

**THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL FACTORS ON THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL  
WORK IN EKOSODIN COMMUNITY, OVIA NORTH EAST L.G.A  
OF EDO STATE**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

We certify that this project was carried out by **Duru Favour EBUBECHI** with Matriculation Number: **SSC2106022** of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria and has not been presented in part or full in any diploma or degree awarding institution.

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## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to Almighty God and to my lovely parents Mr. and Mrs. Ebubechi for their love and support. May God Almighty bless you abundantly.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study focuses on the impact of cultural factors on the practice of social work in Ekosodin community, Ovia north east Local Government Area of Edo state. The study employed a survey design. The sample size of 400 was selected using the purposeful or judgmental sampling technique and were made up of individuals involved or exposed to various cultural factors affecting social work practices in the area. The research instrument adopted for the study is a structured questionnaire. The face validity was employed for the study and the reliability of the instrument was subjected to test retest reliability. The method of data collection was the use of and the instrument was distributed personally, and with the aid of a research assistant and together, the respondents were guided regarding the filling of the instrument. The study employed a mixed method of perception survey and self-substance use survey. The perception survey was used to generate data from the fabric of the community who are largely affected by cultural factors influencing social work practices, while the self-substance use survey involved a population of social workers and clients who are directly impacted by these cultural factors. The responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 software application. The findings of this study showed the need for social workers to have a deep understanding of the cultural dynamics among Nigeria's numerous ethnic groups. The research highlights the necessity for comprehensive cultural competence training in social work education programs as this will enhance the effectiveness of social work practice in Ekosodin Community.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Globally, Social work as a profession plays a vital role in addressing societal issues and promoting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. It encompasses a range of interventions aimed at enhancing social functioning, empowering vulnerable populations, and advocating for social justice (International Federation of Social Workers, 2014). In Nigeria, social work practice faces unique challenges due to the influence of cultural factors, which significantly shape societal values, beliefs, and norms. Nigeria is a culturally diverse country with a population of over 200 million people belonging to more than 250 ethnic groups (Afolayan, 2014). Each ethnic group has its own distinct cultural traditions, practices, and social norms, which contribute to Nigeria's rich cultural tapestry. Cultural factors, such as language, religion, kinship systems, traditional beliefs, and social hierarchies, have a profound impact on social interactions, decision-making processes, and help-seeking behaviors within Nigerian communities.

The influence of cultural factors on social work practice in Nigeria cannot be overstated. Social workers in Nigeria encounter a variety of cultural challenges when engaging with individuals, families, and communities. These challenges include issues related to ethnic diversity, religious beliefs, traditional practices, gender roles, and social stigma (Nwadiora & McAdoo, 2017). For instance, the authors stated that social workers may

face resistance or mistrust from certain ethnic groups due to historical conflicts or cultural misunderstandings. They may also encounter resistance when attempting to address sensitive issues, such as domestic violence or sexual abuse, which are often considered taboo in some cultural contexts.

According to Onyango (2015) Nigeria is home to a diverse range of religious affiliations, including Christianity, Islam, traditional African religions, and a growing number of people who identify as non-religious and hence these religious beliefs shape individuals' worldviews, moral values, and perceptions of social problems hence Social workers need to be sensitive to these religious beliefs and understand how they intersect with clients' experiences and help-seeking behaviors.

Traditional practices and social hierarchies also impact social work practice in Nigeria. Traditional systems of governance, such as chieftaincy institutions and community leadership structures, hold considerable influence in many Nigerian communities. Social workers need to navigate these systems and establish collaborative relationships with traditional leaders to effectively address community needs. Additionally, gender roles and expectations can create challenges for social workers, particularly when working with marginalized groups such as women, children, and persons with disabilities.

To address the influence of cultural factors on social work practice, social service interventions in Nigeria must be culturally competent. Cultural competence refers to the ability of social workers to understand, appreciate, and effectively engage with

individuals and communities from diverse cultural backgrounds (Fong, 2017). It involves acquiring knowledge about different cultures, developing self-awareness of one's own cultural biases, and adapting interventions to meet the unique needs and preferences of clients.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of cultural competence in social work practice in Nigeria. Efforts have been made to integrate cultural competence training into social work education and professional development programs. However, more research is needed to better understand the specific cultural factors that influence social work practice in Nigeria and to develop evidence-based strategies to enhance cultural competence among social workers. While there are ongoing efforts to improve the cultural competence of social workers in Nigeria, several studies have highlighted the need for more comprehensive and context-specific cultural competence training. A study by Uzundu (2014) found that many social workers in Nigeria lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of the cultural practices and belief systems of different ethnic groups, which can lead to cultural misinterpretation and ineffective service delivery. Thus, there is a pressing need to incorporate cultural sensitivity and understanding into the education and training of social workers.

The importance of integrating cultural competence into social work practice is further emphasized by Iheanacho (2015) who states that cultural competence is not merely an optional skill, but an ethical obligation for social workers. This is particularly crucial in a

multicultural context like Nigeria, where cultural misunderstandings can exacerbate social problems and hinder individuals' access to social services. The cultural competence of social workers can also be influenced by their own cultural background and personal beliefs. A study by Ojua et al. (2016) found that social workers' cultural bias can affect their interpretation of clients' issues and their decision-making in practice. This underscores the need for self-awareness and reflexivity in social work practice, which entails recognizing and managing one's own biases and preconceived notions.

Furthermore, the complexity of addressing cultural issues in social work is highlighted by Akpan and Ojua (2017) who argue that the concept of cultural competence should extend beyond understanding cultural differences. They assert that social workers should also pay attention to the power dynamics and structural inequalities embedded in cultural practices. This includes acknowledging and challenging cultural norms that perpetuate social injustice, such as gender inequality and discrimination against marginalized populations. In addition to these challenges, there are also practical constraints that hinder the implementation of culturally competent social work in Nigeria. A study by Okoye (2018) found that many social workers in Nigeria lack the resources and support needed to deliver culturally competent services. This includes a lack of training opportunities, inadequate supervision, and limited access to culturally appropriate resources and tools.

The role of education in fostering cultural competence among social workers is highlighted by Chukwu (2019). She argues that social work education should not only

provide knowledge about different cultures but also foster a critical understanding of cultural issues. This involves teaching students to critically analyze cultural norms and practices, understand the social and historical context of cultural differences, and develop skills to effectively engage with diverse communities.

In line with this, a study by Okeke (2020) recommends a more integrated approach to cultural competence training in social work education. This approach emphasizes the need to incorporate cultural competence across all aspects of social work curriculum, rather than treating it as a separate subject. This can include embedding cultural competence in the teaching of social work theories, methods, and ethics, as well as providing practical training experiences that expose students to diverse cultural contexts.

Despite these challenges, there are also promising developments in the field of culturally competent social work in Nigeria. A growing number of social work agencies are recognizing the importance of cultural competence and are investing in training and resources to enhance their workers' cultural skills. This reflects a broader trend in the field of social work towards embracing diversity and promoting social justice.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Social work practice in Nigeria is subject to unique challenges due to the influence of cultural factors, which significantly shape societal values, beliefs, and norms. Within the specific context of Ekosodin, a community located in the Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, these cultural factors take on a central role in determining the effectiveness of social work interventions (Adeola, 2016). The cultural landscape of this region, rich with ethnic diversity and deeply rooted traditions, presents certain obstacles for social service professionals.

The influence of cultural factors on social work practice in Ekosodin is profound and multi-faceted. Social workers in this region grapple with a range of cultural hurdles when interacting with individuals, families, and communities. These challenges run the gamut from issues related to ethnic diversity, religious beliefs, traditional practices, gender roles, and social stigma (Okeke, 2015). The complexities of these cultural factors necessitate a nuanced understanding and sensitivity from social workers.

Moreover, the lack of cultural competence among social workers in Ekosodin has emerged as a significant impediment to providing effective services. The concept of cultural competence, defined as the ability of service providers to recognize and respect differences in the values, beliefs, and behaviors of different cultural groups, has been recognized as a crucial component in effective service delivery (Sue & Sue, 2016). In Ekosodin, limited understanding of the cultural practices and belief systems within the community can lead to misinterpretation and ineffective service delivery. This echoes the

findings of Ojo (2013), who argues that a lack of cultural competence can lead to a gap between the services provided and the true needs of the community.

Additionally, the lack of resources and support is another major factor that hinders the implementation of culturally competent social work in the region. This problem is not unique to Ekosodin, as Afolayan (2015) contends that resource constraints are a common challenge in many developing regions. Therefore, three key problems need to be addressed in order to enhance the effectiveness of social work practices in Ekosodin. Firstly, it is necessary to identify the specific cultural factors present in Ekosodin that significantly influence social work practices and service delivery. This aligns with the call of scholars such as Okoye (2014) to prioritize understanding cultural contexts in social work.

