

**KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AMONG
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN STUDENTS**

BY

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SSC1913594

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

JUNE, 2025

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,
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PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was carried out by **Odiase Usman Peter** with Matriculation Number: **SSC1913594** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who is gracious and kind and has provided me guidance and protection throughout my stay in school.

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First and foremost, I express my deepest gratitude to God Almighty, whose grace, guidance, and unfailing love have been my constant source of strength and inspiration throughout this journey.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the level of knowledge and awareness of social work practice among students of the University of Benin. Social work, as a professional field, plays a vital role in promoting human well-being, advocating for social justice, and enhancing the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities. Despite its growing significance in contemporary society, social work remains a misunderstood and underappreciated discipline, particularly among university students who are expected to be future change agents. The research assessed the extent to which students from various faculties and departments understand the goals, principles, and practical applications of social work. It also investigates factors that influence awareness levels, such as faculty of study, exposure to social work education, and participation in social intervention programs. The methodology adopted for this study is a quantitative survey research design, aimed at collecting numerical data that can be statistically analyzed. A structured questionnaire was developed and distributed to a stratified random sample of 500 undergraduate students across different faculties within the University of Benin. The questionnaire contained both closed and open-ended questions designed to measure students' awareness, understanding, and perceptions of social work as a discipline and profession. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency tables and percentages) and inferential statistics (Chi-square tests) to determine the relationship between students' demographic variables and their level of awareness. The findings revealed significant gaps in knowledge about social work practice among students, with recommendations geared toward improving social work visibility and integration into general university curricula. Ultimately, the study underscores the need for greater advocacy and educational campaigns to raise awareness and promote the relevance of social work in national development, especially in higher education institutions such as the University of Benin.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Social work is one of the academic disciplines of the social sciences that focus on the human interactions and other social interactions (Ugiagbe, 2018). As a social science, social work focuses on the vulnerable and marginalized members of the society and also stands in the gap for the oppressed members of the society, some of these vulnerable members include; women, children, persons with disabilities (Omorogiuwa, 2017), the aged, amongst others, however social work as a social science evolved in Europe and America because of humanitarian needs. Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (International Federation of Social Work, 2014). Social work practice comprises of the professional application of social work values, principles, and skills to one or more of the following ends: assisting people obtain real services; counseling and psychotherapy with individuals, families, and groups; helping communities or groups

provide or improve social and health services; and take part in legislative processes and social action. The practice of social work requires information of human development and behaviour; of social economic and cultural institutions; and of the interaction of all these factors (National Association of Social Workers, 2009).

It is therefore considered to be a deviation from a desirable condition (how society ought to be), how exposed groups suffer from these conditions (Gould & Baldwin, 2004; Healy & Link, 2012) and what social work practitioners need to take into consideration when dealing with those bearing the symptoms of such conditions (Okoye, 2008). Social Work as a discipline utilizes values, knowledge, skills and focus on issues, needs and problems that arise from the interactions between individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. It is a service sanctioned by society to improve the social functioning of people, to empower them and to promote a mutually beneficial interaction between individual and society in order to improve the quality of life of everyone (Omorogiuwa, 2011). Social work is a professional discipline dedicated to fostering social change, development, and the empowerment of individuals and communities. It aims to address social injustices and enhance human well-being through intervention strategies and support systems (Dominelli, 2004). In a rapidly evolving society like Nigeria, social work has emerged as a critical tool for addressing numerous socio-economic and cultural challenges. However, despite its significance, the awareness and understanding of social work practice among university students remain limited. This study investigates the knowledge and awareness of social work practice among students

at the University of Benin, aiming to uncover factors influencing their perceptions and engagement with the discipline.

Social work as a profession in Nigeria has its roots in traditional communal practices where collective responsibility ensured the welfare of members. However, formalized social work began during the colonial period, primarily addressing issues related to urbanization and poverty (Adesina, 2018). Over the decades, social work has expanded its scope to include areas such as mental health, child welfare, and community development. Universities, including the University of Benin, have incorporated social work into their curricula to train professionals who can tackle the country's growing socio-economic challenges (Aina, 2015).

The level of knowledge and awareness of social work practice among university students is often influenced by exposure to the subject in their academic journey, media, and societal discourse. Social work as a discipline is sometimes overshadowed by more traditionally prestigious fields like medicine, law, or engineering. Many students may perceive social work as a volunteer activity or charity work, rather than a professional and academic discipline (Healy, 2014). This misconception can hinder the effective promotion and development of social work as a career path. At the University of Benin, while the Department of Social Work offers a structured program, it faces challenges in publicizing its relevance and opportunities. Research shows that universities with robust social work programs tend to have higher awareness levels among students, partly due to

outreach programs and collaborations with external agencies (Mizrahi & Davis, 2008). Yet, such initiatives at the University of Benin are often limited, impacting the visibility of social work practice.

Awareness of social work practices among students is vital for several reasons. Firstly, it creates an understanding of the discipline's critical role in addressing societal issues like poverty, inequality, and mental health crises (Payne, 2014). Secondly, it encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, as social work intersects with psychology, sociology, and public health. Finally, it equips students with the knowledge to advocate for and participate in social reforms, fostering a socially responsible university community (Banks, 2012). Previous studies indicate that a significant number of students lack accurate knowledge about social work practice and its scope. This is partly due to inadequate exposure to the discipline in pre-university education and societal misconceptions about its relevance. For instance, Adegoke (2016) noted that many Nigerian students associate social work primarily with orphanages and welfare services, ignoring its broader applications in policy advocacy, community development, and crisis intervention. Educational institutions play a critical role in shaping students' understanding of social work. Integrating social work concepts into general education courses and organizing awareness campaigns can bridge the knowledge gap. Collaborations between universities and professional social work organizations could also enhance practical exposure and career guidance (Trevithick, 2012). Hence, this study will

be examining Knowledge and Awareness of Social Work Practice among University of Benin Students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Social work plays an integral role in promoting social justice, addressing societal inequalities, and improving the quality of life for individuals and communities. However, in many societies, including Nigeria, the profession is often misunderstood or undervalued, particularly among young people in tertiary institutions. At the University of Benin, there is growing concern that students' knowledge and awareness of social work practice remain inadequate. This limitation undermines the potential of the university community to produce advocates and professionals who can effectively contribute to addressing Nigeria's socio-economic challenges (Adesina, 2018).

