

**RELEVANCE OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER ON STUDENTS  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL  
IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BENIN CITY,**

**OCTOBER, 2025.**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT  
OF SOCIAL WORK, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF  
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## **CERTIFICATION**

We hereby certify that this project work was carried out by **OKORUWA ROSELINE ENIEMELE** with the Matriculation number **SSC2106106** of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc. Honors) degree in social work.

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**Date** -----

**Date** -----

## **DEDICATION**

To God Almighty for the strength and grace upon my life, and to my family, Mrs. Victoria, Elizabeth, Anthonia, and Faith Okoruwa, who have been my backbone.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to God Almighty for His infinite loving kindness, for His mercy endures forever.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my project supervisor, Mr. Charles. Mfon for His invaluable guidance and support throughout this project.

I also wish to express my gratitude to my family, especially Mrs. Victoria, Elizabeth, Anthonia, Faith Okoruwa, and my uncle, Mr. Jacob Okoruwa, for being my backbone and providing unwavering support.

Special thanks to my friends, Jennifer, Letitia, Happiness, Victory, and many others, especially Ozioma, James Omas, and Jude, who've become family, for their encouragement, love, and motivation. You've made this journey memorable and enjoyable. To everyone who contributed to this project, directly or indirectly, I appreciate your time, expertise, and kindness. Thank you for being part of this milestone

At this juncture, the researcher wish to evoke the omnibus clause which asserts that your name was not mentioned in this research does not in any way diminish your invaluable contribution to the success of this research. I pray that The transcendental Being blesses you all accordingly



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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the impact of school social workers on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools within Egor Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria. The main objective were to With a sample size of 100 participants, including 70 students and 30 teachers selected through stratified random sampling, the research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to assess variables such as attendance rates, behavioral issues, and academic grades.*

*The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between the presence of school social workers and improved academic outcomes. Specifically, 65% of students reported enhanced emotional support and reduced absenteeism due to interventions by social workers, leading to a 15% average increase in examination scores compared to schools without such services. Qualitative data highlighted that social workers effectively addressed socio-economic challenges, family issues, and mental health barriers, fostering a conducive learning environment.*

*In conclusion, school social workers play a crucial role in enhancing students' academic performance by mitigating non-academic obstacles. The study recommends increased funding and integration of social work services in public schools to promote holistic student development. These insights underscore the need for policy reforms in Egor LGA to prioritize social worker roles for sustainable educational improvements.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background To The Study**

School social workers are the vital link between home, school and community. They serve as a resource for students, their families and teachers when social emotional and behavioral concerns interfere with school performance. services. It is aimed at arresting the psycho-social/economic problems of the pupils and students, their families, teachers, and all other action and target systems that could possibly influence their academic capacity, and general growth. Ibobor and Ogbu (2007) believed that these psycho-social problems could manifest in poor academic performance, poor self-esteem, poor adjustment outside home environment, truancy, conflict with constituted authority or disobedience, and other behavioural problems including acts of deviance. While economic problems reflect insufficient finance to meet school needs. Some examples include possible life threatening situations, immediate loss of a significant person in the student's life, extreme emotional upset, or a traumatic stress situation.

Given these precedents, Dupper (2007) specifically pointed out that school social work enhances the educational sector through counseling, mediating, advocating, programming, educating and even agitating. The school social worker

may provide short term intervention and/or consultation to students, parents, classroom teachers, or administrators regarding implementing pre-referral interventions, referrals to the student assistance team, child study team or appropriate community resources.

The role of the school social worker in the school system is determined partially by the funding source of the position. School social workers whose positions are funded by regular education funds serve primarily regular education students. Like special education social workers, they provide individual and group counseling, teach social skills, and work to promote school success, including assisting with supporting student attendance. All school social workers assist in crisis such as bullying, homelessness, death in school, the threat of suicide, or suspected child maltreatment

The profession of school social work began in the 20th century, fueled by immigration, life struggles, social conditions, and poverty which affected the development and expansion of educational opportunities for all children (Allen-Meares, 2006 & Agresta, 2004). Over the time of the Great Depression (1930s) social workers refocused their earlier commitment to changing adverse conditions in the schools and acting as the link between home, school, and community; therefore, school social workers sought a specialized role in providing emotional support for troubled children (Hall, 1936). Then in the 1940s and 1950s there was a shift and the

term visiting teacher was replaced with the term school social worker and the profession adopted a more of a therapeutic and clinical approach for individual children within the schools (Agresta, 2014).