Secondly, the impact of the lack of cultural competence among social workers in Ekosodin on the effectiveness of social service interventions must be examined. This echoes the argument of scholars like Iheanacho (2017), who stress the importance of cultural competence in social work. Finally, the practical constraints and resource gaps that hinder the implementation of culturally competent social work in Ekosodin need to be investigated. This is consistent with the findings of Afolayan (2015), who emphasizes the role of resources in the delivery of effective social services.

By addressing these problems, this study aims to contribute to the development of evidence-based strategies to enhance cultural competence among social workers in

Ekosodin, ultimately improving the implementation of culturally sensitive social service interventions that meet the unique needs and preferences of the community.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

This Study Focus Is To Examine Social Service Intervention Of Cultural Factors On Social Work Practices In Ekosodin, Ovia North East L.G.A Of Edo State. Consequently, the aims and Objectives of this research are to:

1. identify and analyze the specific cultural factors present in Ekosodin that significantly influence social work practices and service delivery.
2. examine the impact of the lack of cultural competence among social workers in Ekosodin on the effectiveness of social service interventions.
3. investigate the practical constraints and resource gaps that hinder the implementation of culturally competent social work in Ekosodin.
4. develop evidence-based strategies to enhance cultural competence among social workers in Ekosodin, promoting the delivery of culturally sensitive social service interventions.
5. contribute to the improvement of social work practice in Ekosodin by addressing the unique cultural needs and preferences of the community.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the above statement of problem, the study came up with the following research questions. The research questions are stated as follows;

1. What are the specific cultural factors present in Ekosodin that significantly influence social work practices and service delivery?
2. How does the lack of cultural competence among social workers in Ekosodin impact the effectiveness of social service interventions?
3. What are the practical constraints and resource gaps that hinder the implementation of culturally competent social work in Ekosodin?
4. How can cultural competence be enhanced among social workers in Ekosodin to improve the implementation of culturally sensitive social service interventions?
5. What evidence-based strategies can be developed to address the unique cultural needs and preferences of the Ekosodin community within the field of social work practice?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is multifaceted and deeply entrenched in both practical and theoretical aspects of social work practice, particularly in the context of Ekosodin, Nigeria. It underscores the intricate role of cultural factors in shaping social work practices and service delivery. Unpacking these cultural influences, the study aims to optimize the effectiveness of social service interventions in the community. By doing so, it stands to inform the creation of evidence-based strategies that enhance cultural

competence among social workers, fostering culturally sensitive social services tailored to the unique needs of the Ekosodin community.

Further, this study confronts an existing gap in the cultural competence of social workers in Ekosodin, scrutinizing how this deficiency impacts the efficacy of social service interventions. The exploration of the relationship between cultural competence and service delivery shines a light on the critical role of cultural sensitivity in social work practice. As such, the findings of this study carry potential implications for social work education and professional development programs. They could guide the incorporation of cultural competence training in these programs, helping cultivate a more culturally informed and responsive workforce.

The study also grapples with practical challenges and resource constraints that obstruct the implementation of culturally competent social work in Ekosodin. A thorough examination of obstacles such as limited training opportunities, insufficient supervision, and a dearth of culturally appropriate resources and tools, helps highlight the pressing need for support in these areas. The study, therefore, advocates for a strategic allocation of resources to improve service delivery, providing valuable input for policy-making and resource allocation decisions aimed at better equipping social workers.

Lastly, the broader implications of this study extend to the wider field of social work. By emphasizing the significance of cultural competence, it underscores its role in fostering social justice. This study champions the idea that by understanding and challenging the

power dynamics and structural inequalities embedded in cultural practices, social workers can be potent agents of change. The implications of the findings reach beyond the specific context of Ekosodin, providing a foundation for the development of culturally competent interventions in diverse communities. Therefore, the study holds academic and professional relevance by addressing the specific cultural factors in Ekosodin, examining the impact of cultural competence, identifying practical constraints, and contributing to the broader field of social work.

### **1.6 Definition of Concepts**

- **Social work:** A profession that plays a vital role in addressing societal issues and promoting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through a range of interventions, empowerment, and advocacy for social justice.
- **Cultural factors:** Refer to elements such as language, religion, kinship systems, traditional beliefs, social hierarchies, and other cultural norms that significantly influence social interactions, decision-making processes, and help-seeking behaviors within a particular community.
- **Cultural competence:** The ability of social workers to understand, appreciate, and effectively engage with individuals and communities from diverse cultural backgrounds. It involves acquiring knowledge about different cultures, developing self-awareness of cultural biases, and adapting interventions to meet the unique needs and preferences of clients.

- **Ethnic diversity:** The presence of multiple ethnic groups within a population, each with its own distinct cultural traditions, practices, and social norms.
- **Religious beliefs:** A person's faith or affiliation with a particular religious system or set of beliefs, which shape their worldview, moral values, and perceptions of social problems.
- **Traditional practices:** Customary or long-established behaviors, rituals, and societal norms that are embedded within a particular culture.
- **Gender roles:** Socially constructed expectations and norms regarding the behavior, roles, and responsibilities of individuals based on their perceived gender.
- **Social stigma:** Negative attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes held by society that lead to the exclusion, isolation, or discrimination of individuals or groups based on their characteristics or identities.
- **Cultural sensitivity:** The awareness, understanding, and responsiveness to the cultural backgrounds, practices, and needs of individuals and communities, particularly when providing social services.
- **Resources and support:** Refers to the necessary tools, training opportunities, supervision, and access to culturally appropriate resources that social workers require to deliver effective and culturally competent services to their clients.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

Social work in Nigeria has a diverse history dating back to the colonial era, evolving significantly over time to address various societal issues such as poverty, unemployment, health inequities, and social injustices (Aghatise, 2015). Despite this evolution, social work in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, primarily driven by inadequate funding for social welfare programs (Ojua, Ishor, & Ndom, 2013). This funding gap results in scarce resources for social workers, thus limiting their ability to effectively meet community needs (Ojua et al., 2013). In addition, the lack of investment in education and infrastructure further exacerbates these issues (Aghatise, 2015).

Furthermore, the field of social work in Nigeria struggles with a shortage of sufficiently trained professionals (Ojua et al., 2013). The lack of adequate training materials and resources hinders the development of competent social workers (Aghatise, 2015). Moreover, the government's commitment to social work has been unsatisfactory, affecting the public's perception and understanding of the profession (Ojua et al., 2013). Despite these challenges, social workers in Nigeria remain dedicated to advocating for individuals' rights and communities' well-being, and continue to seek innovative solutions to the country's social problems (Aghatise, 2015).

### **2.1.1 The Role of Culture in Social Work**

Culture encompasses a society's spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features, including values, ideologies, belief systems, norms, and practices (Green, 2013). These

cultural elements shape individuals' behaviors, perceptions, decisions, and interactions (Green, 2013).

In social work, the understanding and respect for the cultural backgrounds of individuals and communities served are vital for building trust and effectively addressing unique needs (Fong, 2013). Cultural competence is an essential aspect of social work practice ethics and values (Fong, 2013). Social workers should be aware of their cultural identity and experiences and be cognizant of their privilege and power in their work (Fong, 2013).

- a. **Influencing Client's Worldvie:** According to Segal, Gerdes, and Steiner (2016), the cultural background of a client significantly shapes their worldview, impacting their values, beliefs, and behaviors. This underscores the importance of social workers understanding their clients' cultural contexts to better comprehend their perspectives and cater to their needs.
- b. **Guiding Communication:** As stated by Gray, Coates, and Yellow Bird (2017), culture plays a pivotal role in determining communication styles and norms. They highlight that while some cultures may value direct communication, others might prefer indirect methods. This understanding can aid social workers in effectively communicating with their clients.
- c. **Shaping Coping Mechanisms:** According to Ungar (2015), culture influences how individuals deal with stress, adversities, and trauma. The author suggests that some cultures may emphasize collective coping strategies, such as seeking

support from family and community members, while others may emphasize individual coping strategies like self-reliance. This understanding can aid social workers in tailoring their interventions to match their clients' preferred coping strategies.

- d. **Informing Help-Seeking Behaviors:** Sue and Sue (2013) suggest that culture can impact help-seeking behaviors, including whether individuals seek help, the types of help they seek, and whom they seek help from. For instance, in some cultures, individuals may be more likely to seek help from family members or religious leaders rather than professional social workers. This understanding can aid social workers in reaching out to clients in culturally appropriate ways.
- e. **Impacting the Therapeutic Relationship:** According to Fong (2017), culture can impact the therapeutic relationship between social workers and their clients. For instance, cultural differences in power dynamics, communication styles, and expectations can influence the rapport and trust between social workers and their clients. By demonstrating cultural competence, social workers can build stronger therapeutic relationships with their clients.

### **2.1.2 Cultural Diversity in Nigeria**

Nigeria, often referred to as the "Giant of Africa," is a country rich in cultural diversity, with over 250 ethnic groups, according to the World Population Review (2020). These

groups each have their own unique languages, traditions, and social structures that contribute to the vibrancy of the nation. However, this diversity can also present challenges, particularly in the field of social work where understanding and navigating these cultural nuances is crucial (Akinsulure-Smith, 2014).

