage for prevention plays a role of education for families, the classes given by the social service office in Sweden are for the parents to keep their behaviors and avoid the happening of domestic violence of children. It cannot teach how to deal with all the

suspect violence, but it always helps the parents control their tempers even though something bad which can hardly accept happened.

6. Analysis

According to the results which were summarized from the interviewees' answers above, and the theoretical view we chose in this research—ecological system theory, and the analytic tool—hermeneutics approach, we developed this analysis. The analysis focused on social workers' complex interaction with surroundings and their professionalism of taking care abused children.

Social workers' professionalism is centrality to providing social work services to abused children and their families. Social workers need to decide or contribute to decision making, for instance, is the child safe in this family? Should the abused child remain at home, or remove to another family? What types of services does this child need? Can these services be offered and be effective while the child still lives in abusive environment?

How social workers make decision and take care of abused children could be influenced by variety of factors, those factors exist in different levels of the system. By understanding how the various systems interact, one can also understand why an individual's interaction looks like it does in the various systems (Payne 2008, p.217).

Referring to the three system levels discussed in chapter 3. In macro-level national protecting system, relative law and regulation influenced how social worker behaves in child abuse case. In Sweden there is a mandatory reporting system, therefore when social workers get a suspect child abuse case, they will report to police before making any decision about how to help this child. But a social worker from other country which doesn't have mandatory reporting system may have different action about the same case. In meso-level, it is the organization's strategy and management that influencing social workers' decision making. Social Services Gävle has long term cooperation with Barnens Hus (Children's Home in English), social workers participated into process of examine what degree of violence does the child get. And the organization regular social workers have to take group discussion before providing a specific service to abused child. In micro-level, social workers' pre-understanding, including professional education they got and experience of previous cases could influence what services they would provide to abused child. In this level, specific detail of child and child's family will influence social workers' decision as well, for instance what degree of violence the child got, what kind of risk the child may meet, if the child's family support the treatment and so on.

If applied social workers' professionalism into life model frame, social workers are seen as moving through their decision making. Macro-level factors can be seen as life

stressors. Current child protecting system, law and regulation provide a general direction to social workers about how to take care of abused children. Current child abuse situation, as a life stressor, could cause events or issues that disturb social worker make a balance of the environment and make decision, for instance, as mentioned in earlier research chapter, it is found there is a trend of hidden cases of domestic violence against children. (Humphreys, 1999, p.80)

The stress, which refers to the organization's strategy and management in this frame, is the internal response to current law, regulation, protecting system and treatment trend. When social workers make decision of how to take care of abused children, those factors are what they need to consider as well.

Social workers are moving through two appraisals of stressor and stress on micro-level. First they need to judge how serious the case is. Social workers need to fully examine the case, judge what level the abuse has been reached and find characters of the specific case. Social workers provide services base on these information. Pre-understandings including both professional education and previous experience of taking care of abused children played an important role when social workers move through the second appraisal. The second appraisal is considering of all possible resources in order to cope into the environment.

Social workers' response to all macro, meso, and micro factors is a feedback to the whole system, in other words, it is their decision on how to take care of abused children and what kind of services they will provide.

In hermeneutics approach perspective, it is all about the connections between parts and whole, pre-understanding and understanding (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, p. 104-105). Then we use this approach to look into one case of domestic violence of child: one day the neighbor Uncle David heard the girl next door crying and screaming, so Uncle David went out to the girl's house. When he passed by her window, he saw the girl was beaten by her father, so he hurriedly called the police. Then the police came and also the social workers. They got a pre-understanding and knew part of this case, which is the father, beats the child. After investigation, the social workers and police got new understanding about this case, and they started to survey the case as a whole. Since they figured out new clues that the father was much stressed from his job and economic problems, they grew up with their own viewpoints again, and then they kept on search for the answer to understand. This is the mode of the social workers' working procedure towards child abuse. This example rose as an actual analysis for this research of domestic violence against children.