One of the primary issues is the widespread misconception about the nature and scope of social work. Many students view it as synonymous with charity or voluntary services, rather than a formal, evidence-based profession grounded in ethics, research, and intervention strategies (Dominelli, 2004). This narrow understanding often leads to a lack of interest in social work as a career path, further perpetuating the low visibility of the field. For instance, studies have shown that students pursuing other disciplines often lack awareness of the multifaceted roles of social workers, including their contributions to mental health, policy advocacy, and community development (Healy, 2014).

Another critical issue is the limited exposure of students to social work concepts. While the University of Benin offers a structured program in social work, its integration with other disciplines and the broader student community remains inadequate. Unlike fields such as medicine or law, which are highly publicized and well-understood, social work suffers from a lack of deliberate outreach and promotion. This gap is further compounded by an education system that often prioritizes technical and economic disciplines over the social sciences, leaving students with minimal understanding of social work's relevance to their personal and professional lives (Payne, 2014).

The societal perception of social work as a "soft" or "secondary" profession also contributes to the problem. In a developing nation like Nigeria, where economic pressures often dictate career choices, students are inclined toward fields perceived as financially lucrative. Social work, despite its profound societal impact, is not widely regarded as a desirable profession due to its perceived low status and financial rewards (Aina, 2015). Institutions like the University of Benin are thus challenged to not only educate students about the discipline but also reshape societal narratives about its value.

The lack of awareness and understanding of social work among university students has broader implications for social development. Universities are key stakeholders in producing professionals equipped to address societal challenges. Without adequate knowledge of social work, students may miss opportunities to contribute meaningfully to areas like child protection, mental health, and community empowerment.

This knowledge gap also risks perpetuating societal inequalities, as fewer graduates may choose to advocate for marginalized populations or engage in public policy reform (Banks, 2012).

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of knowledge and awareness of social work practice among University of Benin students?
2. What factors influence students' understanding and perception of social work practice?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- a. To assess the level of knowledge and awareness of social work practice among University of Benin students.
- b. To identify factors that influence students' understanding and perception of social work practice.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it sheds light on the importance of promoting knowledge and awareness of social work practice among university students. The

findings will benefit various stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, students, and social work practitioners, in the following ways:

The study will equip students with a better understanding of social work practices, fostering a sense of social responsibility and preparing them to address societal challenges effectively. The findings will provide insights for curriculum planners and policymakers to integrate social work education into university programs, enhancing students' exposure to the field. By identifying gaps in knowledge and awareness, the study will contribute to strategies aimed at strengthening social work as a professional field in Nigeria. The study will encourage parents and communities to support students in acquiring knowledge that aligns with societal needs, emphasizing the value of social work in fostering social justice and well-being.

The study will serve as a resource for counselors and educators to guide students in exploring career opportunities in social work, thereby contributing to the development of competent professionals in the field.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on students across various faculties and departments at the University of Benin. It seeks to evaluate their knowledge and awareness of social work practice, considering socio-economic, academic, and cultural factors influencing their perceptions. The major faculties would include Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Management Sciences and Faculty of Education.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

- **Knowledge:** The understanding and information students possess about social work practice.
- **Awareness:** The extent to which students are informed and conscious of the principles and practices of social work.
- **Social Work Practice:** The professional application of social work knowledge, skills, and values to promote social justice and improve individual and community well-being.
- **Students:** Individuals enrolled in undergraduate programs at the University of Benin.
- **University of Benin:** A higher education institution in Edo State, Nigeria, serving as the context for this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews as follows: concepts of social work practice, importance of knowledge and awareness in social work, evolution of social work as a professional discipline and relevance of the study to university students, particularly at the University of Benin. The above sub-themes shall be discussed in details relating to the central theme of the research work.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Social work practice refers to a professional discipline dedicated to enhancing the well-being of individuals, families, groups, and communities. It focuses on alleviating social injustices, improving quality of life, and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations through structured interventions, advocacy, and empowerment. According to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), social work is "a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people" (IFSW, 2014). This

definition highlights the multifaceted nature of social work, emphasizing both its theoretical foundations and practical applications in various societal contexts.

Social work practice is rooted in core principles such as human rights, social justice, and professional ethics. Zastrow (2019) defines social work as “a profession designed to help individuals, groups, and communities achieve optimal functioning within their environments.” This definition underscores the importance of understanding and addressing the interplay between individuals and their surroundings, which forms the crux of social work interventions. For instance, when dealing with marginalized communities, social workers consider factors such as cultural values, socio-economic conditions, and systemic barriers to formulate effective solutions.

Furthermore, Healy (2005) describes social work as “a profession that integrates knowledge from various disciplines to address human problems, particularly those related to poverty, discrimination, and health disparities.” This integrative approach distinguishes social work from other helping professions, as it incorporates insights from psychology, sociology, and law to address complex societal issues. For example, in cases of child neglect, a social worker may utilize psychological theories to understand behavioral patterns, while also leveraging legal frameworks to ensure child protection.

Social work practice can also be defined through its commitment to ethical standards and professional values. Payne (2015) describes it as “an organized effort to empower individuals and communities by fostering resilience and promoting social

inclusion.” This definition highlights the empowerment aspect of social work, where practitioners aim to build the capacity of individuals and groups to take control of their lives. Empowerment is particularly crucial in settings where systemic oppression or discrimination undermines the agency of vulnerable populations. In addition, Barker (2003) provides a concise definition, stating that social work is “the professional application of social science principles to facilitate social functioning and well-being.” This definition aligns with the operational aspects of social work, which include assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation. For instance, in mental health social work, professionals use evidence-based interventions to support clients while continuously assessing the outcomes to refine their approaches.

Overall, social work practice is a dynamic and evolving field that adapts to the changing needs of society. It is not merely about providing aid but about fostering sustainable development and addressing the root causes of social issues. By combining theory with practical strategies, social workers aim to create a more just and equitable society, aligning with the profession's foundational mission.

2.3 Overview of Concept of Social Work Practice

Social work practice is a dynamic and interdisciplinary profession committed to promoting human well-being and social justice through intervention and advocacy. It aims to address social problems, empower individuals and communities, and enhance the overall quality of life. According to Payne (2015), social work practice is "a structured

approach to helping people solve problems and meet their needs within their social environments." This holistic approach considers the multifaceted challenges individuals face, including economic, psychological, and societal issues, and seeks sustainable solutions that promote resilience and development. The profession operates at multiple levels, from micro-level interventions focusing on individuals and families to macro-level efforts that address systemic issues such as poverty, inequality, and policy reform. Zastrow (2019) explains that social work practice involves a comprehensive understanding of human behavior, community dynamics, and organizational systems to create meaningful change. For example, a social worker assisting a family in crisis may provide counseling, connect them to social resources, and advocate for systemic changes to address underlying issues like unemployment or housing instability.