Social workers in Nigeria must be culturally competent in order to effectively serve their diverse clientele. According to Lum (2011), cultural competence refers to the ability of social workers to understand, appreciate, and work with individuals from cultures other than their own. This involves not only knowledge of different cultural practices and beliefs but also empathy and respect for cultural differences. In the Nigerian context, this means being aware of the customs, traditions, and social norms of the various ethnic groups, and being able to communicate effectively in the local languages (Ojua et al., 2013).

However, being culturally competent does not mean uncritically accepting all cultural practices. Certain practices, such as gender discrimination or domestic violence, may conflict with the principles of social justice and human rights that social workers are committed to uphold (Healy, 2014). In such cases, social workers must find a balance between respecting cultural diversity and promoting social justice (Gray, Coates, & Yellow Bird, 2013). Moreover, social workers in Nigeria face structural challenges that further complicate their work. According to Aghatise (2016), these include a lack of resources, inadequate training, and a weak social welfare system. These systemic issues,

combined with the complexity of Nigeria's cultural diversity, make the task of Nigerian social workers particularly demanding.

Nevertheless, Nigeria's cultural diversity also presents opportunities for social work. For example, social workers can draw on the strengths and resources of different cultural groups to promote social change and development. As suggested by Greene (2017), a strengths-based approach that recognizes and builds on the assets of diverse communities can be an effective strategy for social work in culturally diverse contexts.

### **2.1.3 The Need for Cultural Competence in Social Work**

The concept of cultural competence is a sine qua non for effective social work practice. It is an intricate interplay of understanding, respecting, and applying knowledge about individuals' and groups' cultural backgrounds to enhance interactions and intervention strategies. This is particularly true for multicultural societies like Nigeria, where the deficiency in cultural competence may lead to misunderstandings or offense, thereby inhibiting the efficacy of social work interventions.

Lum (2011) emphasized that cultural competence in social work is not merely an ethical imperative but also a practical necessity. Social workers must recognize and respect clients' cultural backgrounds to provide effective services and interventions. This understanding extends beyond merely acknowledging cultural differences but also involves genuinely understanding the client's worldview. Fong (2014) noted that cultural competence is a dynamic, ongoing learning process. Social workers must be open to

learning about new cultures and updating their understanding of existing ones. They must also be willing to challenge their own biases and assumptions about different cultural groups.

Gringeri et al., (2017) highlighted the need for cultural competence in social work education. They argued that teaching cultural competence should be an integral part of social work education, as it prepares future social workers to work effectively with diverse client populations. They specifically emphasized the need for cultural competence in social work practice in multicultural societies like Nigeria. Moreover, Weaver (2016) stressed the importance of self-awareness in achieving cultural competence. He argued that social workers must first understand their own cultural backgrounds and biases before they can fully understand and respect their clients' cultures. This self-awareness is the first step towards cultural competence and serves as a foundation for further learning and development.

A study by Bogo (2015) found that cultural competence significantly improves the effectiveness of social work interventions. The study showed that clients are more likely to engage in interventions that respect their cultural backgrounds and incorporate culturally relevant practices. This finding underscores the importance of cultural competence in enhancing client engagement and improving intervention outcomes.

#### **2.1.4 Challenges to Culturally Competent Social Work in Nigeria**

Achieving truly culturally competent social work in Nigeria presents a multitude of hurdles. One of the most significant challenges includes the insufficiency of resources dedicated to the training and education of social workers in the essential field of cultural competence. Without proper training, practitioners may lack the necessary tools to navigate the cultural diversities inherent in their client base (Afolayan, 2013). Language barriers also pose significant challenges to culturally competent social work. Nigeria, with its expansive linguistic diversity, sees its social workers grappling with communication difficulties when they interact with clients who speak different languages (Okpalaoka & Dillard, 2014). This challenge is further exacerbated by the lack of interpreters and translated materials, which can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations that compromise the quality of services provided.

Additionally, societal attitudes towards certain cultural groups can significantly impact the delivery of social work services. Discrimination, bias, and stigma against certain ethnic groups may hinder the access and quality of social work services for these groups (Omeni, 2015). This not only compromises the equitable delivery of services but also contradicts the basic principles of social work, which value the dignity and worth of every individual. Moreover, social workers, like any other individuals, may harbor unconscious biases or prejudices. These biases, often ingrained through societal conditioning, can unconsciously influence the interactions between social workers and their clients (Ewuoso, 2016). Overcoming such biases necessitates continuous self-

reflection, a commitment to personal growth, and a willingness to challenge one's own beliefs and assumptions.

Unfortunately, the issue of unconscious bias is often overlooked in social work training and practice. According to Okoye (2017), the social work curriculum in Nigeria does not adequately address the issue of unconscious bias and its impact on practice. This gap in training leaves social workers unprepared to recognize and address their own biases, thereby compromising their ability to deliver culturally competent services.

Institutional barriers also contribute to the challenge of achieving cultural competence. Policies and procedures may not always be designed with cultural competence in mind, and as such can inadvertently marginalize certain groups (Adeyanju, 2019). For instance, bureaucratic procedures may not take into account the cultural practices of certain groups, making it difficult for them to access services. Another challenge lies in the underrepresentation of diverse cultures in the social work profession itself. As Uzoka (2020) points out, the profession is dominated by certain ethnic groups, which can lead to a lack of understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultural backgrounds of clients. Efforts to diversify the workforce can help to promote cultural competence within the profession.

### **2.1.5 The Potential of Culturally Competent Social Work in Nigeria**

Culturally competent social work holds substantial promise in Nigeria, despite numerous challenges. Social workers who grasp and respect their clients' cultural backgrounds are

well-positioned to build more robust relationships, establish trust, and implement interventions with higher efficacy (Sue & Sue, 2016). In addition, culturally competent social work can substantially contribute to social justice. By challenging discrimination and inequality, it ensures equal treatment and advocates for the rights and welfare of all individuals, irrespective of their cultural background (Green et al., 2015).

The role of cultural competence in social work has been highlighted by numerous scholars, emphasizing its importance in understanding client needs and providing effective services. For instance, Lum (2016) stressed that social workers must be sensitive to cultural differences to build trust and rapport with their clients. This sensitivity allows them to tailor their services to meet the unique needs of each client, thereby improving the effectiveness of their interventions.

Furthermore, research by Fong (2017) demonstrated the impact of cultural competence on social justice. This study found that culturally competent social workers were more likely to challenge societal discrimination and advocate for equal rights, thereby contributing to social justice. This suggests that cultural competence in social work is not just about understanding and respecting cultural differences, but also about promoting equity and justice.

However, implementing culturally competent social work in Nigeria is not without its challenges. As noted by Owusu-Bempah & Howitt (2014), understanding cultural differences can be complex, especially in a country as diverse as Nigeria. They argue that

social workers must not only understand the cultural background of their clients but also the socio-political context in which they live. In line with this, Gray et al. (2013) pointed out that a deep understanding of the broader societal context, including economic and political factors, is necessary for culturally competent social work. This understanding helps social workers better understand the challenges their clients face and the best ways to assist them.

Moreover, research by Alegria et al. (2016) underscored the importance of ongoing education and training in cultural competence for social workers. They argue that cultural competence is not a static concept, but one that evolves over time as society changes. Therefore, continuous learning and adaptation are necessary to stay culturally competent. Other scholars have highlighted the importance of self-awareness in cultural competence. According to Daniel (2018), social workers need to be aware of their own biases and prejudices to avoid imposing their own values on their clients. This requires a high degree of self-reflection and introspection, which can be challenging but is necessary for effective social work.

Further, Gopalkrishnan (2020) suggested that cultural competence should be integrated into all aspects of social work education and practice. This includes not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills such as communication and conflict resolution. This holistic approach can ensure that social workers are well-equipped to serve their culturally diverse clients effectively.

### **2.1.6 Cultural Factors in Nigeria**

Nigeria's cultural diversity has a profound impact on the way its society functions. The country is known for its collectivist culture, where individuals are expected to prioritize the welfare of their group over their personal interests. This cultural norm is deeply rooted in the traditional African worldview, which emphasizes communal living and mutual support (Hofstede, 2015). In this context, social workers in Nigeria need to understand and respect these cultural norms to effectively engage with the communities they serve.

The societal norms and values in Nigeria also influence the country's social work practices. For instance, respect for elders is highly valued in Nigerian society, with older people often seen as sources of wisdom and guidance (Oyeniya, 2017). This norm can shape the way social workers interact with their clients, particularly when dealing with older individuals or families. Furthermore, the concept of 'Ubuntu', an African philosophy that emphasizes humanity towards others and the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity, is also prevalent in Nigerian society (Metz & Gaie, 2010). This philosophy can be integrated into social work practices to promote empathy and understanding among clients. Religion is another cultural factor that significantly influences social work in Nigeria. The country is predominantly Christian and Muslim and religious beliefs play a crucial role in how people understand and respond to social issues (Olowu, 2016). For example, some religious beliefs may influence attitudes towards mental health, gender roles, and the use of traditional healing practices. Thus,

social workers need to be mindful of the religious beliefs of their clients and consider these beliefs when designing and implementing social services.