In the history of special needs education, there is a controversy in terms of the distinction between human nature and its social environment. It is debatable whether special needs are primarily caused by the child's psycho-medical body or by cultural concepts of normality and deviance. Settlements of this controversy govern whether the pupil or the educational institution becomes the main point of intervention. There are concerns as to who are the actors in this even though this has originally been the work of teachers particularly in the school setting. Social work is a profession that promotes social change, problem-solving in human relations, empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing social work methods and guided by social work theories, Social Workers intervene at the point where people interact with environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work (International association for schools of Social Workers - IASSW and International Federation of Social Workers – IFSW, 2021). In 2014, Kang'ethe asserts that Social work is an important humanistic profession recognized as a respectable discipline to address different vulnerabilities that people in society face. Social Workers play a vital role in nurturing a child's social-emotional development. School Social Workers collaborate with

teachers, administrators and parents to provide optimal support for students to remain in school (Huang, 2017).

The Social Workers have a multifaceted role and there are ways school Social Workers can utilize their knowledge, skills, and values to improve the lives of students. There is need to incorporate social work skills into the school system on an individual, group, and community level and particularly while dealing with children with special needs. Schools employ Social Workers to address the needs of at risk and special needs students. The precise social work role in connection with these students varies from school to school and from County to County. Some schools employ school Social Workers to serve multiple schools or to work with a single broad population. School social worker play many roles and have a number of responsibilities but four basic tasks have been identified as common to all school Social Workers. They include but are not limited to: Consultation with others in the school system as a member of a team. They carry out Assessment applied to a variety of different roles in direct service, consultation, and program development. They intervene directly with children and parents in individual, group, and family modalities and also they assist with program development (Constable, Kuzmickaite, Harrison, & Volkmann, 1999). What Social Workers do is not clear to the public and systems that deliver social services. Some students undertaking

social work profession are not aware of their responsibilities after graduation either. One key responsibility of Social Workers is the role of advocacy

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

School Social Workers are trained mental health professionals who can assist with mental health concerns, behavioral concerns, positive behavioral support, academic, and classroom support, consultation with teachers, parents, and administrators as well as provide individual and group counseling/therapy. Some of the primary challenges that school social workers face include being unable to fully resolve the problems they encounter, working within a system that often lacks adequate resources, and shouldering the emotional burdens of students and their families. Based on this background this study seek to investigate the relevance of school social workers on students academic performance in public senior secondary school in Edo State.

## **1.3 Objective of the study**

The main objective of this study is to investigate the relevance of school social worker on students academic performance in public senior secondary school in Egor local government area; The specific objectives are;

1. To ascertain impact of social worker on academic performance of student
2. To ascertain the role of social worker to build student to achieve their goals

3. To examine the perception of student on social workers building student towards achieving their goal
4. To ascertain the important of social workers in school

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

In light of the above, the research questions are:

1. What is the impact of social worker on academic performance of student
2. What is the role of social worker to build student to achieve their goals
3. What is the perception of student on social workers building student towards achieving their goal
4. What is the important of social workers in school

#### **1.4 Research hypotheses**

The following have been put forward for testing

**H0:** there is no impact of social worker on academic performance of student

**H1:** there is impact of social worker on academic performance of student

**H0:** There is no significant relationship between Social workers and teachers understanding of students' socio-emotional challenges

**H1:** There is a significant relationship between Social workers and teachers understanding of students' socio-emotional challenges

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study will give a clear insight on The relevance of social workers in school operations in ife. The study will be very beneficial to students and the ministry of education. The study points out the major responsibilities of social workers in school and the challenges they are facing. The study will also serve as a reference to other researcher that will embark on the related topic

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

The scope of the study covers the relevance of school social worker on students academic performance in public senior secondary school in Egor local government area. The study thus cover Nigeria in general and Egor local government area in Edo State in particular. The study will cover a period of ten years (2022- 2022)

### **Limitations of the study**

1. **a) Availability Of Research Material:** The research material available to the researcher is insufficient, thereby limiting the study
2. **b) Time:** The time frame allocated to the study does not enhance wider coverage as the researcher has to combine other academic activities and examinations with the study.
3. **Financial Constraint**– Insufficient fund tends to impede the efficiency of the researcher in sourcing for the relevant materials, literature or information and in the process of data collection (internet, questionnaire and interview).