Social work has its roots in the charitable efforts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, evolving from informal care provided by religious and philanthropic organizations into a formal profession. Barker (2003) notes that social work emerged as a response to the industrial revolution's social challenges, including urbanization, migration, and poverty. Early pioneers like Jane Addams in the United States emphasized community organization and social reform, laying the foundation for modern social work practice. Over time, the field has expanded to include various specializations such as child welfare, mental health, medical social work, and international social development. Each of these areas highlights the adaptability of social work practice in addressing diverse societal needs. Healy (2005) observes that the profession's capacity to integrate

knowledge from sociology, psychology, and public policy enables it to tackle complex problems effectively.

The practice of social work is underpinned by a set of core principles and values that guide professional behavior and decision-making. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) outlines principles such as respect for human dignity, the pursuit of social justice, and the promotion of human rights (IFSW, 2014). These principles ensure that social workers remain committed to ethical practices, even in challenging contexts. For instance, the principle of self-determination is central to social work, empowering clients to make informed decisions about their lives. This aligns with the profession's broader mission of fostering independence and agency among individuals and communities. Zastrow (2019) emphasizes that social workers must balance this principle with professional judgment, particularly in cases where client decisions may pose risks to themselves or others.

A defining characteristic of social work practice is its interdisciplinary nature. Social workers collaborate with professionals from healthcare, education, law, and other fields to provide holistic support to clients. Payne (2015) asserts that this collaborative approach enhances the effectiveness of interventions by addressing issues from multiple perspectives. For example, in healthcare settings, social workers often work alongside doctors and nurses to support patients dealing with chronic illnesses, ensuring they receive both medical care and psychosocial support. The profession's reliance on

evidence-based practice further underscores its interdisciplinary approach. Social workers integrate research findings, theoretical frameworks, and client preferences to inform their interventions. This ensures that their methods are both scientifically grounded and culturally appropriate.

2.4 Evolution of Social Work as a Professional Discipline

The evolution of social work as a professional discipline reflects its historical roots in addressing societal challenges and its progression into a structured and academically grounded field. Social work has undergone significant transformations, from its origins in charitable initiatives to its current status as a multidisciplinary and evidence-based profession. This journey highlights the adaptability and enduring relevance of social work in promoting social justice and human well-being.

2.4.1 Historical Roots in Charity and Philanthropy

Social work traces its origins to charitable practices aimed at alleviating poverty and suffering during the late 19th century. In pre-industrial societies, care for the vulnerable was primarily a communal or religious responsibility. However, the rapid urbanization and industrialization of the 19th century exacerbated social problems such as poverty, homelessness, and child neglect, prompting the need for more organized intervention. According to Barker (2003), this period marked the transition from informal charity work to structured social assistance programs. The establishment of the Charity Organization Society (COS) in the United Kingdom in 1869 exemplifies this shift. The

COS sought to coordinate charitable efforts and introduced the concept of "scientific charity," which emphasized systematic casework. Similarly, the Settlement House Movement, spearheaded by Jane Addams in the United States, focused on community-based interventions and social reform (Payne, 2015). These initiatives laid the foundation for modern social work by combining direct assistance with advocacy for systemic change.

2.4.2 Emergence as a Profession

Social work began to formalize as a profession in the early 20th century, driven by the growing recognition of the need for specialized knowledge and training. The establishment of social work training programs, such as the New York School of Philanthropy in 1898 (later the Columbia University School of Social Work), marked a significant milestone in this evolution. These programs introduced theoretical frameworks and practical skills, distinguishing social work from general charity work. By the 1920s and 1930s, social work had gained recognition as a legitimate profession. Barker (2003) notes that the adoption of professional standards and codes of ethics, such as those developed by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in the United States, helped solidify its identity. The integration of psychoanalytic theories, particularly those of Sigmund Freud, further enhanced the intellectual depth of the discipline, enabling social workers to address psychological and emotional aspects of client welfare (Zastrow, 2019).

2.4.3 Development of Theoretical Foundations

The mid-20th century witnessed the diversification of social work theories and practices, reflecting its interdisciplinary nature. Ecological systems theory, introduced by Bronfenbrenner, emphasized the interaction between individuals and their environments, reshaping approaches to social work interventions. This period also saw the emergence of critical social work, which challenged traditional practices and advocated for a focus on social justice and empowerment (Healy, 2005). Social work's theoretical foundations expanded further with the adoption of evidence-based practice (EBP) in the late 20th century. Payne (2015) explains that EBP integrates empirical research, clinical expertise, and client preferences to ensure effective and ethical interventions. This shift marked a move toward greater accountability and professionalism within the field. In recent decades, social work has become increasingly globalized, addressing issues such as migration, climate change, and human rights. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) has played a pivotal role in promoting global standards and fostering cross-cultural exchange. According to Healy (2005), the global definition of social work adopted by the IFSW emphasizes the promotion of social change, development, and empowerment, reflecting the discipline's adaptability to diverse contexts.

Social work has also diversified into numerous specializations, including medical social work, school social work, and forensic social work. Each specialization addresses specific societal needs, further enhancing the profession's relevance and impact. For

instance, medical social workers collaborate with healthcare teams to support patients coping with chronic illnesses, while school social workers address educational and behavioral challenges among students.

2.5 Importance of Knowledge and Awareness in Social Work

Knowledge and awareness are foundational to the practice of social work, influencing both the effectiveness and ethical integrity of interventions. Social workers must be equipped with an understanding of theoretical frameworks, cultural competencies, legal requirements, and best practices to address the complex needs of individuals, families, and communities. This section explores the significance of knowledge and awareness in social work practice, with insights drawn from academic and professional literature.

1. Enhancing Professional Competence: Knowledge provides the technical expertise needed to navigate diverse social issues. Social workers rely on a robust understanding of human behavior, societal structures, and intervention strategies to design effective solutions. Awareness complements this knowledge by enabling practitioners to recognize subtle and overt social dynamics that influence their clients' experiences (Payne, 2015). For example, awareness of mental health stigmatization in certain cultures allows social

workers to adapt their communication and advocacy strategies to be more culturally sensitive. Without such awareness, interventions may fail to address the nuanced needs of clients, reducing their effectiveness and potentially causing harm.