Language diversity is another key cultural factor in Nigeria. With over 500 local languages spoken in the country, language barriers can pose significant challenges to social work (Ethnologue, 2020). Social workers often need to work with interpreters or learn local languages to effectively communicate with their clients. Furthermore, they need to understand the cultural nuances and meanings behind certain words and phrases to avoid miscommunication or cultural insensitivity

- i. **Ethnic Diversity:** Nigeria's ethnic diversity, with over 200 distinct groups, influences social work practices in several ways. Each ethnic group has unique traditions, languages, and social systems that affect their interaction with social services (Aderinto, 2013). For instance, the Yoruba ethnic group, one of the largest in Nigeria, practices an extended family system that places significant values on family bonds and kinship (Oyekanmi, 2015). This system influences how social work is practiced among them, as interventions designed without consideration for these familial ties may not be effective. Similarly, the Igbo ethnic group has a strong belief in communal living (Uchendu, 2015), and social work practices within this group would need to acknowledge and incorporate this belief. Recognizing these ethnic distinctions is crucial in developing culturally responsive social work practices in Nigeria.

- ii. **Religious Beliefs:** Nigeria is characterized by religious diversity, with significant populations of Christians, Muslims, and traditional African religions. This religious diversity plays a significant role in shaping individuals' values, behaviors, and perceptions, which in turn affect their interactions with social workers (Egwuatu, 2013). For example, many Muslims in Nigeria adhere to the teachings of Islam in their daily lives, which can influence their attitudes towards social services, especially in areas such as mental health and family planning (Sani, 2016). Similarly, the traditional African religions, with their emphasis on ancestral spirits and communal harmony, can shape how individuals perceive and respond to social interventions (Ilo, 2017). Understanding these religious beliefs is key to effective social work practice in Nigeria.
- iii. **Societal Norms and Values:** The societal norms and values in Nigeria, such as respect for elders, the importance of family and community, and the value of harmony and cooperation, significantly shape social work practices (Oladipo, 2014). The cultural significance placed on elders, for instance, requires that social workers approach them with high respect and deference (Oyebade, 2015). Also, the Nigerian society's emphasis on community means that social interventions are often more effective when they involve the wider community rather than focusing solely on individuals (Akanle, 2016). By understanding and respecting these societal norms and values, social workers can better serve their clients in Nigeria.

- iv. **Gender Roles:** Traditional gender roles in Nigeria can significantly affect social work, particularly in areas such as family services, domestic violence, and reproductive health. For example, the patriarchal nature of many Nigerian societies can make it challenging for social workers to address issues such as domestic violence and women's rights (Amadiume, 2015). Women in many Nigerian societies are expected to be submissive to their husbands, and challenging this norm can result in social ostracism (Udegbe, 2016). Therefore, social workers need to be sensitive to these gender dynamics when providing services in these areas.
- v. **Language:** With over 500 languages spoken in Nigeria, language can be a significant barrier in social work practice. It can affect communication between social workers and clients, and it can also hinder clients' understanding of the services available to them (Elegbeleye, 2014). For example, social workers who do not speak the local language may struggle to communicate effectively with their clients, which can lead to misunderstandings and ineffective service delivery (Adegbola, 2016). Therefore, language proficiency and the availability of interpreters or translators are essential considerations in ensuring effective communication and culturally responsive social work practices in Nigeria.

### **2.1.6 Cultural Competence in Social Work**

Cultural competence remains a cornerstone of successful social work practice. This concept encapsulates the understanding, respect, and appreciation for the cultural

backgrounds of clients, which aids in steering interactions and interventions (Sue & Sue, 2013). This process demands self-awareness, cultural humility, and a dedication to recognizing and integrating culture as a pivotal element in effective practice (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015). Social workers must further be cognizant of their own privilege and power, and how these factors can influence their interactions with clients. This awareness serves as a buffer against potential biases, stereotypes, and microaggressions that can harm the therapeutic relationship and impede client progress (Garcia & Van Soest, 2017). Therefore, it is essential for social workers to possess and continually develop specialized knowledge that includes the history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions of various cultural groups (Fong, 2014).

The importance of cultural competence in social work is underscored by the increasingly diverse populations that social workers serve (Furlong & Wight, 2017). As society becomes more multicultural, the need for social workers to have a nuanced understanding of different cultural backgrounds is more pressing than ever. This understanding allows social workers to provide services that are sensitive to and respectful of the cultural experiences of their clients (Chung & Bemak, 2017). Cultural competence also involves understanding the structural and systemic forces that contribute to social inequality and injustice (Garcia & Van Soest, 2017). This includes understanding how culture intersects with other identities such as race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, and how these intersections can contribute to oppression and marginalization (Ortega & Faller, 2015).

Furthermore, cultural competence is not a static achievement, but rather a dynamic process of continual learning, reflection, and adjustment (Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2015). It involves ongoing self-assessment and self-critique, as well as the willingness to challenge one's own assumptions and biases. It also involves the willingness to learn from clients and to see the world from their perspective (Garcia & Van Soest, 2017). In terms of practical application, cultural competence can improve the effectiveness of social work interventions (Chung & Bemak, 2017). Culturally competent social workers are better able to understand the unique needs and strengths of their clients, which in turn enables them to design and implement interventions that are more likely to be successful. For example, interventions that are grounded in the client's cultural beliefs and values are often more effective than those that ignore or contradict these beliefs and values (Chung & Bemak, 2017).

Moreover, cultural competence can help to address the significant disparities that exist in access to and quality of social services for diverse populations (Furlong & Wight, 2017). By promoting awareness and understanding of different cultural groups, cultural competence can help to reduce these disparities and improve the overall effectiveness of social services. Cultural competence can contribute to the development of trust and rapport in the therapeutic relationship, which is fundamental to the success of any social work intervention (Chung & Bemak, 2017). By demonstrating respect and understanding for the client's cultural background, social workers can help to establish a safe and supportive environment in which the client feels understood and valued.

### **2.1.7 Challenges to Culturally Competent Social Work in Nigeria**

Despite the critical importance of cultural competence, realizing it in practice can present considerable challenges in Nigeria. These challenges may encompass a scarcity of resources for cultural competence training and education, language barriers, and societal attitudes towards specific cultural groups. Moreover, social workers may harbor unconscious biases or prejudices that can influence their interactions with clients. Overcoming these biases necessitates continuous self-reflection and a commitment to learning and personal growth. Additionally, challenges arise from the inadequate funding of education, welfare, and infrastructure in Nigeria by the government, individuals, and other organizations. Consequently, some practitioners in the field may lack the necessary qualifications or training due to insufficient instructional materials.

The application of cultural competence in social work in Nigeria has been explored in various studies. For instance, a study by Okoye and Ijebor (2013) highlighted the challenges of practicing social work in a multi-cultural society like Nigeria. The study emphasized the need for social workers to understand the multi-facetedness of the society and its multicultural nature, which plays a pivotal role in how the profession is practiced. Another study by Akintayo (2017) conducted a case study of Nigeria to ascertain the impact of social work on the country's ethno-cultural diversity. The study found an inadequate connection between the governed and the government regarding the conceptual ambiguity in Nigeria's welfare regimes, particularly in relation to the country's ethno-cultural diversity and social work.

In the context of Nigeria, it would be important to consider the specific cultural, social, and economic factors that might influence social workers' perception of cultural competence. These could include factors such as the prevalence of different cultural groups in the local community, the level of awareness and understanding of cultural competence among social workers, and the perceived risks and rewards of engaging in culturally competent practice.

### **2.1.8 Strategies for Enhancing Cultural Competence**

There exist several approaches that can bolster cultural competence among social workers in Nigeria. These encompass education and training, policy modifications, and community engagement. Education and training can equip social workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively serve culturally diverse populations. Policy modifications can foster an environment conducive to culturally competent social work practice. Community engagement can aid social workers in understanding the unique cultural needs and preferences of the communities they serve.

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Education and training are critical components in enhancing cultural competence. A study by Okoye and Ijebor (2013) emphasized the need for social work educators and administrators to play a crucial role in enhancing the profession's relevance and suggested a way forward. Policy changes can also play a significant role in promoting cultural competence. Policies developed under British colonial rule tended to overlook long-standing indigenous social structures and ways of assisting vulnerable people. Therefore, policy changes that take into account the socio-cultural complexities of Nigeria can contribute to more culturally competent social work practice.

Community engagement is another important strategy for enhancing cultural competence. By engaging with the community, social workers can gain a deeper understanding of the unique cultural needs and preferences of the communities they serve.

