

**ATTITUDE OF SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICERS TOWARDS THE  
AGED IN NEW BENIN COMMUNITY, EDO STATE**

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BENIN CITY**

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**BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK, FACULTY OF SOCIAL  
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PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF  
SCIENCE (B.Sc) IN SOCIAL WORK.**

**OCTOBER, 2023**

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

I hereby approve this project work as adequate in scope and quality for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Degree in Bachelor of Science (B.Sc), Social Work.

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**Mrs Benedicta Imudia**  
Project Supervisor

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Date

## **CERTIFICATION**

We certify that this project was carried out by Onifade Ezekiel Omoniyi in the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of B.Sc. Degree in Social Work.

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HOD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for sparing my life to see this day come through.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I give thanks to God Almighty for granting me the grace, knowledge, the ability, strength, and divine support all through the time of my study, to the very end.

My sincere and undiluted appreciation goes to my able project supervisor Mrs Benedicta Imudia, whose intellectual prowess, scholarly and parental guide reviewed my work till the last point ,amidst giving suggestion, directive and above all encouragement through the period of this survey. I am also grateful for her advice which to a great extent, helped me in the completion of this research.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Approval Page	ii
Certification	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Abstract	xi
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Objective of the study	5
Research Questions	6
Significance of the Study	6
Scope and Delimitation of the Study	7
Operational Definition of Terms	7
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
2.1.1 Concept of Social Welfare Official	8
2.1.2 Attitudes towards the Elderly	10
2.1.3 Influence of Attitudes on Service Delivery	13
2.1.4 Factors Shaping Attitudes	16
2.1.5 Consequences of Negative Attitudes	21
2.2 Theoretical Framework	24
2.3 Empirical Review	25

2.4 Research Gap	27
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**CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

Design of the study	29
Population of the Study	29
Sample and Sampling Technique	29
Research Instrument	30
Validity of the Instrument	31
Reliability of the Instrument	31
Method of Data Collection	32
Method of Data Analysis	32

**CHAPTER FOUR:**

**DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Presentation of Results	34
Discussion of Findings	42

**CHAPTER FIVE:**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Summary	44
Conclusion	45
Recommendations	46
References	48
APPENDIX 1	50

## ABSTRACT

The study investigated the attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Benin community. Four (4) research questions were raised to guide the study. The study adopted survey research design. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire; it was built around the research question by the researcher and validated by the researcher's supervisor. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The major findings of the study are as follows: social welfare officers have positive attitude towards the aged in Benin Community; the attitudes of social welfare services to the elderly population influence: the level of interaction and communication of social workers with the aged, affects their quality of services, the relationship between social workers attitude and the aged and the professionalism of social workers; the respondents agreed that factors contribute to the formation of these attitudes among social welfare officers include: Personal beliefs and values, Religious beliefs. Formal and professional training and Personal life experience. And the potential consequences of negative attitudes towards the aged on the well-being and quality of life of the elderly population include: negative stereotypes or prejudices about the elderly may lead to discrimination or social exclusion, older individuals may experience reduced access to healthcare or support services due to negative attitudes, negative attitudes towards aging impact the mental and emotional well-being of elderly individuals and negative attitudes can contribute to increased feelings of loneliness and isolation among the elderly. Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made: Social welfare officers should maintain good attitude towards the aged in Benin Community and Social workers should always bear it in mind that their attitude towards the aged is very important amongst others.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Nigeria is an important area of study as it directly impacts the quality of care and support provided to the elderly population. Social welfare officers refers to professionals who work in the field of social welfare and are responsible for providing assistance, support, and services to individuals and communities in need. These officers play a crucial role in implementing social welfare policies and programs, ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to essential resources and support systems.

According to Riccucci, (2019) social welfare officers are responsible for assessing the needs of individuals and families, developing intervention plans, and coordinating services to address those needs. They work closely with clients to identify their strengths, challenges, and goals, and provide guidance and support to help them overcome difficulties and improve their well-being. Social welfare officers play a vital role in providing support, assistance, and services to individuals and communities in need. Their roles encompass assessing needs, developing intervention plans, coordinating services,

advocating for clients' rights, and promoting social welfare. While specific references on the roles of social welfare officers in Nigeria are limited, the general understanding of the field of social welfare can provide insights into their responsibilities and contributions to the well-being of individuals and communities (Zeng 2019).

According to Zeng (2019), knowledge and attitude of the social welfare officials are directly related to their practice. Regarding elderly care the quality of caregivers for the elderly in long-term care institutions is dependent on factors such as education, working years, and pre-employment training. Sun (2019) asserted that attitude of social welfare officials have been an area of concern as their attitude is a major determinant in their services to the aged (also known as elderly).

An elderly person, also referred to as an older adult or senior citizen, generally refers to an individual who has reached an advanced stage of life in terms of age. The specific age range that defines an elderly person may vary across different contexts, cultures, and organizations. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an elderly person is typically defined as someone who has reached the age of 60 years or above Gunawan & Laksmidewi (2020). However, it is important to note that this age threshold may differ in certain contexts or for specific purposes. For instance, some studies may consider

individuals aged 65 years and above as elderly (Perdhana, 2022). In Nigeria, there is limited research specifically focusing on the attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged.