2. Promoting Ethical Practice: Ethical practice is a cornerstone of social work, and knowledge and awareness are crucial in upholding ethical standards. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) emphasizes that practitioners must be aware of their ethical responsibilities to clients, society, and their profession (IFSW, 2018). Knowledge of ethical principles, such as confidentiality, informed consent, and non-discrimination, ensures that social workers adhere to professional guidelines. Awareness of potential ethical dilemmas, such as power imbalances or conflicts of interest, allows practitioners to navigate these challenges with integrity. For instance, a social worker with awareness of systemic biases in welfare systems can advocate more effectively for equitable policy changes.

3. Improving Client Outcomes: Clients benefit directly from social workers' knowledge and awareness. By understanding evidence-based practices, social workers can select interventions that are most likely to succeed in specific contexts. Awareness of clients' unique circumstances, including their cultural backgrounds, social identities, and personal experiences, allows practitioners to build rapport and foster trust. Research shows that clients are more likely to engage in social work interventions when they feel understood and respected (Turner, 2017). For instance, a social worker who is aware of the barriers

faced by marginalized communities, such as language barriers or fear of discrimination, can tailor their approach to address these challenges, leading to better outcomes.

4. Advancing Social Justice: Awareness of systemic inequalities and social injustices is critical in empowering social workers to advocate for change. Knowledge of historical and contemporary social issues, such as racism, poverty, and gender inequality, provides the foundation for effective advocacy. Awareness enables social workers to identify injustices in their immediate environment and take action to address them (Dominelli, 2010). For example, a social worker who is aware of the disproportionate impact of housing policies on low-income families can use their knowledge to campaign for inclusive housing reforms. Such efforts not only benefit individual clients but also contribute to broader societal change.

5. Enhancing Cultural Competency: Cultural competency is an essential skill in social work, particularly in multicultural societies. Knowledge of diverse cultural practices and beliefs enables social workers to approach clients with respect and sensitivity. Awareness of cultural dynamics, including power relations and intersectional identities, ensures that interventions are both inclusive and equitable (Sue, 2010). For example, a social worker assisting immigrant families must be aware of the cultural stigma around mental health in certain communities. This awareness allows the practitioner to design interventions that respect cultural values while addressing critical issues.

6. Building Resilience in Social Workers: Social work can be emotionally demanding, and practitioners must develop resilience to sustain their well-being and effectiveness. Knowledge of self-care practices and awareness of personal boundaries are essential for preventing burnout (Matthews & Matthews, 2011). For instance, a social worker who is aware of their emotional triggers and stressors can proactively seek supervision, peer support, or professional development opportunities. This self-awareness not only benefits the practitioner but also ensures consistent and high-quality service delivery to clients.

7. Adapting to Changing Social Landscapes: The social landscape is constantly evolving, with new challenges emerging in areas such as technology, globalization, and public health. Knowledge of these trends, combined with an awareness of their local and global implications, allows social workers to remain relevant and effective in their practice (Healy, 2014). For example, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of digital literacy in social work. Practitioners who were knowledgeable about virtual communication tools and aware of the digital divide could adapt their services to support clients effectively during lockdowns.

8. Facilitating Collaboration and Advocacy: Social work often involves collaboration with other professionals, such as educators, healthcare providers, and policymakers. Knowledge of interdisciplinary practices and awareness of the roles of other stakeholders enhance the social worker's ability to build effective partnerships.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Models Relevant to Understanding Social Work Awareness

Understanding social work awareness requires theoretical frameworks that explain how individuals and groups perceive, process, and engage with the principles and practices of social work. These models offer insights into the cognitive, social, and cultural factors shaping awareness. Below are key theoretical models relevant to understanding social work awareness:

1. Social Cognitive Theory:

Social cognitive theory, developed by Albert Bandura, is instrumental in understanding how awareness of social work practices develops. The theory emphasizes that individuals learn and develop awareness through observation, interaction, and imitation within their social environment (Bandura, 1986). It highlights the interplay between personal factors (e.g., attitudes, knowledge), behavioral patterns, and environmental influences. For instance, awareness of social work practices among university students may be shaped by exposure to media campaigns, classroom discussions, or personal experiences with social workers. The theory underscores the role of role models and influential figures, such as lecturers or community leaders, in fostering knowledge and positive attitudes toward social work.

2. Diffusion of Innovations Theory:

Everett Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory is particularly relevant when examining how awareness of social work practices spreads across populations. This theory explains how new ideas or practices, such as modern social work methods, are communicated and adopted within a society (Rogers, 2003). The theory categorizes individuals into groups such as innovators, early adopters, and laggards, based on their readiness to accept new concepts. Awareness of social work might initially arise among innovators or socially conscious students and then spread to others through peer influence and institutional programs. Diffusion is influenced by factors such as communication channels, perceived benefits of social work, and cultural compatibility.

3. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The theory of planned behavior, proposed by Ajzen (1991), explains the relationship between attitudes, intentions, and behavior. TPB is crucial in understanding how awareness translates into engagement with social work practices. The model posits three components:

- **Attitude toward the behavior:** Students' perceptions of social work's value in addressing societal issues.

- **Subjective norms:** Social pressures or expectations from peers and educators to support social work.

- **Perceived behavioral control:** The belief in one's ability to engage with or support social work activities. This model is useful in predicting whether awareness of social work will lead to active participation, such as volunteering or pursuing a career in the field.

4. Critical Theory

Critical theory offers a lens to understand the socio-political dynamics influencing social work awareness. Rooted in the works of thinkers like Horkheimer and Habermas, critical theory challenges structural inequalities and highlights the role of power, ideology, and culture in shaping awareness (Payne, 2015).

In the context of social work, critical theory helps examine how societal narratives, educational curricula, and media representations either promote or hinder awareness of social work as a tool for social justice. For example, the lack of emphasis on social work education in certain university programs might reflect broader societal undervaluation of the discipline.