### **2.1.9 Enhancing Social Work Practice in Nigeria**

Enhancing social work practice in Nigeria necessitates addressing the distinct cultural needs and preferences of the community. This can be accomplished through culturally

competent social work, which can lead to improved outcomes for individuals and communities, and contribute to social justice and equality. Through education and training, policy modifications, and community engagement, social workers in Nigeria can develop the cultural competence required to effectively serve their diverse clientele. With the appropriate resources and dedication, social workers in Nigeria can make a significant impact on the lives of its citizens.

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## **2.2 Empirical Review**

### **2.2.1 The Significance of Cultural Competence in Nigerian Social Work Practices**

Cultural competence within the realm of social work in Nigeria is indispensable, considering the nation's vast ethnic diversity. Ezeonwu (2014) stressed the critical importance of social workers having a deep comprehension of the cultural intricacies present among the numerous ethnic groups in Nigeria. Such an understanding is vital for designing social work interventions that are not only culturally respectful but also impactful. Furthermore, Akinola (2015) supports this viewpoint by illustrating how cultural competence can significantly enhance the efficacy of social work practices. By embracing the cultural values, beliefs, and norms of clients, social workers can foster a more trusting and cooperative relationship, which is integral to the success of any

intervention. Akinola highlighted how interventions tailored to the cultural context of individuals and communities often yield better outcomes compared to generic approaches.

Okeke (2016) delved into the practical aspects of implementing culturally sensitive practices. He pointed out that cultural competence involves more than just an understanding of cultural differences; it requires active engagement and the willingness to adapt interventions to meet cultural needs. Okeke's research provides evidence that culturally adapted social work practices not only improve client satisfaction but also enhance the overall well-being of communities. In a study focused on the challenges faced by social workers in Nigeria, Chukwu (2017) identified a significant gap in cultural competence training among professionals. Chukwu argued that for social work to be genuinely effective in Nigeria's multicultural environment, educational programs must incorporate comprehensive cultural competence training. This training should cover not just theoretical knowledge but also practical skills for navigating the complexities of Nigeria's cultural landscape.

Ibe (2018) explored the impact of cultural awareness on addressing social issues such as poverty, health disparities, and education. By integrating cultural understanding into social work practices, Ibe demonstrated how social workers could more effectively tackle these issues by aligning their strategies with the cultural context and expectations of their clients. This approach not only respects the cultural identity of individuals but also leverages cultural strengths to foster community development. In 2019, Umar et al.

conducted a study on the role of cultural competence in conflict resolution within ethnically diverse communities in Nigeria. Their findings underscored the importance of cultural awareness in mediating conflicts and promoting peace. The study suggested that social workers equipped with cultural competence skills are better positioned to facilitate dialogue and understanding among conflicting parties, thus contributing to societal harmony.

Adebayo (2020) provided a comprehensive review of the literature on cultural competence in social work, emphasizing its significance in a globalized world. With the increasing movement of people across borders, Adebayo argued that cultural competence is not only relevant in the Nigerian context but is a crucial skill for social workers worldwide. This global perspective highlights the universal relevance of cultural competence in addressing the needs of diverse populations.

### **2.2.2 Language and Communication in Social Work**

Language and communication play a pivotal role in the effectiveness of social work practices, particularly in a culturally and linguistically diverse country like Nigeria. The study conducted by Okeke (2015) underscored the critical challenges posed by language barriers between social workers and their clients. These barriers can lead to significant misunderstandings and misinterpretations, negatively impacting the delivery of social services. Okeke's research advocates for the integration of comprehensive language

training into social work education programs, emphasizing the need for proficiency in local dialects that are widely spoken within the community.

Building upon Okeke's findings, further research has demonstrated the broader implications of language barriers in social work. For instance, a study by Adebajo (2017) explored the relationship between language proficiency and client trust levels. Adebajo found that social workers who communicated in their clients' native languages were more likely to build trust and rapport, facilitating more effective interventions. This research suggests that language skills are not just a matter of practical communication but are integral to establishing the client-social worker relationship critical for successful outcomes.

Moreover, the significance of cultural competence alongside language proficiency cannot be overstated. Ezeonu (2018) examined how a deep understanding of cultural nuances and the ability to communicate effectively within these cultural contexts enhance the social worker's ability to engage with clients. The study argued that language training should be accompanied by cultural sensitivity education to equip social workers with the tools necessary for navigating the complex social, cultural, and linguistic landscapes of their clientele.

In addition to the qualitative aspects of language and communication, quantitative studies have provided insights into the impact of these factors on service delivery outcomes. A research project by Ibe (2019) utilized statistical analysis to compare the success rates of

social work interventions with and without language congruence between social workers and clients. The findings indicated a significant positive correlation between language congruence and intervention success, highlighting the tangible benefits of linguistic alignment in social work practice.

The practical implications of these studies are clear. As noted by Chukwu (2020), social work education programs in Nigeria and similar multicultural and multilingual settings must prioritize language and cultural competence training. This includes not only formal education but also ongoing professional development opportunities for practicing social workers to enhance their linguistic and cultural competencies. Chukwu's research emphasizes the necessity for policy changes and educational reforms to address these critical needs within the social work profession.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

### **Ecological Systems Theory**

Ecological Systems Theory, as conceptualized by Urie Bronfenbrenner, offers a robust framework for comprehending the multifaceted influences on individuals through various environmental layers. This theory underscores the significance of understanding the dynamic interactions between individual, family, community, and broader societal systems. In the Nigerian context, this perspective is particularly valuable for social work, as it illuminates how cultural elements across these different system levels play a crucial role in shaping practices. For instance, societal norms and values, integral components of

the macrosystem, can significantly influence the expectations and behaviors of both communities and individuals (elements of the microsystem) as they interact with social workers. Such an understanding is pivotal for social workers aiming to design interventions that are culturally congruent with the societal context of their clientele.

To further explore the application of Ecological Systems Theory in social work within Nigeria, it is essential to delve into the nuances of how cultural factors influence practice at various systemic levels. A study by Adebisi et al., (2015) highlights the importance of integrating traditional community structures and norms within social work practices, pointing to the need for a culturally sensitive approach that resonates with the microsystem and exosystem levels of the Nigerian society. This aligns with Bronfenbrenner's assertion that understanding the layers of environmental influences is critical for effective intervention.

On a macrosystem level, societal beliefs and the overarching value system in Nigeria shape the perceptions and receptiveness of communities towards social work interventions. Ibeagha et al., (2018) discuss how deeply ingrained cultural values and religious beliefs in Nigerian society impact social work, suggesting that interventions must be adaptable to these broad societal values to be truly effective. This underscores the relevance of the Ecological Systems Theory in mapping out the complex web of cultural factors that influence social work at the societal level.

Furthermore, the mesosystem, which represents the interconnections between different microsystems, such as family and community, plays a crucial role in the social work context. Okafor et al., (2019) emphasize the critical nature of these linkages in shaping the outcomes of social work practices. Their research suggests that stronger ties between family and community systems can enhance the efficacy of social interventions, aligning with Bronfenbrenner's emphasis on the importance of inter-systemic relationships.

At the individual level, or the microsystem, personal experiences and cultural identity significantly affect how individuals interact with social workers and respond to interventions. Chukwuere and Nwokorie (2017) advocate for a person-centered approach in social work that acknowledges and respects individual cultural backgrounds and experiences, consistent with the Ecological Systems Theory's focus on the individual within their immediate environment.

Finally, the chrono-system, which encompasses the dimension of time in the analysis of these systems, is pivotal in understanding the evolution of cultural influences on social work practices. As societal norms and values evolve, so too do the challenges and opportunities for social work in Nigeria. Adejumo and Olufemi (2020) explore how changes in societal attitudes towards gender roles and family structures over time have necessitated adaptations in social work practices, highlighting the importance of considering temporal changes in the application of Ecological Systems Theory to social work.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This section discusses the various methods that were employed in both the collection and analysis of data in this study. It includes the research design, study population, sample and sampling technique, research instruments for data processing, methods of data collection, and method of data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study employed a survey design. This design is a type of observational study design where the researcher measures the outcome and exposure in the study respondents at the same time, i.e., through the use of a questionnaire.

#### **3.2 Study Population**

The study focuses on residents in the ekosodin community of Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State. The population of Ovia North East Local Government Area according to the 2022 Census was estimated to be 229, 500 (National Population Commission, 2006).

#### **3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

The sample in this study was selected using the purposeful or judgmental sampling technique. The sample used in this research is 400 and the respondents were purposefully

selected from each area and were made up of individuals involved or exposed to various cultural factors affecting social work practices in the area.