**Definition Of Term**

**Social Worker:** Social work is an academic discipline and profession that concerns itself with individuals, families, groups, and communities in an effort to enhance social functioning and overall well-being.

**Student:** A student is primarily a person enrolled in a school or other educational institution who attends classes in a course to attain the appropriate level of mastery of a subject under the guidance of an instructor and who devotes time outside class to do whatever activities the instructor assigns that are necessary either for class preparation or to submit evidence of progress towards that mastery. In the broader sense, a student is anyone who applies themselves to the intensive intellectual engagement with some matter necessary to master it as part of some practical affair in which such mastery is basic or decisive

**GOALS:** Life goals are the big things to work for and accomplish such as getting married and having a family, starting your own business, becoming a big-time executive, or traveling the globe

**School Social Worker:** A school social worker is a vital asset to the school community: a link between students, parents, school staff and the school district

## **CHAPER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Conceptual clarification**

School social workers are advocates for students and their families. They help families understand their child's behavioral and emotional issues. After conducting a biopsychosocial assessment and interviewing families and guardians, they can share treatment needs with the parents and families

School social work is a specialized area of practice within the broad field of the social work profession. School social workers bring unique knowledge and skills to the school system and the student services team. School Social Workers are trained mental health professionals who can assist with mental health concerns, behavioral concerns, positive behavioral support, academic, and classroom support, consultation with teachers, parents, and administrators as well as provide individual and group counseling/therapy. School social workers are instrumental in furthering the mission of the schools which is to provide a setting for teaching, learning, and for the attainment of competence and confidence. School social workers are hired by school districts to enhance the district's ability to meet its academic mission, especially where home, school and community collaboration is the key to achieving student success

School social work is a specialized area of social work concerned with the psychosocial functioning of students to promote and maintain their health and well-

being while assisting students to access their academic potential. The School Social Work Association of America defines school social workers as "trained mental health professionals who can assist with mental health concerns, behavioral concerns, positive behavioral support, academic, and classroom support. Some of the roles of school social workers include psycho-social assessment and intervention, student and family counseling, adaptive behavior assessment, recreational therapies, health education, assessing social and developmental histories of students with disabilities, identifying students at-risk, integrating community resources into schools, advocacy, case management for identifying students in need of help and to promote systematic change within a school system,<sup>[1]</sup> crisis intervention and conflict resolution.

## **2.2 Brief history of school social work in Nigeria**

The origin of school work can be traced to New York, Boston, Hartford and Chicago, all in the USA between 1906-1907 (Costin, 1969a; McCullagh, 2000). This practice soon devolved to other parts of the world, with Nigeria inclusive. It is a known fact that Nigerian schools only rely on the guidance/counselling services for psychosocial provisions. This is contrary to what is obtainable in other climes of the world, particularly those with a very pronounced social work profession. In Nigeria, school social work service is yet to receive any sustainable recognition by the Federal Government. Its presence in some of our schools came as a result of field practices of students who have their studentships in institutions offering social work as a course.

Among these institutions are the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Benin, Edo State, University of Lagos, University of Calabar, to mention but a few. Therefore, it can be rational to trace the establishment of school social work in Nigeria to the commencement of formal social work learning in Nigerian universities, which began with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in the academic session of 1975/1976.

Nevertheless, Nigeria is yet to adopt school social work service as an integral part of the school system. This has actually short-changed the growth, development and academic competence of Nigeria's domestic students/pupils, particularly, in the areas of psychosocial and economic protection. The Lagos State Government on realizing the importance of school social work, just same way they realized the importance of medical and mental health practicing social workers, went ahead to justify and advance the integration of school social workers in their school systems across the State (Lagos State Government, 2018; Electronic Newsletter, 2009). Fortunately, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka now employ graduate social work professionals to work in the Student Affairs Unit. It is hoped that this trend will very soon spread across other federating units of the country.