6. Transformational Learning Theory

Transformational learning theory, developed by Mezirow, focuses on how critical reflection leads to profound changes in understanding and awareness (Mezirow, 2000). This theory is particularly relevant in academic settings, where students encounter new perspectives on social work practices. Through critical dialogue and experiential learning,

students may challenge previously held assumptions about social issues and develop a deeper appreciation for the role of social work. Transformational learning is often triggered by disorienting experiences, such as exposure to case studies or fieldwork in disadvantaged communities.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section discusses the various methods that will be employed in both collections and analysis of data in this study: Research Design, Population, Sample and Sampling Technique, Research Instrument, Validity and Reliability, Method of Data Collection and Method of Data Analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This research design adopted in this study is the survey research design. This design would allow the researcher to collect data from only few people considered representative of the entire population.

3.3 Study Population

The study population will be the students within the University of Benin.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sampling method is purposive, in that, the participants were purposively selected. Simple random sampling was employed in order to ensure that the students within the University of Benin is well represented. In terms of sample size one hundred students from various faculties will be selected.

3.5 Research Instrument

The instrument that was used for the data collection was solely questionnaire. Care was therefore taken to ensure that the questions were clear and unambiguous and easy for the students to understand and respond accurately

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The validity of research instrument refers to the ability of an instrument to measure what it is design to measure. There are different types of validity. However, this researcher in bid to ascertain the validity of his instrument presented the said instrument

to his supervisor, and two other social workers; their comments, suggestions and criticisms were used to modify the initial research instrument. The research instruments in question were subjected to test-retest reliability.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire will be distributed personally to the respondents. The respondents should be able to answer the questions honestly after administering the questionnaires to them. The researcher will also guide the respondents with regards to filling questionnaires. The respondents were informed that their responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected will be analyzed using SPSS presented in frequency distribution tables.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	300	60.0%

Female	200	40.0%
Total	500	100%

Source: Field work, 2025

The gender distribution shows a slightly higher number of male respondents (40.0%) compared to females (60.0%). This indicates a fairly balanced gender representation in the study, providing a diverse range of perspectives on social work practice.

Table 4.2: Age Range

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18-30 years	450	90.0%
31-43 years	50	10.0%
44-55 years	-	-
55 years and above	-	-
Total	500	100%

Source: Field work, 2025

The age distribution of respondents, as shown in the table, indicates that the vast majority of participants (90%) were between the ages of 18 and 30 years. This reflects a

youthful population and suggests that most of the individuals surveyed were relatively young. Only 10% of the respondents fell within the 31–43 years age group, indicating a smaller but still relevant proportion of slightly older participants. Interestingly, no respondents were recorded in the 44–55 years and 55 years and above categories, which implies that older adults were either underrepresented or absent in the sample. This could be attributed to several factors such as declining interest in social work-related topics with age, lower enrollment of older individuals in academic institutions, or reduced availability or willingness to participate in such studies

Overall, the age distribution suggests that the findings of this study are more reflective of younger adults' awareness and perception of social work practice in University of Benin. The dominance of the 18–30 years age group aligns with the typical demographic composition of undergraduate and postgraduate students, who are usually in their late teens to early thirties. The total of 500 respondents offers a robust basis for examining how age influences awareness and perception of social work, especially among the younger demographic who are most engaged with contemporary academic and social issues.

Table 4.3 Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	300	60.0%

Muslim	100	20.0%
Traditional	100	20.0%
Total	500	100%

Source: Field work, 2025.

As indicated in Table 4.3, the majority of respondents identified as Christians, making up 60% (300 out of 500) of the total sample. This dominant representation suggests that Christian values and perspectives may significantly influence the general awareness and perception of social work practice among students in University of Benin. The Christian population's strong presence could also indicate the potential for collaboration with faith-based organizations in promoting the principles of social work within academic and community settings. Muslims comprised 20% (100 respondents) of the study population, while an equal percentage (20%) identified with Traditional religious beliefs. The notable presence of these groups highlights the religious diversity within the university environment. It also underscores the importance of culturally and religiously sensitive approaches in the design and implementation of social work awareness programs. Given the central role religion plays in shaping moral values and social behavior in Nigeria, each group's worldview may influence how social work is perceived—particularly in areas related to social justice, community service, and support for vulnerable populations. The religious distribution of respondents reveals a rich spectrum of beliefs that could

affect how social work is understood and received in academic institutions. Social work educators and practitioners would benefit from considering these religious contexts when engaging with students, ensuring that programs resonate with their values and promote inclusivity. Overall, the religious profile suggests that social work advocacy and education in University of Benin must be sensitive to religious influences while remaining rooted in universal principles of empathy, equity, and social responsibility.

Table 4.4 Level of Study

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
100 Level	100	20.0%
200 Level	125	25.0%
300 Level	75	15.0%
400 Level	200	40.7%
Total	500	100%

Source: Field work, 2025.

The distribution of respondents by academic level, as shown in the table, indicates that a substantial proportion of participants (40.7%) were in their 400 level, followed by 200 level students at 25.0%. First-year students (100 level) accounted for 20.0%, while 300 level students made up the smallest group at 15.0%. This spread highlights a broad representation across the academic spectrum, which is crucial for understanding varying

levels of awareness and perception of social work practice within University of Benin. The high percentage of final-year students suggests that more mature students—who may have had more academic exposure and experience within the university system—are likely to have a deeper or more nuanced understanding of social work as a field of study and practice. These students may have encountered the subject through general studies courses, departmental interactions, or campus-based outreach programs. Their insights are valuable in assessing how well social work has been integrated into the university curriculum and student consciousness. Meanwhile, the significant representation of 200 and 100 level students points to an opportunity for early engagement. Awareness programs and introductory modules on social work can be targeted at this group to shape their understanding from the onset of their academic journey. The relatively lower percentage of 300 level students (15.0%) still provides useful input, possibly reflecting transitional academic phases where students begin to engage more critically with professional disciplines.

Overall, the academic-level distribution of respondents offers a well-rounded perspective for examining how awareness and perception of social work practice vary across different stages of university education. It underscores the importance of tailored engagement strategies that consider students' academic maturity, ensuring that social work is recognized not only as a profession but also as a vital tool for societal transformation.