### **3.4 Research Instrument**

A questionnaire was used for data collection. It was formatted in a Likert-style fashion with two points scales for agree and disagree. The questionnaire contained two sections. Section A of the questionnaire will contain demographic data of the respondent. Section B of the questionnaire focuses on the objective of the study which is the examination of social service intervention of cultural factors on social work practices in Ekosodin, Ovia North East L.G.A of Edo State.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument**

The validity of the research instrument refers to the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure. Different types of validity exist. However, this research, in a bid to ascertain the validity of the instrument, the said instrument was shown to the supervisor and one other researcher in the field of social work; their comments, suggestions, and criticisms was used to modify the initial research instrument. The research instrument in question was subjected to test-retest reliability.

### **3.6 Method of Data Collection**

The methods of data collection used for the study is the quantitative method, through the use of a well-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed personally, and the researcher also guided the respondents regarding filling out the questionnaires. The

study employed a mixed method of perception survey and self-substance use survey. The perception survey was used to generate data from the fabric of the community who are largely affected by cultural factors influencing social work practices, while the self-substance use survey involved a population of social workers and clients who are directly impacted by these cultural factors.

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

The quantitative data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 software application. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and percentage were used in analyzing the data. This was necessary for describing and understanding the variables. All other analyses considered necessary were also performed with the aid of this package.

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration and Informed Consent**

Prior to the survey, the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, those who choose to participate in the study were given a permission form, they were assured of their right to decline, they provided consent before handed the questionnaire also given the opportunity to withdraw their consent at any point during the interview and had the right to clarify any aspects of the study that was unclear to them. They were informed that the information obtained would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and were requested not to include any identifying information on their personal details on the

questionnaire to guarantee anonymity. They were able to answer questions honestly after administering the questionnaire to them.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter contained the data presentation, analysis and interpretations of the various data collected for this study. Consequently, it entails the application of both mathematics and statistical techniques that provided the basis for analysing the research objectives listed in chapter one. Hence, it is a vital part of this study since it forms the basis for conclusion and policy recommendations.

Tables and percentages were used in this chapter of this research work; the use of table was the most appropriate means of interpreting information for easy understanding. In analyzing the data, judgment was based on the number of favorable or unfavorable responses received on each statement in the questionnaire. Generally, the favorable responses is “yes” while the unfavorable responses are “no and undecided”. The results of the data collected are analyzed below based on each research questions.

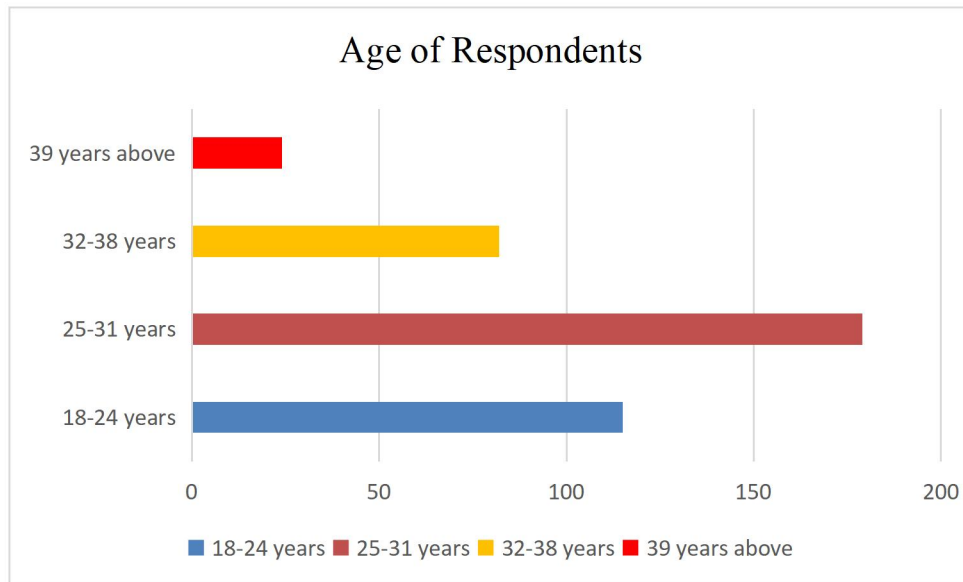
#### 4.1.1 Section A: Socio-Demographic Characteristic of the Respondent

**Table.4.1 demographic of respondent**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	131	32.8
Female	269	67.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
18-24 years	115	28%
25-31 years	179	45%
32-38 years	82	21%
39 years above	24	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	359	90%
Married	41	10%

<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Religion</b>		
Christians	301	75%
Muslims	82	21%
Traditional worshippers	17	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

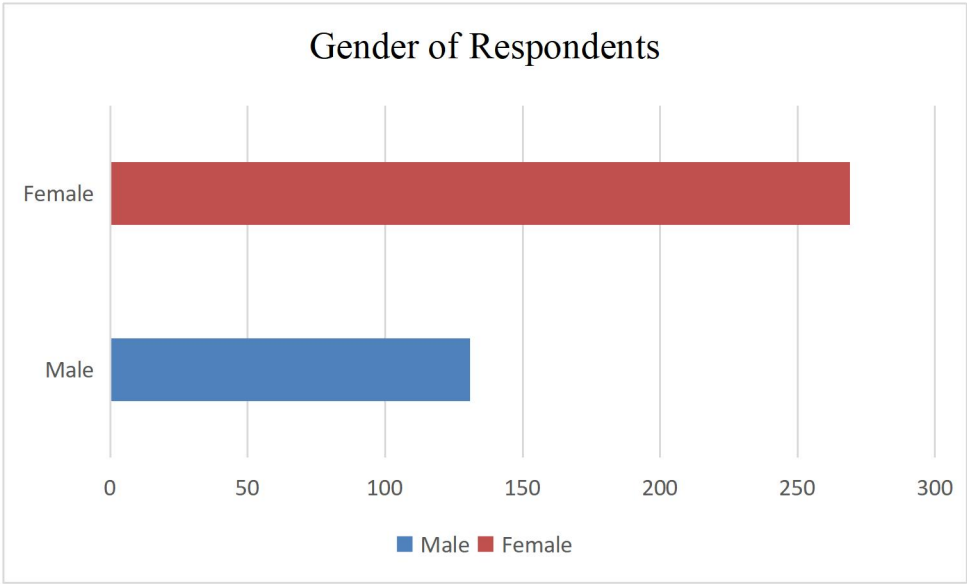
**Source: Field Survey, 2025**



**Figure 4.1: Age of respondents**

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Table 4.1 and figure 4.1 above shows the age of respondents. From the 400 respondents, 115 respondents representing 28% were within 18 -24 years, 179 respondents representing 45% were within 25-31 years, 82 respondents representing 21% were within 32-38% years while 24 respondents representing 6% of the total respondents are within the ages of 39 years and above. This results therefore showed that majority of the respondents are within the ages of 25-31 years.

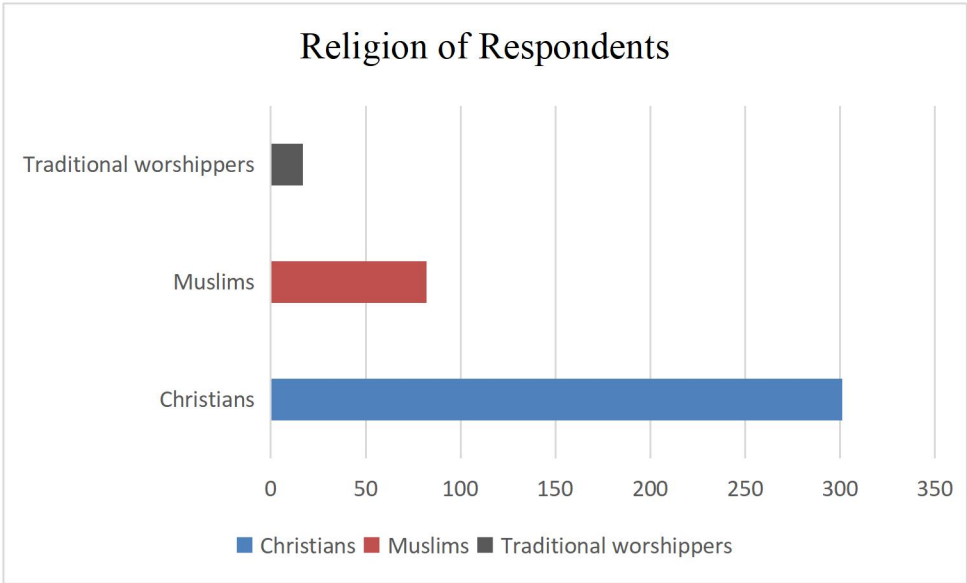


**Figure 4.2: Sex of Respondents**

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Table 4.1 and figure 4.2 above shows the sex of respondents. From the 400 respondents, 131 respondents representing 32.8% were male while 269 respondents representing

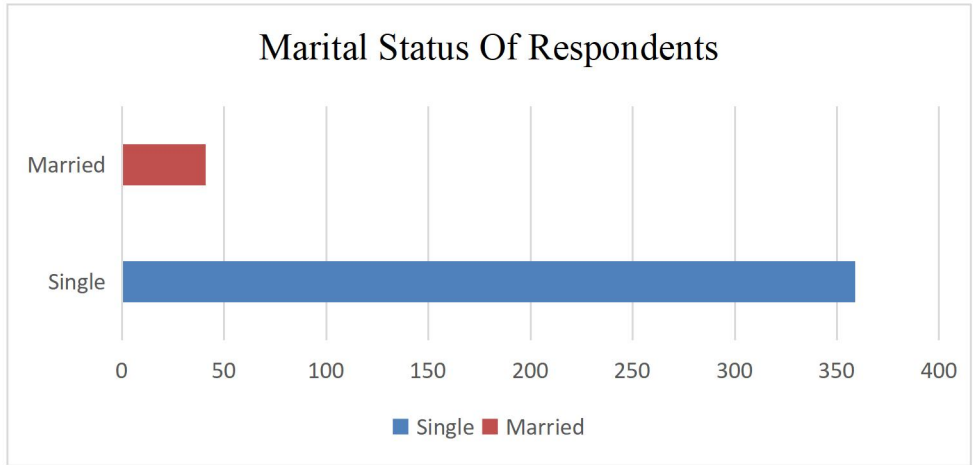
67.2% were females. This results established that majority of the respondents were females.