However, a study by Okpa (2022) explored the socio-demographic factors affecting access to and utilization of social welfare services in Nigeria. While the study did not directly examine the attitude of social welfare officers, it provides insights into the challenges and barriers faced by the elderly population in accessing social welfare services in Nigeria. Hence, the relevance of the study is born.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Nigeria is a significant concern that needs to be addressed. The elderly population faces various challenges, including poverty, limited access to affordable healthcare, violence and abuse, and integration into social life (Nmadu, 2018). Social welfare officers play a crucial role in providing support and services to the elderly and their attitude towards this population can greatly impact the quality of care and support provided.

Various factors can influence these attitudes, which in turn have the potential to impact the quality of care and support provided to the elderly population. It is

crucial to delve deeper into the nature of these attitudes and understand their potential consequences. By understanding the underlying factors that shape the attitudes of social welfare officers towards the elderly, it becomes possible to develop strategies that foster positive and empathetic outlooks. This understanding can lead to the implementation of targeted interventions and training programs that address any biases or prejudices that may exist. Addressing these issues is essential for the well-being and welfare of the elderly in the Benin community. By promoting positive attitudes among social welfare officers, the elderly can receive better care and support tailored to their needs. This, in turn, can contribute to their overall well-being and enhance their quality of life.

Furthermore, creating an environment that encourages positive attitudes towards the elderly can have a ripple effect within the community. It can help reduce age-related stereotypes and promote a more inclusive and respectful society for all individuals, regardless of their age or circumstances. Therefore, it is important to address and prioritize the attitudes held by social welfare officers towards the elderly in the Benin community. By doing so, we can work towards ensuring that the elderly receive the care and support they deserve, ultimately enhancing their well-being and welfare.

Lastly, there is limited research specifically focusing on the attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Nigeria. Understanding their attitudes is essential for identifying potential gaps, barriers, and areas for improvement in the delivery of social welfare services to the elderly population. The problem statement can be summarized as follows: What is the attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Nigeria, and how does it impact the provision of social welfare services to this population? Addressing these questions will provide valuable insights into the attitudes of social welfare officers towards the aged in Nigeria and help identify strategies to improve the provision of social welfare services to this vulnerable population.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The study focuses on the attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Benin community. Specifically the study seeks to:

1. examine the prevailing attitudes of social welfare officers towards the aged in Nigeria.
2. determine if these attitudes influence the delivery of social welfare services to the elderly population in Benin Community.
3. ascertain the factors that contribute to the formation of these attitudes among social welfare officers in Benin Community.

4. determine the potential consequences of negative attitudes towards the aged on the well-being and quality of life of the elderly population in Benin Community.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following questions are raised to guide the study.

1. What are the prevailing attitudes of social welfare officers towards the aged in Benin Community?
2. How do these attitudes influence the delivery of social welfare services to the elderly population in Benin Community?
3. What factors contribute to the formation of these attitudes among social welfare officers in Benin Community?
4. What are the potential consequences of negative attitudes towards the aged on the well-being and quality of life of the elderly population in Benin Community?

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

This study has a big impact on how best practices and social work theory are developed. The study would advance the theoretical underpinnings of the social work profession, particularly in the context of Nigerian contexts. Additionally, this study will change the paradigm of the previous social work theories and

add to the body of already held information; by educating them about the right attitude disposition towards the aged in Benin community, Edo State.

Empirically, this study is important since it will give students who are interested in the social work profession and social workers' roles in society with regard to care giving practices an explanatory data base. The results of this paper will serve as a valuable and pertinent instrument for formulating policies that was deal with concerns surrounding the social work profession and public awareness in Nigerian societies. It will offer the necessary information so that the government may better understand the factors informing the attitude of social welfare officials towards their services to the aged in Benin City.

### **1.6 Scope of the study**

The scope of this study examines attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Benin community and it's limited to some selected the aged in Benin community, Edo State.

### **1.7 Definition of Concepts**

**Social Welfare Official:** Social welfare officers refers to professionals who work in the field of social welfare and are responsible for providing assistance, support, and services to individuals and communities in need

**Attitude:** a settled way of thinking or feeling about something.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.1 REVIEW OF RELEVANT CONCEPTS**

As it reviews pertinent material, this chapter focuses on attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Benin community. The following subheadings will be used to discuss this chapter:

#### **2.1.1 Concept of Social Welfare Official**

A social welfare official is a government official responsible for implementing and overseeing social welfare policies and programs. These officials play a crucial role in ensuring that individuals and communities have access to essential social services and support systems. The role of social welfare officials varies depending on the country and context, but their primary objective is to promote the well-being and improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations. Social welfare officials are involved in various tasks and responsibilities related to social welfare. They are responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating social welfare policies and programs (Pierson, 2023). This includes conducting research, analyzing data, and identifying the needs and priorities of the target population (Pierson, 2023). Social welfare officials also collaborate with other government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders to coordinate and deliver social services effectively (Cohen, 2014).

One of the key roles of social welfare officials is to ensure that eligible individuals and families have access to social welfare benefits and services. They are responsible for determining eligibility criteria, processing applications, and providing assistance to those in need (Reddy, 2021). This may involve conducting assessments, interviews, and home visits to assess the needs and circumstances of individuals and families (Reddy, 2021).

In addition to administering social welfare programs, officials also play a crucial role in advocating for social justice and equality. They work to address systemic issues and barriers that prevent individuals from accessing social welfare benefits (Walle & Lahat, 2016). This may involve advocating for policy changes, raising awareness about social welfare issues, and promoting inclusive and equitable practices (Walle & Lahat, 2016). Social welfare officials also have a responsibility to ensure the efficient and effective use of resources allocated for social welfare programs. They are involved in budgeting, financial management, and monitoring the implementation of programs to ensure that resources are utilized appropriately and that desired outcomes are achieved (Cohen, 2014).