In the angle of system theory towards this example above, the three concepts could also interpret the issue: *physical damage—mental deficiency*, as Uncle David saw the girl was beaten by her father, who already caused the physical damage to the girl; the abused girl was crying and screaming, this is apparently to see the girl was frightened and hysteric. Those two sides' reactions were obviously to be concluded to physical and mental damages. *Stressors—stressors*, the first stressor is from the father, which has been explained that he had a problem of his job and also economic stresses, this is the main fuse of the father's violent behavior. And then look back to the abused girl, the second stressor is from her, she was so frightened and caused both physical and mental damages; these damages were heavily oppressed to the girl's childhood. *Protection—self/outside*, after this case reported to the police and social workers, protections from the outside were supported to the girl, and also the report given by Uncle David was also the help from the outside. Self protection is not easy to define, for children domestic violence, self protection is more often to be seen as the struggle in the violence and seal up the children themselves after the abuse. This simple example was the most common issue of children domestic violence, and it was appropriate to develop and analyze with the hermeneutic circle and system theory.

7. Discussion

7.1 Summary of the results

The aim of the study is to find out how Swedish social workers tackle the issue of children received domestic violence. In order to reach the aim, three research question were explored: first one is ‘how social workers know and think about prevention of family violence’. This question focused on strategy and management aspect. By interviewing with participants, authors collected what social workers known about how to prevent family violence against children, and what’s the strategy for taking care of abused children. Education for families is the main way to prevent the family abuse; there are courses for upcoming parents. During courses those future parents could learn how to control their temper and avoiding violence to kids.

In order to help abused child, the Social Services Gävle, especially parts dealing with child abuse issues, has long time cooperation with Barnens Hus and police. Abused children get physical examination at Barnens Hus. If it’s a child abuse case, it will be reported to police. This integrated and obligation reporting system helps children from further violence. In some case, if social workers think the child’s living environment is too bad for the child developing, they would put the child in a third family until the original family shows improvements.

Second research question is “how social workers remain professional when the suspected perpetrator is a parent, and what kind of service can they provide?” This question focused on orientation of social worker’s professionalism. Authors explored what social workers should do during dealing with child abuse cases, how they remain professional when the case is ongoing and what services they provide. There are certain regulations for social workers deal with child abuse cases, for instance Social Services Act; social workers need to follow those regulations when taking care of the children. Before choosing a certain social worker to do with the child abuse case, there would be a group meeting, which would be a discussion of how to help the child. In this way, the office tries to maximize the support.

And the last one is “in a condition of child abuse, what would the social workers do to stop or prevent deteriorating?” Authors wanted to explore social workers personal opinion of stopping and preventing child abuse issue. In the research, authors expand the question, and explored what difficulties happened during practical work. What difficult our interviewees met was, children’s family sometimes tried to refuse help from social workers, the families were protecting the person, normally is the man, who

gave violence to the child. Therefore, social workers need to provide help for this family, at the same time against violence of this family.

7.2 Comparison with earlier research

Similarities:

Through research, the authors got some similar results in accordance with earlier research, and the majority of similarities are prevention of child abuse, strategies and management, and related law or regulation.

Both of our research and the earlier research mentioned there is an increasing of the number reported to police and the organization. After anti-spanking law has been published, there was a previous decrease of child abuse in prevalence rates in Sweden, but it was ceased between the surveys during 2000 and 2006, reporting cases were slightly increasing. The Social Services Gävle is related to police. When there is child abuse case reported to police, the organization has the obligation to investigate the case. On the contract, when social workers find a child abuse case, they have to report to the police as well.

Differences:

Compared with earlier research, the difference of result is concerted on what social workers think about the practical difficulties during taking care of the abused children.

In previous researches, present several difficulties during practical works, such as the minimize of child abuse cases, for instance, report the child abuse case but named as another issue, or received the child abuse case but did not think it's a child centered case. In our research, there is no evidence presents the organization was trying to minimize the effect of child abuse. As Humphreys (1999) mentioned, "there appears to be a marked trend over the last two years to name some issues of domestic violence more directly (Humphreys, 1999, p.82)."

And in our research, social workers have to meet the conflict between providing protection for child and the rejections of help from the child's family. Social workers help abused children improving their living environment and giving information about correct parenting, but some families reject the help and deny the domestic violence has happened to the children.

7.3 Alternative interpretations of the results

Social learning theory, especially role model perspective, could be possible applied to the research as an alternative way to interpret the result. Social learning theory argued

role model is an important stage of learning (Payne, 2009, p.120-125). Children who got violence and abuse from their parents or other caretaker had a bad growing environment; they got damaged from both physical and mental aspects. In the sense of what social worker did was rebuilding the children's living environment and providing better condition for their healthy growth. From social learning perspective, the research could be more focused on the environment of abused children and the family therapy that social worker provided in improving children's living environment.