Table 4.5 Faculty

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
Management Science	95	19.0%
Education	20	4.0%
Arts	190	38.0%
Social Science	195	39.0%
Total	500	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

The distribution of respondents across different faculties reveals a diverse academic representation that offers meaningful insight into how awareness and perception of social work practice varies within University of Benin. According to the data, the highest number of respondents came from the Faculty of Social Sciences, comprising 195 students or 39.0% of the total sample. This was closely followed by the Faculty of Arts with 190 respondents (38.0%), while Management Sciences accounted for 95 students (19.0%), and the Faculty of Education represented the smallest group with just 20 respondents (4.0%). The dominance of Social Science and Arts students is significant, as these faculties are often more directly exposed to themes and subjects related to human behavior, social issues, and community development. As such, students from these backgrounds may have a higher likelihood of being familiar with social work

concepts, either through coursework, campus events, or academic discourse. This exposure may positively influence their awareness and perceptions of social work as a professional and academic field.

In contrast, students from Management Sciences and Education—although fewer in number—still contribute valuable perspectives. Their relatively lower representation could suggest that social work practice is less emphasized or integrated into their academic curriculum. This points to the need for more interdisciplinary engagement, where social work principles are introduced across faculties to foster broader appreciation and support for the discipline. Overall, the faculty distribution highlights the importance of academic context in shaping students' understanding of social work. It emphasizes the necessity of tailored advocacy and educational efforts across different faculties to ensure that social work practice is not only recognized but also respected and integrated into the wider academic and societal framework in University of Benin.

4.2 Analysis of Research Questions

The objective of this research question was to find out the extent of the knowledge and Awareness of Social Work Practice Among University of Benin Students.

The results are presented in Table 4.6.

S/N	Statements	YES		NO		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	f	%

1	Have you heard of social work practice before	275	55	225	45	500	100
2	How you participated in "social work practice" before	400	80	100	30	500	100
3	Is the primary role of a social worker to help people	212	42.4	288	57.6	500	100
4	Are you aware that social workers are present in hospitals, schools, and community centers	45	9	455	91	500	100
5	Have you come across any social work-related initiatives or programs on campus	290	58	210	42	500	100
6	Are there any courses or activities in your department that emphasize social work practices	256	51.2	244	48.8	500	100
7	Would you rate your awareness of the roles and responsibilities of social workers a 100%?	65	13	435	87	500	100
8	Have you ever participated in a campaign or activity related to social	100	20	400	80	500	100

	work						
9	Do you think social work should be introduced as a course in all faculties	450	90	50	10	500	100

Key: N- Number of respondents, f = frequency, %- Percentage.

Firstly, 55% of the respondents (275 students) indicated that they had heard of social work practice before, while 45% (225 students) had not. This suggests that just over half of the student population is familiar with the term "social work practice." Notably, a higher percentage—80% (400 respondents)—claimed they had participated in some form of social work activity, indicating that although many students may not recognize the formal terminology, they have engaged in related practices.

Interestingly, only 42.4% of respondents (212 students) correctly identified the primary role of a social worker as helping people, while a larger portion, 57.6% (288 students), were either unaware or misinformed about this key responsibility. Furthermore, awareness about the presence of social workers in hospitals, schools, and community centers was extremely low, with only 9% (45 students) affirming knowledge of this, and 91% (455 students) showing a lack of awareness.

Despite this, a majority of students (58%) reported encountering social work-related initiatives or programs on campus, suggesting that exposure to social work activities is more prevalent than the formal understanding of the discipline. Additionally, 51.2% stated that their departments offered courses or activities that emphasize social work

practices, while 48.8% did not see such integration, indicating an almost even divide in academic exposure. When asked to rate their awareness of the roles and responsibilities of social workers at 100%, only 13% (65 students) affirmed full awareness, whereas 87% (435 students) admitted to limited understanding. Moreover, 20% (100 students) reported having participated in campaigns or activities related to social work, while the majority, 80% (400 students), had not. Importantly, an overwhelming 90% (450 respondents) agreed that social work should be introduced as a course across all faculties, reflecting a strong interest in institutionalizing social work education and increasing its visibility within the university structure. In summary, the data suggests that while a significant number of students have participated in social work-related activities, there remains a substantial gap in formal knowledge and understanding of the profession. These findings underscore the need for increased awareness, curriculum inclusion, and interdisciplinary integration of social work practice within University of Benin to enhance its recognition and impact.

Table 4.7: Knowledge and Awareness of Social Work Practice Among University of Benin Students

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Social work practice involves supporting individuals, families, and communities in times of need.	260(52%)	45 (9%)	95 (19%)	100 (20%)

2. Social workers focus on addressing societal issues such as poverty, mental health, and child welfare.	250 (50%)	50(10%)	50(10%)	150 (30%)
3. Social work practice is a professional discipline requiring specialized training.	300 (60%)	50 (10%)	50(10%)	100 (20%)
4. Do you believe students should be educated about social work practice?’	300 (60%)	100(20%)	100 (20%)	-
5. Social work practice is essential for addressing societal challenges.	400 (80%)	50 (10%)	50 (10%)	-
6. Social work can improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations.	250 (50%)	50(10%)	50(10%)	150 (30%)
7. Students should be actively involved in social work-related activities.	260 (52%)	95 (19%)	45 (9%)	100 (20%)

Source: Field work, 2025.

The data reveals a high level of awareness and support for social work practice among the respondents. A significant 52% (260 students) strongly agreed, and 9% (45 students) agreed that social work practice involves supporting individuals, families, and communities in times of need. However, 19% (95 students) disagreed, and 20% (100 students) strongly disagreed with this statement, suggesting some confusion or lack of understanding about the specific focus of social work practice. When asked about the

societal issues that social workers focus on, such as poverty, mental health, and child welfare, 50% (250 students) strongly agreed, and 10% (50 students) agreed with this statement. However, a considerable 30% (150 students) strongly disagreed with this view, indicating that some respondents may not fully recognize the broad scope of social work.

Furthermore, 60% (300 students) strongly agreed that social work practice is a professional discipline requiring specialized training, which indicates a strong recognition of the formal qualifications and expertise required for the profession. Nevertheless, 20% (100 students) strongly disagreed, revealing a gap in understanding the professional nature of social work. Regarding the importance of educating students about social work practice, 60% (300 students) strongly agreed, and 20% (100 students) agreed, while 20% (100 students) disagreed. This shows a general consensus on the need for education on social work, though some students remain uncertain about its necessity. An overwhelming 80% (400 students) strongly agreed that social work practice is essential for addressing societal challenges, indicating widespread support for its role in tackling issues like poverty, mental health, and social inequality. A smaller percentage, 10% (50 students), agreed, while another 10% (50 students) disagreed.