The role of social welfare officials is not without challenges. They often face complex and multifaceted social issues, limited resources, and bureaucratic constraints (Upmark, 2011). They must navigate political dynamics, stakeholder interests, and public opinion to effectively address social welfare

needs (Pierson, 2023). Additionally, social welfare officials may encounter resistance, skepticism, or even hostility from certain segments of society (Upmark, 2011). To overcome these challenges, social welfare officials need to possess a range of skills and competencies. They should have a strong understanding of social welfare policies, social justice principles, and the needs of the target population (Pierson, 2023). They should also have excellent communication and interpersonal skills to engage with diverse stakeholders and build partnerships (Walle & Lahat, 2016).

Additionally, analytical and problem-solving skills are essential for assessing needs, developing strategies, and evaluating the impact of social welfare programs (Pierson, 2023). In conclusion, social welfare officials play a vital role in promoting social welfare and improving the well-being of individuals and communities. They are responsible for implementing and overseeing social welfare policies and programs, ensuring access to social services, advocating for social justice, and managing resources effectively. Despite the challenges they face, social welfare officials are instrumental in creating a more equitable and inclusive society

### **2.1.2 Attitudes towards the Elderly**

Attitudes towards the elderly play a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of social welfare services and significantly influence the quality of care and

support provided to this vulnerable population. Research underscores that the attitudes held by social welfare officers towards the elderly can have profound implications for the effectiveness of service delivery, ultimately impacting the well-being and quality of life of the aging population. This section delves deeper into the influence of attitudes and how they are intertwined with personal beliefs, societal norms, and professional training.

The impact of attitudes on the provision of social welfare services to the elderly cannot be overstated. Positive attitudes have been linked to improved care, better outcomes, and enhanced overall experiences for the elderly recipients of these services (Jones & King, 2018; Smith, 2016). Social welfare officers who harbor positive attitudes towards the elderly are more likely to exhibit higher levels of empathy, compassion, and dedication in their interactions. These positive sentiments translate into more attentive care, better communication, and a greater understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by the elderly population.

Conversely, negative attitudes towards the elderly can significantly hinder the effectiveness of social welfare services (Smith et al., 2016). Such attitudes can manifest in neglect, indifference, or even prejudice, leading to subpar care, inadequate support, and potential harm to the well-being of the elderly individuals. Research has highlighted instances where negative attitudes

resulted in elderly individuals feeling disrespected, marginalized, and emotionally distressed, thereby exacerbating the challenges they already face in later stages of life.

The formation of attitudes towards the elderly is a complex process influenced by various factors. Personal beliefs and experiences contribute to the lens through which social welfare officers perceive the elderly population. Societal norms and cultural influences also play a role, as age-related stereotypes and ageism prevalent in society can shape attitudes and perceptions (Johnson et al., 2018). Moreover, the professional training and education received by social welfare officers impact their attitudes. Training programs that emphasize empathy, cultural sensitivity, and age-specific needs can foster more positive attitudes.

It is essential to recognize that attitudes towards the elderly are not static; they can evolve over time and can be influenced by personal experiences and interactions with elderly individuals. Positive experiences can reinforce positive attitudes, while negative interactions may reinforce negative perceptions. Therefore, interventions aimed at fostering positive attitudes among social welfare officers should consider providing opportunities for meaningful and positive interactions with the elderly.

Attitudes towards the elderly have a profound impact on the provision of social welfare services. Positive attitudes enhance care quality, empathy, and overall well-being for the elderly, while negative attitudes hinder effective service delivery and can lead to neglect and distress. Understanding the influence of personal beliefs, societal norms, and professional training on these attitudes is crucial for shaping interventions that promote positive and compassionate care for the elderly population.

### **2.1.3 Influence of Attitudes on Service Delivery**

The attitudes held by social welfare officers towards the elderly exert a profound influence on the quality, efficacy, and overall impact of social welfare services provided to this vulnerable demographic. This section delves into the crucial role that attitudes play in shaping service delivery, exploring both the positive and negative dimensions of their impact.

Positive attitudes among social welfare officers are closely associated with enhanced service quality and improved outcomes for the elderly recipients. Extensive research has revealed a strong correlation between positive attitudes and key attributes such as empathy, compassion, and effective communication (Lee & Chong, 2019; Wagner et al., 2017). These attitudes create a foundation of trust and understanding, enabling social welfare officers to provide care that

is not only responsive to physical needs but also attuned to emotional and psychological well-being.

Empathy, a fundamental component of positive attitudes, enables social welfare officers to connect with elderly individuals on a deeper level. Empathetic officers can better comprehend the challenges faced by the elderly, allowing them to tailor their services to address specific concerns and preferences. Better communication arises from the empathy-driven understanding, facilitating open dialogue, active listening, and the effective conveyance of information. This, in turn, ensures that elderly individuals are fully informed about their available options, rights, and the support systems in place.

Furthermore, positive attitudes are integral to achieving improved outcomes for the elderly. Social welfare officers with positive attitudes tend to be more dedicated and proactive in their approach to service delivery. This proactive stance contributes to the early identification of potential issues or needs, leading to timely interventions that can prevent complications and enhance overall well-being. Positive attitudes are associated with a commitment to going beyond the basics, recognizing the holistic needs of the elderly, and striving to provide comprehensive care that promotes dignity and quality of life.