Empowerment theory can be used for alternative interpretation as well. Empowerment theory refers to strengthen the depressed individuals or groups (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Children who received violence from their family could be seen as a disadvantaged group, since they were all under age and their families didn't provide proper protection, that they were facing depression. Social workers' strategy is a professional support for this disadvantage group to overcome difficulties. From this theory perspective, strategy and prevention of children protection could be deeper explored.

Since the research's purpose was to study not only professionalism of social work, but the connection between social worker and child abuse issue, ecological system theory was the best choice. System theory emphasizes how relationships and interaction among individual and society come out; one of the basic ideas of ecological system theory was 'integration and connectedness' (Payne, 2009, p.154). This perspective was more helpful to figure out this connection. And also, the issue had been explored from different levels, in this case were national, organizational and social worker's level. Through analyzing child abuse issue from all these three different levels, it would be clearer to reach a more comprehensive understanding.

7.4 Methodological discussion

There are various methods to explore the domestic violence, population-based research, narrative interview, or mixed methods. Since the study's aim is to find out how Swedish social workers deal with child violence. The aim is in line with phenomenological position which needs to describe subject's experiences; the qualitative interview with social workers is the best choice for the study.

Since we started this aim about how social workers manage issues about children domestic violence, it was determined to use qualitative method in order to get the requisite results about "how social workers manage", which cannot get from quantitative questionnaires. And also the domestic violence against children is a

phenomenon of social problem in nowadays, which need we researchers do surveys from the phenomenon into essences, and the obtained results could be seen as the essences that derived from the phenomenon.

In the interviews, interviewees shared their work experience with specific cases and expressed very detailed personal opinions about how to prevent child domestic violence, which would be hard to collect with a quantitative method.

The interviews were semi-structured that researchers addressed certain themes for discussing. The semi-structured mode attempts to understand themes from interviewees' personal perspectives. The semi-structured mode was facilitated in analysis, and at the same time is not boring in the interviews. If we did a more structured interview, it might make the interviews bored and less difference in materials. And if we did non-structured interview, it would be a wasting of time, and difficult to analyze.

7.4 Contribution to social work and society

Social work “dedicated service for the welfare and self-fulfillment of human beings; to the development and disciplined use of scientific knowledge regarding human behavior and society; to the development of resources to meet individual, group, national and international needs and aspirations; to the enhancement and improvement of the quality of life of the people, and to the achievement of social justice (International Federation for Social Work, 2006).”

The study focused on the child abuse issue. Children protection is an important part of social work. In the study, researchers explored the social worker's professionalism, child abuse strategies and regulation and law related to social workers. Readers can realize more information of this field, and find possible way to improve the situation. And this study is also good for new social workers since they had no previous experience in this field.

7.5 Suggestion for further study

There are two aspects of children domestic violence that might be considered to explore further:

First is the need for further question on decrease in prevalence but an increase in incidence of reports. Both previous research and interview mentioned after the law was published and all services the organization provided, people had more knowledge on child abuse and domestic violence, which helped to prevent child abuse. However, the reports of children domestic violence came to the police more than before. The further

study should focus on spreading the knowledge about meanings and types of child abuse to the society. In this way, social workers can explore deeper reasons of the trend of increase in reports' number but decrease of prevalence.

Second, there is a need to examine interventions from social services and other children protection services. The examination is to clarify if the strategies and therapies that organizations provided have reached their primary goal, and if those services lead to an improved situation for children domestic violence.

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Appendix: Interview Guide

1. Method of tackling

- a) How child protection worker remain professional when the suspected perpetrator is a parent, and what kind of service can they provide?
- b) Is there any special case about child abuse?
- c) What kinds of protection do you offer?

2. Family violence situation in Sweden

- a) How many cases do you organization handle per month?
- b) Is there any improvement than before?
- c) In child abuse cases, who is the main reporter? Neighbor, parent, or teacher?

3. Prevention (organization strategies & Individual)

- a) How do child protection workers think about “prevention of family violence”?
- b) In a condition of child abuse, what would the workers do to stop or prevent deteriorating?

4. Swedish law

- a) What law do you obey?
- b) Is there any special regulation during your work that you need to follow?
- c) ‘Anti-spanking’ Law? If they use, since it has been published, is there any improvement?

5. Co-operation

- a) Is there any other institution you cooperate with?
- b) How many departments in your organization deal with those issues? How do they connect with each other?