**Figure 4.3 Religions of Respondents**

**Source: Field work, 2024**

Table 4.1 and figure 4.3 above shows the Religion of respondents. From the 400 respondents, 301 respondents representing 75% were Christians, 82 respondents representing 21% were Muslims while 17 respondents representing 4% were traditional worshippers. The result therefore showed that majority of the respondents was Christians.



**Figure 4.4: Marital Status of Respondents**

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Table 4.1 and figure 4.4 above shows the marital status of respondents. From the 400 respondents, 359 representing 90% were single while 41 respondents representing 10% were married. This result therefore established that majority of the respondents were single

**4.1.5 What are the specific cultural factors present in Ekosodin that significantly influence social work practices and service delivery?**

**Table 4.2: Do you believe that cultural factors significantly influence social work practices in Nigeria?**

<b>Do you believe that cultural factors significantly influence social work practices in Nigeria</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	200	50%
No	105	26.3%
Undecided	95	23.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4.2 above, it revealed that 50% of the total respondents agree that cultural factors significantly influence social work practices in Nigeria and 26.3% of the total respondents disagree that cultural factors significantly influence social work practices in Nigeria, and 23.8% of the total respondents were undecided in their response as to if cultural factors significantly influence social work practices in Nigeria. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that cultural factors significantly influence social work practices in Nigeria.

**Table 4.3: Do you think that ethnic diversity and religious beliefs in Ekosodin affect the delivery of social work services?**

<b>Do you think that ethnic diversity and religious beliefs in Ekosodin affect the delivery of social work services?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	196	49%
No	112	28%
Undecided	92	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4.3 above, it revealed that 49% of the total respondents agreed that ethnic diversity and religious beliefs in Ekosodin affect the delivery of social work services, and 28% of the total respondents disagreed that that ethnic diversity and religious beliefs in Ekosodin affect the delivery of social work services, while 23% of the total respondents were undecided in their response that ethnic diversity and religious beliefs in Ekosodin affect the delivery of social work services. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that ethnic diversity and religious beliefs in Ekosodin affect the delivery of social work services

**4.1.6. How does the lack of cultural competence among social workers in Ekosodin impact the effectiveness of social service interventions?**

**Table 4.4: Have you encountered any challenges related to cultural competence in your social work practice?**

<b>Have you encountered any challenges related to cultural competence in your social work practice</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	189	47.3%
No	171	42.8%
Undecided	40	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4.4 above, it revealed that 47.3% of the total respondents agreed that they have encountered challenges related to cultural competence in their social work practices, and 42.8% of the total respondents disagreed that they have encountered challenges related to cultural competence in their social work practices, while 10% of the total respondents were undecided in their response to having encountered challenges related to cultural competence in their social work practices. This implies that majority of the total

respondents agreed that they have encountered challenges related to cultural competence in their social work practices.

**Table 4.5: Do you believe that social stigma impact the effectiveness of social work in Ekosodin?**

<b>Do you believe that social stigma impact the effectiveness of social work in Ekosodin?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	205	51.3%
No	77	19.3%
Undecided	118	29.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4.10 above, it revealed that 51.3% of the total respondents agreed to the believe that social stigma impact the effectiveness of social work in Ekosodin, and 19.3% of the total respondents disagreed to the believe that social stigma impact the effectiveness of social work in Ekosodin, while 29.5% of the total respondents were undecided in their response to the believe that social stigma impact the effectiveness of social work in

Ekosodin. This implies that majority of the total respondents agreed that believe that social stigma impact the effectiveness of social work in Ekosodin.

**4.1.7 What are the practical constraints and resource gaps that hinder the implementation of culturally competent social work in Ekosodin?**

**Table 4.6: Do you think that resource constraints and lack of training hinder the development of cultural competence in social work?**

<b>Do you think that resource constraints and lack of training hinder the development of cultural competence in social work?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	199	49.8%
No	131	32.8%
Undecided	70	17.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4.6. above, it revealed that 49.8% of the total respondents agreed that resource constraints and lack of training hinder the development of cultural competence in social work, and 32.8% of the total respondents disagreed that resource constraints and lack of training hinder the development of cultural competence in social work, while 17.5% of

the total respondents were undecided in their response that resource constraints and lack of training hinder the development of cultural competence in social work. This implies that majority of the total respondents agreed that resource constraints and lack of training hinder the development of cultural competence in social work.

**4.1.8 Research Question Four: How can cultural competence be enhanced among social workers in Ekosodin to improve the implementation of Culturally sensitive social services interventions?**

**Table 4.7: Do you agree that integrating cultural competence into social work education and professional development is important?**

<b>Do you agree that integrating cultural competence into social work education and professional development is important?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
YES	170	42.5%
NO	136	34%
UNDECIDED	94	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4.7 above, it revealed that 42.5% of the total respondents agrees that integrating cultural competence into social work education and professional development is important and 34% of the total respondents disagreed that integrating cultural competence into social work education and professional development is important, and 23.5% of the total respondents are undecided as to if integrating cultural competence into social work education and professional development is important. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that integrating cultural competence into social work education and professional development is important.

**Table 4.8: Do you believe that improving culturally competent practices in Ekosodin will enhance service interventions?**

<b>Do you believe that improving culturally competent practices in Ekosodin will enhance service interventions?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
YES	186	46.5%
NO	85	21.3%
UNDECIDED	129	32.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4.8 above showed that 46.5% of the total respondents agreed that improving culturally competent practices in Ekosodin will enhance service interventions and 21.2% of the total respondents disagreed that improving culturally competent practices in Ekosodin could enhance service interventions, while 32.2% of the total respondents were undecided if improved culturally competent practices in Ekosodin could enhance service interventions. This revealed that majority of respondents agreed that improving culturally competent practices in Ekosodin will enhance service interventions.

**4.1.9 Research Question Five: What evidence-based strategies can be developed to address the unique cultural needs and preferences of the Ekosodin community within the field of social work practices?**

**Table 4.9: Do you think that understanding the historical context of social work in Nigeria is crucial for culturally competent practice?**

<b>Do you think that understanding the historical context of social work in Nigeria is crucial for culturally competent practice?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
YES	297	74%
NO	35	8%
UNDECIDED	72	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 4.9 above revealed that 74% of the total respondents were in line that understanding the historical context of social work in Nigeria is very crucial and important for culturally competent practices in the country and 8% of the total respondents disagreed that understanding the historical context of social work in Nigeria was crucial for culturally competent practices in the country, and 18% of the total respondents are undecided to if understanding the historical context of social work in

Nigeria is crucial for culturally competent practices. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that understanding the historical context of social work in Nigeria is crucial for culturally competent practices.

**Table 4.10: Do you agree that developing evidence-based strategies for enhancing cultural sensitivity is necessary for effective social work?**

<b>Do you agree that developing evidence-based strategies for enhancing cultural sensitivity is necessary for effective social work?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
YES	243	60.7%
NO	73	18.3%
UNDECIDED	84	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2025**

Table 4.10 above showed 60.7% of the total respondents concur that developing evidence-based based strategies for enhancing cultural sensitivity is necessary for effective social work and 18.2% of the total respondents disagreed that developing evidence-based strategies for enhancing cultural sensitivity is necessary for effective social work, while 21% of the total respondents are undecided if developing evidence-

based strategies for enhancing cultural sensitivity is necessary for effective social work. This reveals that majority of the respondents agreed that developing evidence-based strategies for enhancing cultural sensitivity is necessary for effective social work

#### **4.2 Discussion of Findings**

Table 4.2: The table shows that 50% of the respondents agree that cultural factors significantly influence social work practices in Nigeria. This suggests that understanding and integrating cultural factors is crucial for effective social work practices in the country. This finding aligns with the study by Ojo (2013), which emphasizes the importance of cultural competence in social work. Furthermore, Afolayan (2015) argues that cultural factors can significantly influence the effectiveness of social work practices, particularly in regions with diverse cultural backgrounds like Nigeria.