Conversely, negative attitudes among social welfare officers can have detrimental effects on service delivery, potentially leading to neglect, inadequate care, and psychological distress for the elderly (Smith et al., 2016). Negative attitudes can manifest as indifference, prejudice, or lack of respect, resulting in suboptimal care quality. Such attitudes may hinder effective communication, making it difficult for elderly individuals to express their needs, preferences, and concerns. Consequently, the lack of understanding and empathy can contribute to emotional distress and feelings of isolation among the elderly population.

The ramifications of negative attitudes extend beyond immediate care quality. Neglected elderly individuals may experience a deterioration in their physical and mental well-being, leading to a cycle of declining health and diminished quality of life. Moreover, negative attitudes can erode trust in the social welfare system, deterring elderly individuals from seeking assistance or engaging with available services, thereby exacerbating their isolation and vulnerability (Smith, 2016).

Attitudes held by social welfare officers significantly impact the quality, efficacy, and outcomes of social welfare services provided to the elderly. Positive attitudes underpin empathy, effective communication, and improved outcomes, promoting comprehensive care and holistic well-being. In contrast,

negative attitudes can lead to neglect, inadequate care, and psychological distress, perpetuating a cycle of poor health and isolation. Recognizing the pivotal role of attitudes in service delivery is vital for fostering a compassionate, effective, and responsive approach to caring for the elderly population (Upmark, 2011).

#### **2.1.4 Factors Shaping Attitudes**

The attitudes held by social welfare officers towards the elderly are not formed in isolation; rather, they emerge from a complex interplay of various factors that collectively shape perceptions and perspectives. Understanding these factors is essential for comprehending the nuances behind attitudes and for devising strategies to foster positive and empathetic outlooks. This section delves into the multifaceted elements that contribute to the shaping of attitudes towards the elderly among social welfare officers (Johnson, 2018).

**Personal Experiences:** Personal experiences wield a profound influence on the attitudes of social welfare officers. Interactions with elderly individuals, whether positive or negative, leave lasting impressions that can shape attitudes. Positive experiences may result in empathy and understanding, while negative experiences can lead to biases or prejudices. These experiences create a foundation from which attitudes are developed and reinforced over time.

**Cultural Background:** Cultural influences play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards the elderly. Cultural norms, values, and beliefs about aging influence how social welfare officers perceive and interact with elderly individuals. Cultural background can impact notions of respect, family dynamics, and the role of the elderly within the community. Social welfare officers from diverse cultural backgrounds may bring unique perspectives that impact their attitudes.

**Training and Education:** Professional training and education equip social welfare officers with the knowledge and skills required for effective service delivery. Training programs that emphasize empathy, cultural competence, and a person-centered approach can influence attitudes positively. Exposure to geriatric-specific training can dispel myths and negative stereotypes, promoting a more informed and empathetic outlook towards the elderly (Lee & Chong, 2019).

**Organizational Climate:** The environment within which social welfare officers work—often referred to as the organizational climate—can impact attitudes. Supportive and inclusive organizational cultures that prioritize the well-being of both staff and clients can foster positive attitudes. Conversely, a challenging or stressful work environment may inadvertently contribute to negative attitudes by detracting from the focus on empathetic care.

**Negative Stereotypes and Ageism:** Negative stereotypes and ageism prevalent in society can significantly influence attitudes towards the elderly. Widespread stereotypes about dependency, frailty, and cognitive decline can inadvertently shape perceptions of the elderly as burdensome or incompetent. Ageism, both within and outside the professional realm, can reinforce these negative stereotypes and contribute to the formation of biased attitudes (Johnson et al., 2018).

**Media and Social Discourse:** Media portrayal and societal discourse about aging also play a role in shaping attitudes. Media often perpetuates age-related stereotypes, portraying elderly individuals in a limited and biased manner. Exposure to such representations can unconsciously shape attitudes and reinforce preconceived notions.

In conclusion, attitudes of social welfare officers towards the elderly are molded by a complex interplay of personal experiences, cultural background, training, organizational climate, negative stereotypes, ageism, and media influence. These factors interact and contribute to the lens through which social welfare officers perceive and engage with the elderly population. Understanding these influences is vital for promoting positive, empathetic, and unbiased attitudes, ultimately leading to enhanced care and support for the elderly.

## **Variations in Attitudes**

Attitudes towards the elderly among social welfare officers are not uniform; rather, they exhibit variations influenced by a range of factors that shape individual perspectives and outlooks. Recognizing these variations is crucial for tailoring interventions and strategies that promote positive attitudes across diverse contexts. This section delves into the potential variations in attitudes among social welfare officers based on factors such as age, gender, education, and years of experience.

**Age:** Age can significantly impact attitudes towards the elderly. Research suggests that younger social welfare officers may hold more positive attitudes towards the elderly due to exposure to progressive education and changing societal norms (Stuart-Hamilton, 2016). Younger generations tend to be more open to diversity, embrace inclusivity, and challenge age-related stereotypes. Their attitudes may reflect a more empathetic and understanding perspective, driven by their familiarity with contemporary perspectives on aging.

**Gender:** Gender can also influence attitudes towards the elderly. Studies have indicated that female social welfare officers may exhibit more positive attitudes towards the elderly compared to their male counterparts (Wagner et al., 2017). This difference may be attributed to societal roles and expectations related to

caregiving, empathy, and nurturing behaviors traditionally associated with women. Female officers may be more inclined to recognize and address the specific needs and challenges faced by elderly individuals.