In terms of improving the quality of life for vulnerable populations, 50% (250 students) strongly agreed, and 10% (50 students) agreed, while 30% (150 students) strongly disagreed. This suggests that while many recognize the positive impact of social work, there is still some skepticism about its effectiveness or role in improving lives.

Finally, when asked about the involvement of students in social work-related activities, 52% (260 students) strongly agreed, and 19% (95 students) agreed, with 9% (45 students) disagreeing, and 20% (100 students) strongly disagreeing. This indicates a significant proportion of students believe in the value of student involvement in social work initiatives, though there remains a sizable group who do not see the benefit or opportunity for participation.

In conclusion, the responses reveal a mixed but generally positive view on the importance and impact of social work practice. There is a strong consensus on the necessity for education, training, and active involvement in social work-related activities, as well as broad recognition of social work's role in addressing societal challenges. However, gaps in awareness and understanding persist, underscoring the need for further education and outreach to clarify the profession's scope and significance.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings from the study provide valuable insights into the understanding and perceptions of this field among the student population. The study aimed to evaluate how well students recognize social work as a profession, its role in addressing societal issues, and its relevance to their academic and personal lives. The results from the survey indicate varying levels of awareness, participation, and perceptions of the role of social workers in society.

The data reveals that a significant portion of the respondents, 55%, had heard of social work practice before, which demonstrates a reasonable level of awareness of the field. However, 45% of the respondents had not encountered social work practice, indicating a need for greater outreach and education about the profession. This suggests that while a majority of students are familiar with the term "social work," a considerable number are not well-versed in the depth and scope of the profession. The finding highlights a gap in knowledge that could be addressed through more comprehensive education and awareness programs within the university and beyond.

In terms of participation, the findings are more promising, with 80% of respondents indicating that they have participated in social work practice at some point. This could include activities such as volunteering, engaging in community services, or attending related events and programs. The high percentage of participation indicates that social work practice, in its broadest sense, has a visible presence within the university and that students are actively engaged in initiatives that align with social work values. However, 30% of students reported not having participated in social work practice, which may suggest barriers to engagement, such as lack of awareness of available opportunities, time constraints, or insufficient promotion of these initiatives.

When asked about the primary role of social workers, 42.4% of respondents strongly agreed that social workers are primarily focused on helping people, whereas 57.6% disagreed. This divide suggests that while some students recognize the core role of

social workers in assisting individuals, families, and communities, others may not fully understand the breadth of the profession or may confuse social work with other helping professions. This is a critical finding, as it highlights the importance of ensuring that students are provided with clear and accurate information about what social work entails. Social work goes beyond providing direct help; it also involves advocacy, policy development, and addressing systemic issues. The misperception of social workers' roles may be a result of limited exposure to the profession, as evidenced by the 45% of respondents who were not aware of social work practice.

The study also found that 9% of respondents were aware that social workers are present in hospitals, schools, and community centers, while a large majority (91%) were unaware of this. This significant gap underscores the need to raise awareness of the diverse roles social workers play across various sectors. Social workers are often involved in healthcare settings, educational institutions, and community outreach programs, helping to address issues such as mental health, poverty, and child welfare. This gap in awareness may point to a lack of practical exposure to the profession within the university context or insufficient promotion of the various fields within which social workers operate. Enhancing student awareness of the sectors where social workers are active could promote a more nuanced understanding of the profession and its relevance in different contexts.

The findings further reveal that 58% of students reported having encountered social work-related initiatives or programs on campus, while 42% had not. This indicates that social work-related initiatives, such as campaigns, seminars, or volunteer opportunities, are present on campus but not widely known or accessible to all students. The presence of such initiatives suggests that there is a foundation for social work education and practice at the university level. However, to improve participation and engagement, there may be a need for more visible and inclusive programs that actively involve students from diverse departments and academic levels. This could also help to bridge the gap between students' knowledge of social work and their engagement in related activities.

The study also explored whether students were aware of any courses or departmental activities that emphasized social work practices. The results indicated that 51.2% of respondents were aware of such courses or activities, while 48.8% were not. This finding suggests that there is a moderate level of integration of social work-related content into the university's curriculum, but there is still room for expansion. The inclusion of social work principles in various courses, especially in departments such as sociology, psychology, and education, could foster interdisciplinary understanding and highlight the relevance of social work in addressing societal issues. Further embedding social work practices into academic programs across different faculties could increase students' awareness and appreciation of the profession. The survey also asked students whether they believed social work should be introduced as a course in all faculties, and a

striking 90% of respondents agreed. This overwhelming support reflects a strong desire for greater inclusion of social work education within the broader university curriculum. This finding suggests that students recognize the importance of social work in addressing a variety of social issues and would like to see it incorporated into their academic learning. The call for social work courses across all faculties could enhance students' understanding of the profession and its importance in different contexts, as well as prepare them to engage with social issues in their personal and professional lives.

In conclusion, the findings from this study indicate that while there is a reasonable level of awareness of social work practice among University of Benin students, there are significant gaps in understanding the full scope of the profession. Many students have heard of social work and are involved in related activities, but their understanding of its role and impact is often limited. The data also reveals a strong desire among students for greater exposure to social work practice through formal education, increased visibility of social work initiatives, and the integration of social work principles across disciplines. To address these gaps, the university could consider offering more targeted educational campaigns, increasing the number of social work-related courses, and promoting existing social work initiatives on campus. By doing so, the university could foster a more informed and engaged student body, better equipped to address social issues both during and after their academic careers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study conducted on the knowledge and awareness of social work practice among students of the University of Benin reveals a nuanced understanding of students' exposure to and perception of the field of social work. The findings indicate that while there is a general awareness of the term "social work" among students, in-depth knowledge about the principles, scope, and professional relevance of social work practice remains relatively low among the majority. Many students associate social work primarily with charitable acts and volunteerism, rather than recognizing it as a professional and academic discipline rooted in human rights, social justice, and systematic intervention methods.

The research findings highlight that students enrolled in the Faculty of Social Sciences, especially those in the Department of Social Work, demonstrate a higher level of awareness and understanding of the field when compared to their counterparts in other faculties. This disparity suggests that academic exposure plays a significant role in shaping students' comprehension of the scope and objectives of social work. Students from faculties such as Education, Arts, and Management Sciences displayed limited knowledge about the profession, often perceiving social work as peripheral or informal in nature. The study also found that the visibility of social work within the University of Benin's institutional structure and student orientation programs is minimal. Many students indicated that they had never encountered detailed information or campaigns that educate them about the importance and functions of professional social workers in society. This lack of institutional awareness contributes to misconceptions and the

underappreciation of the discipline's relevance in addressing societal issues such as poverty, mental health, gender-based violence, substance abuse, and child welfare.