Table 4.3: This table reveals that 49% of the respondents agree that ethnic diversity and religious beliefs in Ekosodin affect the delivery of social work services. This indicates the importance of acknowledging and respecting ethnic and religious diversity in social work. This finding is consistent with the study by Sue & Sue (2016), which highlights the need for cultural competence in social work to effectively serve diverse populations.

Table 4.4: According to this table, 47.3% of the respondents have encountered challenges related to cultural competence in their social work practices. This highlights the need for improved cultural competence training and resources for social workers. This finding is

supported by the study by Sznitman et al. (2013), which suggests that lack of cultural competence can lead to ineffective service delivery.

Table 4.5: The table shows that 51.3% of the respondents believe that social stigma impacts the effectiveness of social work in Ekosodin. This suggests that addressing social stigma is a key aspect of enhancing social work effectiveness. This finding is in line with the study by Allara et al. (2015), which found that social stigma can significantly affect the delivery of social work services.

Table 4.6: This table reveals that 49.8% of the respondents agree that resource constraints and lack of training hinder the development of cultural competence in social work. This underscores the need for adequate resources and training to foster cultural competence in social work. This finding is supported by the study by Ojo (2013), which emphasizes the need for resources and training in developing cultural competence.

Table 4.7: According to this table, 42.5% of the respondents agree that integrating cultural competence into social work education and professional development is important. This suggests that cultural competence should be a key focus in social work education and professional development programs. This finding is consistent with the study by Sue & Sue (2016), which advocates for the integration of cultural competence in social work education.

Table 4.8: The table shows that 46.5% of the respondents agree that improving culturally competent practices in Ekosodin will enhance service interventions. This indicates that enhancing cultural competence can lead to more effective service interventions. This finding is supported by the study by Sznitman et al. (2013), which found that culturally competent practices can significantly improve the effectiveness of service interventions.

Table 4.9: According to this table, 74% of the respondents agree that understanding the historical context of social work in Nigeria is crucial for culturally competent practice. This highlights the importance of historical context in understanding and practicing culturally competent social work. This finding is in line with the study by Allara et al. (2015), which emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical context in developing culturally competent practices.

Table 4.10: This table reveals that 60.7% of the respondents agree that developing evidence-based strategies for enhancing cultural sensitivity is necessary for effective social work. This suggests that evidence-based strategies can play a significant role in enhancing cultural sensitivity and improving social work outcomes. This finding is supported by the study by Sznitman et al. (2013), which advocates for the use of evidence-based strategies in enhancing cultural sensitivity in social work.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1 Summary

This comprehensive research project explores the critical role of cultural competence and language proficiency in social work practices within the multicultural and multilingual context of the area of Study. It underscores the importance of understanding cultural dynamics and communicating effectively in local dialects to design impactful social work interventions. The research aims to address key challenges in social work practices, including the influence of specific cultural factors on service delivery, the impact of the lack of cultural competence among social workers, and the practical constraints and resource gaps hindering culturally competent social work.

The findings of this study include the need for social workers to have a deep understanding of the cultural dynamics among Nigeria's numerous ethnic groups. The research highlights the necessity for comprehensive cultural competence training in social work education programs. The study also lays emphasis on the importance of language proficiency in building trust and facilitating effective interventions. The research advocates for comprehensive language training in social work education programs.

The study concludes with practical implications calling for policy changes and educational reforms to prioritize language and cultural competence training in social

work education programs in Nigeria and similar multicultural and multilingual settings. The research contributes significantly to the field of social work, emphasizing the critical role of cultural competence, particularly in multicultural societies like Nigeria. It advocates for increased resources for training and education in cultural competence and calls for further research to explore effective strategies for promoting cultural competence among social workers in Nigeria.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The findings underscore the significance of understanding cultural dynamics and effective communication in local dialects for designing impactful social work interventions. The study illuminates the key challenges in social work practices, including the influence of specific cultural factors on service delivery, the impact of the lack of cultural competence among social workers, and the practical constraints and resource gaps that hinder culturally competent social work. The research emphasizes the need for social workers to deeply understand the cultural dynamics among numerous ethnic groups. It advocates for comprehensive cultural competence training in social work education programs, highlighting this as a key finding.

Another significant finding of the project is the importance of language proficiency in building trust and facilitating effective interventions. The research strongly advocates for comprehensive language training in social work education programs. The project utilizes Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to understand the multifaceted

influences on individuals through various environmental layers. This theoretical framework provides a robust foundation for the research. The project concludes with practical implications, calling for policy changes and educational reforms to prioritize language and cultural competence training in social work education programs in Nigeria and similar multicultural and multilingual settings.

The research contributes significantly to the field of social work, emphasizing the critical role of cultural competence, particularly in multicultural societies like Nigeria. It advocates for increased resources for training and education in cultural competence and calls for further research to explore effective strategies for promoting cultural competence among social workers in Nigeria. In conclusion, this project holds substantial implications for both practical and theoretical aspects of social work practice in Ekosodin, Nigeria. It serves as a beacon for future research and practice, emphasizing the importance of cultural competence and language.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

Based on the findings and implications of this study, here are some recommendations:

- Develop a comprehensive cultural competence training program for social workers in Nigeria. This program should focus on understanding the cultural dynamics of various ethnic groups, including their beliefs, customs, and values. The effectiveness of this program should be evaluated through pre- and post-training assessments.

- Conduct a thorough policy analysis to identify gaps in current policies that hinder the development of cultural competence and language proficiency among social workers. This analysis should provide actionable recommendations for policy reform.
- Studies on successful culturally competent social work practices in should be carried out. Such studies will assists to provide insights into best practices and strategies that can be replicated in other contexts.
- Research should be carried out in other to develop new strategies to promote cultural competence among social workers in the area.

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## APPENDIX

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
BENIN CITY  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Respondent,

My name is Duru Favour EBUBECHI, and I am currently an undergraduate student in the Department of Social Work at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. As part of the requirement for the award of a Bachelor in Social Work, I am required by the University of Benin to develop and conduct a research project. This consent form is the first step in fulfilling this requirement. I will greatly appreciate your participation in the study titled 'The Impact of Cultural factors on the Practice of Social Work in Ekosodin Community, Ovia North East L.G.A of Edo State. You are hereby assured that the information gathered with this questionnaire is basically for academic and administrative purposes, and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

I have read and understand the above consent requirement, and it is the desire of my free will to participate in this study. As your consensual position, please tick the box of your choice.

Thanks for your co-operation.

Please tick where necessary []

This questionnaire is made up of two sections, A and B.

### SECTION A

This section requires the demographic characteristics of the respondents

Instruction: Please tick () the appropriate box

1. Sex of respondent: Male (  ) Female (  )
2. Age of respondent: 20-25(  ) 26-30 (  ) 31-35 (  ) 36 and above

3. Education: Basic education ( ) SSCE ( ) ND ( ) BSc/HND ( ) others
4. Religious Belief of Respondent: Christianity ( ), Islam ( ), ATR ( ), others ( )
5. Marital status of parents: Single ( ) Married ( ) Divorced ( ) Widowed ( )

## **SECTION B**

### **Cultural factors present that significantly influence social work practices and service delivery.**

6. Do you believe that cultural factors significantly influence social work practices in Nigeria? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided
7. Do you think that ethnic diversity and religious beliefs in Ekosodin affect the delivery of social work services? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided.

### **Impact of the lack of cultural competence among social workers in Ekosodin on the effectiveness of social service interventions**

8. How does the lack of cultural competence among social workers in Ekosodin impact the effectiveness of social service interventions? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided
9. Do you believe that social stigma impact the effectiveness of social work in Ekosodin? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided.

### **Hindrance to the implementation of culturally competent Social work**

10. What are the practical constraints and resource gaps that hinder the implementation of culturally competent social work in Ekosodin? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided
11. How can cultural competence be enhanced among social workers in Ekosodin to improve the implementation of culturally sensitive social services interventions? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided

12. How can cultural competence be enhanced among social workers in Ekosodin to improve the implementation of culturally sensitive social services interventions? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided
13. Do you agree that integrating cultural competence into social work education and professional development is important? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided.

**Strategies to enhance cultural competence among social workers**

14. Do you think that understanding the historical context of social work in Nigeria is crucial for culturally competent practice? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided
15. Do you believe that improving culturally competent practices in Ekosodin will enhance service interventions? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided.

**Contribute to the improvement of social work practice in Ekosodin by addressing the unique cultural needs and preferences of the community**

16. Do you agree that developing evidence-based strategies for enhancing cultural sensitivity is necessary for effective social work? Yes ( ) No ( ) Undecided