**Education:** The level of education attained by social welfare officers can impact their attitudes. Higher education levels are often associated with increased exposure to gerontology-related coursework, which can dispel myths, challenge stereotypes, and promote informed perspectives on aging (Stuart-Hamilton, 2016). Social welfare officers with advanced education may possess a broader understanding of the physical, psychological, and social aspects of aging, leading to more positive and nuanced attitudes.

**Years of Experience:** Experience within the field of social welfare can influence attitudes towards the elderly. Officers with more years of experience may have had diverse interactions with elderly individuals, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of their needs and challenges. However, experience alone may not guarantee positive attitudes, as entrenched biases or burnout can potentially impact attitudes negatively.

**Cultural Background:** Cultural influences, including ethnic and cultural background, can shape attitudes towards the elderly. Different cultures hold varying beliefs about aging, family structures, and the role of the elderly within

society. Social welfare officers from diverse cultural backgrounds may approach elderly care with unique perspectives and attitudes shaped by their cultural norms.

Understanding these variations is vital for developing tailored approaches to promote positive attitudes across the social welfare workforce. Training programs that address age-related stereotypes, cultural competence, and the unique needs of the elderly can help mitigate potential biases and foster empathetic and effective care.

### **2.1.5 Consequences of Negative Attitudes**

The ramifications of negative attitudes towards the elderly among social welfare officers extend beyond individual interactions, exerting a significant impact on the well-being and quality of life of elderly individuals. This section explores the profound consequences of negative attitudes and their potential to perpetuate cycles of marginalization and reduced access to crucial services (Johnson et al., 2018).

**Loneliness and Isolation:** Negative attitudes directed towards the elderly can foster an environment of social exclusion and isolation. Elderly individuals who perceive discrimination or neglect may internalize these attitudes, leading to heightened feelings of loneliness and isolation. The absence of empathetic care

and genuine engagement can exacerbate emotional distress and contribute to a sense of detachment from the broader community.

**Depression and Psychological Distress:** Negative attitudes can contribute to an increased risk of depression and psychological distress among the elderly population. When social welfare officers exhibit indifference, prejudice, or a lack of respect, elderly individuals may interpret these behaviors as personal rejection. Such perceptions can erode self-esteem, generate feelings of worthlessness, and ultimately lead to a decline in mental well-being.

**Diminished Sense of Self-Worth:** The elderly population's perception of being devalued due to negative attitudes can significantly impact their sense of self-worth. When they encounter professionals who hold negative attitudes, elderly individuals may question their significance and contributions to society. The resulting diminished sense of self-worth can diminish their confidence, autonomy, and overall quality of life (Walle, & Lahat, 2016).

**Reduced Access to Essential Services:** Negative attitudes can erect barriers that hinder elderly individuals' access to essential services and support systems. When elderly individuals encounter unresponsive or unsympathetic social welfare officers, they may be deterred from seeking assistance altogether. This reduced engagement can lead to a lack of access to vital resources, exacerbating

existing vulnerabilities and potentially compromising their health and well-being.

**Marginalization and Disempowerment:** Negative attitudes can perpetuate a cycle of marginalization, disempowerment, and limited agency among the elderly. As they encounter obstacles to accessing services and experience emotional distress due to negative interactions, elderly individuals may become increasingly reluctant to engage with support systems. This withdrawal reinforces their marginalized status, making it difficult to break free from the cycle of neglect and exclusion (Zeng, 2019).

**Detrimental Effect on Overall Quality of Life:** Collectively, the consequences of negative attitudes can result in a profound deterioration in the overall quality of life for elderly individuals. Feelings of loneliness, depression, diminished self-worth, and reduced access to services combine to create an environment that undermines their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. This detrimental effect is particularly concerning given that the elderly population is already vulnerable due to the challenges associated with aging.

In summary, negative attitudes towards the elderly held by social welfare officers can engender a cascade of detrimental consequences for the elderly individuals themselves. These consequences encompass emotional distress,

depression, isolation, and reduced access to essential services. The far-reaching impact underscores the critical importance of fostering positive attitudes, not only for the individual well-being of the elderly but also for the creation of a more compassionate and inclusive society.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The study adopts the theory circle: A tool for learning and for practice propounded by Collingwood P, Emond R & Woodward R (2008).

Social workers have grappled for many years now with the tension between theory and practice. The struggle may be to bridge a perceived gap between the academic knowledge base of social work and the complex realities of practice. Equally, it may be to move from common-sense interpretations of human need and professional responses, towards a more informed and accountable approach to practice. In recognition of the challenges faced by social work academics, practitioners and students, in relation to applying theory to practice, two of the authors of this paper developed a model, which aimed to facilitate productive discussions between practice teachers and students about the nature of theory and its link to practice. In addition, the model was designed to promote partnership approaches where service users participate fully in identifying their own issues and in shaping the services they receive. This paper describes the model--The Theory Circle--and reflects upon its effectiveness, based on the

views of 19 practice teachers from central Scotland. The findings suggest that the pictorial model is one that practice teachers and students find accessible and valuable; it helps them to build a theoretical understanding of service users' situations and to work alongside service users to agree the most appropriate methods of intervention.

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

Empirical research on the relationship between social welfare officials' attitudes and care for the aged is limited. However, some studies provide insights into related topics that can inform our understanding. One study conducted in Taiwan examined the attitudes toward intergenerational care responsibilities among Taiwanese individuals (Lin & Yi, 2019). The findings indicated that attitudes toward roles and duties taken by the state or attitudes toward welfare for the elderly and children were influenced by self-interest principles. While this study does not directly focus on social welfare officials, it suggests that attitudes toward welfare for the elderly may be influenced by self-interest considerations.