Additionally, the research reveals that the perception of social work as a female-dominated profession still persists among the student population. This gendered view potentially deters male students from engaging with the discipline or considering it as a career path. Another important finding is that the career prospects and employability associated with social work are not widely known, leading to low interest among students who prioritize career paths perceived to offer higher financial rewards. The findings underscore the need for enhanced sensitization and advocacy on campus regarding the role and value of social work practice. There is a strong recommendation for the University of Benin to integrate awareness programs, workshops, and interdisciplinary engagements that can demystify social work and promote its significance in nation-building and community development. By doing so, the institution can foster a more informed student body and encourage the growth of social work as a respected and essential profession in Nigeria.

5.2 Conclusion

The study has revealed significant gaps in students' understanding and perception of the social work profession. While the term "social work" is somewhat familiar to many, a large portion of the student population lacks a comprehensive understanding of its academic and professional dimensions. This limited knowledge can be attributed to

several factors, including low visibility of the discipline within the university environment, insufficient outreach by the Department of Social Work, and societal misconceptions that equate social work merely with humanitarian or charitable efforts.

The findings also show a strong correlation between academic exposure and the level of awareness. Students who are part of the Social Work department or related disciplines within the Faculty of Social Sciences possess better knowledge of the field's roles, ethics, and career opportunities. This highlights the importance of curriculum content and faculty engagement in fostering awareness. However, for students in other faculties, there remains a need for broader sensitization to bridge the knowledge gap. Furthermore, the study has drawn attention to the perception of social work as a gendered profession and the lack of awareness regarding its professional recognition and job prospects. These factors collectively contribute to the low level of interest in pursuing social work as a viable career path. Therefore, more deliberate efforts must be made to promote social work as a dynamic and essential field that plays a critical role in social development, advocacy, and community empowerment.

To address these challenges, the University of Benin and relevant stakeholders should initiate educational campaigns, integrate interdisciplinary programs, and enhance the visibility of the social work discipline through seminars, career talks, and collaborations with professional bodies. Such efforts will not only correct misconceptions but also foster respect and recognition for social work as a profession. Ultimately,

increasing students' knowledge and awareness of social work practice is essential for nurturing a new generation of socially conscious and professionally competent individuals equipped to address the multifaceted challenges in Nigerian society.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to improve students' understanding and appreciation of the social work profession. Firstly, there is a strong need for the Department of Social Work to take proactive steps in creating awareness about the discipline across all faculties within the university. This can be done through the organization of campus-wide seminars, workshops, public lectures, and exhibitions that introduce students to the aims, principles, and career prospects of social work. Such events can foster greater interdisciplinary engagement and encourage students from other academic backgrounds to see the relevance of social work in their respective fields.

Secondly, the university administration should incorporate basic knowledge of social work into general studies or entrepreneurship courses that are compulsory for all students. This will provide students with foundational information about the field regardless of their course of study, thereby demystifying existing misconceptions. Awareness campaigns, both physical and online, can also be utilized to disseminate accurate and relatable content about social work, using student-friendly platforms like social media, student union events, and departmental collaborations.

Additionally, it is recommended that professional social workers and alumni from the Social Work Department be invited regularly to speak to students and share their real-world experiences. This will help bridge the gap between theory and practice, and inspire students by showcasing how social workers contribute meaningfully to society. Encouraging student-led social work clubs and advocacy groups can also help sustain interest and create a sense of community among students passionate about social issues. Finally, the university should work closely with social welfare organizations, NGOs, and governmental agencies to create internship and volunteer opportunities for students. Practical engagement will not only enhance learning but also expose students to the diverse roles of social workers in healthcare, education, corrections, family services, and policy advocacy. These experiences can shape students' career interests and help establish social work as a respectable, impactful, and viable profession. By implementing these recommendations, the University of Benin can significantly enhance students' knowledge and awareness of social work practice and contribute to the growth and professionalization of the field in Nigeria.

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APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORKS

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.

**QUESTIONNAIRE ASSESSING THE KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF
SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AMONG UNIVERSITY OF BENIN STUDENTS**

SECTION A:

Dear Respondents,

The researcher is a student of the above-named institution and the questionnaire is constructed for and undergraduate degree project on The Knowledge and Awareness of Social Work Practice Among University of Benin Students

You are kindly requested to fill the questionnaire. All information gathered shall be used purely for research purposes and shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks

ODIASE USMAN PETER

SECTION B:

Bio-Data of the Respondent

Instruction: Please tick (✓) where appropriate

- 1. Gender:** Male () Female ()
- 2. Age Range:** 18 - 30 () 31 – 43 () 44 – 54 () 55 and above ()
- 3. Religion:** Christian () Muslim () Traditional ()
- 4. Level of Study:** 100L () 200L () 300L () 400L ()
- 5. Faculty:** Management Science () Education () Arts () Social Science ()

SECTION C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Have you heard of social work practice before? _____

2. How you participated in "social work practice" before ? _____

3. Is the primary role of a social worker to help people?

4. Are you aware that social workers are present in hospitals, schools, and community centers?

5. Have you come across any social work-related initiatives or programs on campus?

6. Are there any courses or activities in your department that emphasize social work practices?

7. Would you rate your awareness of the roles and responsibilities of social workers a 100%?

8. Have you ever participated in a campaign or activity related to social work?

9. Do you think social work should be introduced as a course in all faculties?

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

Instruction: Please tick (√) under the column in the option that suits you best.

Where: Strongly Agreed = SA; Agreed = A; Disagreed = D; Strongly disagree = SD

SECTION I

Items	Knowledge and Awareness of Social Work Practice Among University of Benin Students	Responses			
		SA	A	D	SD
S/N	Questions				
1.	Social work practice involves supporting individuals, families, and communities in times of need.				
2.	Social workers focus on addressing societal issues such as poverty, mental health, and child welfare.				
3.	Social work practice is a professional discipline requiring specialized training.				
4.	Do you believe students should be educated about social work practice?				
5.	Social work practice is essential for addressing societal challenges.				
6.	Social work can improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations.				
7.	Students should be actively involved in social work-related activities.				