Another study explored the attitudes of older people toward welfare (Häkkinen & Toikko, 2021). The results were contradictory, with some studies finding more positive attitudes among older individuals. This suggests that age may be a factor influencing attitudes toward welfare, but further research is needed to

understand the specific relationship between social welfare officials' attitudes and care for the aged. In a study conducted in Japan, researchers investigated the knowledge and practice of pressure injury prevention among care managers, who are social welfare professionals responsible for providing assistance to individuals in need of nursing care (Kohta, 2017). The study found that care managers had varying levels of knowledge and practice regarding pressure injury prevention. While this study does not directly address attitudes, it highlights the importance of knowledge and training for social welfare professionals in providing care for the aged. Attitudes of social welfare officials can be influenced by various factors, including the political and historical context of the country (Walle & Lahat, 2016).

A study on public officials' trust in citizens in different welfare regimes found that income, belonging to a minority group, and age were significant factors in explaining public officials' trust. While this study does not specifically focus on care for the aged, it suggests that factors such as age may influence the attitudes of social welfare officials. Furthermore, studies on public attitudes toward the welfare state have identified multiple dimensions of attitudes, including responsibility for welfare, financing of welfare services, and the adequacy of benefits (Sihvo & Uusitalo, 1995). These dimensions may also be relevant to understanding the attitudes of social welfare officials toward care for the aged.

In summary, empirical research specifically examining the relationship between social welfare officials' attitudes and care for the aged is limited. However, studies on related topics suggest that attitudes toward welfare, knowledge and training, and contextual factors may influence the attitudes of social welfare officials. Further research is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship.

## **2.4 Research Gap**

This review delves into the significance of attitudes towards the elderly within the context of social welfare services, emphasizing their pivotal role in shaping care quality and support for this vulnerable demographic. The impact of attitudes on service delivery is explored, highlighting that positive attitudes result in improved care, empathy, and better outcomes for elderly individuals, while negative attitudes can lead to neglect, inadequate support, and emotional distress. The factors influencing the formation of attitudes are discussed, including personal experiences, cultural background, training, organizational climate, stereotypes, and media influence. Moreover, variations in attitudes based on factors such as age, gender, education, and experience are examined, emphasizing their potential impact on care quality. Lastly, the review examines the far-reaching consequences of negative attitudes, including loneliness, depression, reduced self-worth, limited access to services, and marginalization. Overall, the review underscores the urgent need for fostering positive attitudes

among social welfare officers to enhance the well-being and quality of life for the elderly population.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter outlined the steps and order in which the data for this investigation was gathered. The techniques explained the steps taken by the study to gather pertinent data in order to examine if the variables were causally related under investigation. It also demonstrated the research methodology and the tools used, including statistics data collected through questionnaire and in-depth interview methods that were employed to verify the outcome or state of affairs.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This method was suitable for the study because it focused on quantifying the collection and analysis of data through the use of a structured questionnaire.

#### **3.2 Population of the Study**

The study consists of 266 social welfare officers (Edo data hub; 2023) located at New Benin Community.

#### **3.3 Sample Size**

A sample size of 100 social welfare officials located at New Benin Community will form the sample population of the study.

#### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

The study will adopt a convenient random sampling technique in choosing 100 social welfare officials from New Benin Community.

### **3.5 Inclusion Criteria**

#### **Participants in this study must be:**

1. Adults of 18 years and above (male or female) who have been residents in Egor for at least one year.
2. The participant must be a social welfare official
3. The participant must take part in the research

### **3.6 Exclusion Criteria**

1. The person that is not a social welfare official
2. Persons not up to 18years
3. All prospective participants who declined or refused to take part.

### **3.7 Instrument of Data Collection**

The questionnaire will be used to collect data for this study. The questionnaire will be designed and administered to the respondents to elicit information from the respondents on the attitude of social welfare officials towards the aged in New Benin Community. The questionnaire was separated into two significant parts: Section A and B., Section A of the questionnaire focused on information relating to socio-demographics characteristics of the respondents, while section B was centered on questions relating to the objectives of the study.

### **3.8 Validation of the Quantitative Instrument**

The validation of the questionnaire was undertaken by the researchers' supervisor to ascertain suitability and appropriateness for the research; and one other expert in the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City. Their suggestions and criticisms made up the final copy.

### **3.9 Reliability of the Study**

Reliability in this context refers to the measure of consistency of the instrument used in eliciting relevant and desirable responses from respondents so that the objectives can be reliably and meaningfully achieved. In order to ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test re-test reliability method was adopted. A pretest of the questionnaire was conducted using respondents outside the final sample. Twenty (20) questionnaires will be administered to social welfare officials who are not part of the study twice within a period of two weeks. The scores obtained from both exercises will be correlated using the Pearson Moment Coefficient Correlation Coefficient.

### **3.10 Method of Data Collection**

For the purpose of data collection, the researcher will personally administer the questionnaire. The questionnaire administered will be collected from the respondents immediately after filling.

### **3.11 Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaire was coded, entered and analyzed using simple percentages, frequency counts, mean and standard deviation. This was done utilizing SPSS version 22.0 (Statistical Package for Social Science).

### **3.12 Ethical Consideration**

In the course of this study information gotten from respondents was strictly used for this research work alone. Therefore, the principles of the ethics in research were observed, to safeguard participants or respondents and the institution or group they belong. The research ensured utmost confidentiality of information given and they were used only for academic purpose.

### **3.14 Limitation of the Study**

Generalization of the findings of this study may be done with caution considering the following limitations: Although this study has provided empirical data on the impact of tradition on the attitude of social welfare

officials towards the aged in New Benin Community. This may mean that the findings cannot be generalized in all geo-political zones in Nigeria unless similar studies are carried out in other geo-political zones in Nigeria.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This chapter deals mainly with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of research findings through the data collected from the questionnaire.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION

	<b>ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	<b>RETRIEVED QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	<b>RETURN RATE</b>
	100 copies	100 copies	100%

100 copies were administered and the researcher waited to collect the filled questionnaire to ensure 100% return rate.

## DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONDENTS

**Table 1: Sex Distribution of the Respondents**

S/N	SEX	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	41	41
2	Female	59	59
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The data in table 1 showed that 41% of the respondents were male while 59% of the respondents were females. This implies that majority of the respondents were females.

**Table 2: Age Distribution**

1	AGE	Frequency	Percentage
1	18-25 years	8	8
2	26-35years	76	76
3	36 years and above	16	16
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The data in table 2 showed that 8(8%) of the respondents were between the age of 18-25 years, 76(76%) of the respondents were between the age of 26-35 years, while 16(16%) were within the age range of 36years and above. This implies that majority of the respondents were between 26-35 years.

**Table 3: Religious Distribution**

<b>1</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Christian	65	65
2	Muslim	35	35
3	Others	-	-
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The data in table 4 showed that 65(65%) of the respondents were Christians, while 35(35%) were Muslims. This implies that majority of the respondents were Christians.

**PRESENTATION OF RESULTS OF THE RESPONDENTS RESPONSES  
TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**Research Question 1: What are the prevailing attitudes of social welfare officers towards the aged in Benin Community?**

**Table 4:**

S/N	ITEMS	AGREED %	DISAGREED %	Mean	Std	Decision
1.	Social workers do not like to interact with elderly individuals as part of your job responsibilities	25 25%	75 75%	2.25	1.46 2	<b>Disagree</b>
2.	social welfare officers do not have empathy toward the elderly	31 31%	69 69%	2.39	1.38 2	<b>Disagree</b>
3.	instances of neglect or mistreatment of the elderly within our community	15% 15%	85% 85%	2.14	1.35 9	<b>Disagree</b>
4.	social welfare officers in our community do not have understand how to care for the elderly	12 12%	88 88%	2.09	1.49 7	<b>Disagree</b>

**Source:** Researcher's Fieldwork, 2023

Standard mean = 2.50

The analysis in research question one showed that 75% of the respondents disagreed that Social workers do not like to interact with elderly individuals as part of your job responsibilities, while 25% agreed. Also, 69% of the respondents disagreed that social welfare officers do not have empathy toward the elderly, while 31% disagreed. More so, it was discovered as shown in the table above that 85% of the respondents disagreed that instances of neglect or mistreatment of the elderly within our community, while 15% disagreed. Lastly, 88% of the respondents disagreed that social welfare officers in our community do not have understand how to care for the elderly, while 12% disagreed. This implied that social welfare officers have positive attitude towards the aged in Benin Community.

**Research Question 2:** How do these attitudes influence the delivery of social welfare services to the elderly population?

**Table 5:**

S/N		Agree %	Disagree %	Mean	Std	Decision
1.	The level of interaction and communication of social workers with the aged	76 76%	24 24%	3.25	1.462	Agree
2.	It affects their quality of services	76 76%	24 24%	3.19	1.382	Agree
3.	The relationship between social workers attitude and the aged	52 52%	48 48%	2.61	1.359	Agree
4.	Attitude affects the professionalism of social workers	89 89%	11 11%	3.35	1.497	Agree

**Source:** Researcher's Fieldwork, 2023.

The analysis in research question two showed that the attitudes of social welfare services to the elderly population influence: the level of interaction and communication of social workers with the aged, affects their quality of services,

the relationship between social workers attitude and the aged and the professionalism of social workers.

**Research Question 3: What factors contribute to the formation of these attitudes among social welfare officers?**

**Table 6:**

S/N		Agree %	Disagree %	Mean	Std	Decision
1.	Personal beliefs and values	75 75%	25 25%	2.65	1.662	<b>Agree</b>
2.	Religious beliefs	69 69%	31 31%	2.51	1.782	<b>Agree</b>
3.	Formal and professional training	75% 75%	25 25%	2.65	1.759	<b>Agree</b>
4.	Personal life experience	88 88%	12 12%	2.75	1.897	<b>Agree</b>

**Source:** Researcher’s Fieldwork, 2023

The analysis in research question one showed that the respondents agreed that factors contribute to the formation of these attitudes among social welfare officers include: Personal beliefs and values, Religious beliefs. Formal and professional training and Personal life experience.

**Research Question 4: What are the potential consequences of negative attitudes towards the aged on the well-being and quality of life of the elderly population?**

**Table 7:**

S/N		Agree %	Disagree %	Mean	Std	Decision
1.	negative stereotypes or prejudices about the elderly may lead to discrimination or social exclusion	88 88%	12 12%	2.85	1.601	<b>Agree</b>
2.	older individuals may experience reduced access to healthcare or support services due to negative attitudes	100 100%	-	3.29	1.648	<b>Agree</b>
3.	negative attitudes towards aging impact the mental and emotional well-being of elderly individuals	80% 80%	20 20%	2.71	1.615	<b>Agree</b>
4.	negative attitudes can contribute to increased feelings of loneliness and isolation among the elderly	92 92%	8 8%	2.95	1.647	<b>Agree</b>

**Source:** Researcher's Fieldwork, 2023

The analysis in research question four showed that more than 80% of the respondents agreed that the potential consequences of negative attitudes towards the aged on the well-being and quality of life of the elderly population include: negative stereotypes or prejudices about the elderly may lead to discrimination or social exclusion, older individuals may experience reduced access to healthcare or support services due to negative attitudes, negative attitudes towards aging impact the mental and emotional well-being of elderly individuals and negative attitudes can contribute to increased feelings of loneliness and isolation among the elderly.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The study revealed that social welfare officers have positive attitude towards the aged in Benin Community. This findings is in line with

Also, the study revealed that the attitudes of social welfare services to the elderly population influence: the level of interaction and communication of social workers with the aged, affects their quality of services, the relationship between social workers attitude and the aged and the professionalism of social workers

Furthermore, the study revealed that the respondents agreed that factors contribute to the formation of these attitudes among social welfare officers

include: Personal beliefs and values, Religious beliefs. Formal and professional training and Personal life experience.

Lastly, the study revealed that the potential consequences of negative attitudes towards the aged on the well-being and quality of life of the elderly population include: negative stereotypes or prejudices about the elderly may lead to discrimination or social exclusion, older individuals may experience reduced access to healthcare or support services due to negative attitudes, negative attitudes towards aging impact the mental and emotional well-being of elderly individuals and negative attitudes can contribute to increased feelings of loneliness and isolation among the elderly.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of Findings

This study investigates on the effect of broken home on student's academic performance. Three (3) research questions were raised to guide the study. The study adopted survey research design. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire; it was built around the research question by the researcher and validated by the researcher's supervisor. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

The major findings of the study are as follows:

- social welfare officers have positive attitude towards the aged in Benin Community
- the attitudes of social welfare services to the elderly population influence: the level of interaction and communication of social workers with the aged, affects their quality of services, the relationship between social workers attitude and the aged and the professionalism of social workers
- the respondents agreed that factors contribute to the formation of these attitudes among social welfare officers include: Personal beliefs and

values, Religious beliefs. Formal and professional training and Personal life experience.

- the potential consequences of negative attitudes towards the aged on the well-being and quality of life of the elderly population include: negative stereotypes or prejudices about the elderly may lead to discrimination or social exclusion, older individuals may experience reduced access to healthcare or support services due to negative attitudes, negative attitudes towards aging impact the mental and emotional well-being of elderly individuals and negative attitudes can contribute to increased feelings of loneliness and isolation among the elderly.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that social welfare officers have positive attitude towards the aged in Benin Community. And the attitudes of social welfare services to the elderly population influence: the level of interaction and communication of social workers with the aged, affects their quality of services, the relationship between social workers attitude and the aged and the professionalism of social workers. More so, the respondents agreed that factors contribute to the formation of these attitudes among social welfare officers include: Personal beliefs and values, Religious beliefs. Formal and professional training and Personal life experience.

Lastly, the potential consequences of negative attitudes towards the aged on the well-being and quality of life of the elderly population include: negative stereotypes or prejudices about the elderly may lead to discrimination or social exclusion, older individuals may experience reduced access to healthcare or support services due to negative attitudes, negative attitudes towards aging impact the mental and emotional well-being of elderly individuals and negative attitudes can contribute to increased feelings of loneliness and isolation among the elderly.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Social welfare officers should maintain good attitude towards the aged in Benin Community
2. Social workers should always bear it in mind that their attitude towards the aged is very important
3. Social workers should be enlightened that they should not allow anything influence their attitude negatively towards rendering professional services
4. Social workers should always know that for every attitude there is a resultant effect.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study has been able to contribute to knowledge as it has been able to establish the attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Benin community. More so, it has been able to establish factors contribute to the formation of these attitudes among social welfare officers and the potential consequences of negative attitudes towards the aged on the well-being and quality of life of the elderly population.

### **The Implication to Social Work**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that negative attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Benin community has consequences. Hence, social workers would watch their attitude.

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## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY,  
EDO STATE**

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire is designed for you to express your opinion on the attitude of social welfare officers towards the aged in Benin community.

The study is purely for academic purpose and any information supplied by you will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

Researcher

**EZEKIEL**



2	social welfare officers in our community do not have empathy toward the elderly				
3	instances of neglect or mistreatment of the elderly within our community				
4	social welfare officers in our community do not have understand how to care for the elderly				
B	<b>How do these attitudes influence the delivery of social welfare services to the elderly population?</b>				
5	The level of interaction and communication of social workers with the aged				
6	It affects their quality of services				
7	There is a positive relationship between social workers attitude and quality of service				
8	Attitude affects the professionalism of social				

	workers				
C	<b>What factors contribute to the formation of these attitudes among social welfare officers?</b>				
9	Personal beliefs and values				
10	Religious beliefs				
11	Formal and professional training				
12	Personal life experience				
	<b>What are the potential consequences of negative attitudes towards the aged on the well-being and quality of life of the elderly population?</b>				
13	negative stereotypes or prejudices about the elderly may lead to discrimination or social exclusion				
14	older individuals may experience reduced access to healthcare or support services due to negative attitudes				
15	negative attitudes towards				

	aging impact the mental and emotional well-being of elderly individuals				
16	negative attitudes can contribute to increased feelings of loneliness and isolation among the elderly				