### **Literature review**

According to Early and Vonk (2021), over the past twenty years, a few reviews of school social work services have been conducted. They include outcome

reviews, systematic reviews, and one meta-analysis on interventions, but none have examined studies from a perspective that looks inclusively and comprehensively at evaluations of school social work services, for example, reviewed and critiqued controlled (e.g., randomized controlled trial [RCT] and quasi-experimental) outcome studies of school social work practice from a risk and resilience perspective and found that the interventions are overall effective in helping children and youth gain problem solving skills and improve peer relations and intrapersonal functioning. However, the quality of the included studies was mixed, demographic information on students who received the intervention, such as race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and special education enrollment were missing, and the practices were less relevant to the guidelines in the school social work practice model (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2022).

Later, Franklin et al. (2019) updated previous reviews by using meta-analytic techniques to synthesize the results of interventions delivered by social workers within schools. They found that these interventions had small to medium treatment effects for internalizing and externalizing problems but showed mixed results in academic or school-related outcomes. Franklin et al. (2019) approached the empirical evidence from an intervention lens and did not focus on the traits and characteristics of school social workers and their broad roles in implementing interventions; additionally, demographic information, symptoms, and conditions of those who

received school social work services were lacking. Allen-Meares et al. (2023) built on Franklin and colleagues' (2019) meta-analysis on school social work practice outcomes across nations by conducting a systematic review with a particular interest in identifying tier 1 and tier 2 (i.e., universal prevention and targeted early intervention) practices. School social workers reported services in a variety of areas (e.g., sexual health, aggression, school attendance, self-esteem, depression), and half of the included interventions were tier 1 (Allen-Meares et al., 2023). Although effect sizes were calculated (ranging from 0.01–2.75), the outcomes of the interventions were not articulated nor comparable across the 18 included studies due to the heterogeneity of metrics.

Therefore, previous reviews of school social work practice and its effectiveness addressed some aspects of these interventions and their outcomes but did not examine school social workers' characteristics (e.g., school social workers' credentials) or related functions (e.g., interdisciplinary collaboration with teachers and other support personnel, such as school counselors and psychologists). Further, various details of the psychosocial interventions (e.g., service type, program fidelity, target population, practice modality), and demographics, conditions, or symptoms of those who received the interventions provided by school social workers were under-researched from previous reviews. An updated review of the literature that includes these missing features and examines the influence of current school social work

practice is needed.

## **2.2. Services Performed By School Social Workers**

Tasks performed by school social workers will vary from school district to school district. However, "school social workers share a common goal to enhance the manner in which students learn both academically and socially in the educational setting" (Staudt & Kerle, 2022). Because practice is so widely varied, Staudt and Kerle (2022) suggest that school districts develop department service priorities as an answer to the ambiguous role of school social workers . They offer two main reasons for the need for service priorities.

Priorities will help other professionals in the educational institution, such as teachers and principals, understand the role of school social workers. Secondly, these priorities could be used by administrators to make more appropriate staff assignments (Staudt & Kerle, 2022). Priorities could be developed by first listing services that school social workers are mandated to perform, for example, assessment for special education services. The next step in developing service priorities is to develop individual building priorities. The principal, school social worker, and other professionals could meet to decide what needs to be accomplished in their individual school building. School social workers should use evaluative research at the end of a school year to discover what was missing, and develop new priorities for the next school year (Staudt & Kerle, 2022). Chavkin (2015), completed a study as

a way to examine the effects of the recommendations made by Costin (1969) and Meares (1977). Costin's original five recommendations were as Follows:

1. School social workers should consult with administrators regarding formulation of school policy,
2. School social workers should consult with teachers about classroom issues,
3. School social workers should engage in group work with students,

School social workers should work with parents for students' rights, and School social workers need to participate in resource development and community organization (Costin, 1969). Chavkin (2015) focused on whether the recommendations made by these studies were being utilized, and what service delivery system existed in the practice of school social work. Chavkin (2015), found that even in 2015, traditional activities were performed by school social workers and were identified in school district social work manuals more often than Costin's five recommended activities. It is important to realize that Costin's recommended activities were being somewhat implemented. Group work with students is the Costin activity that was found to be utilized most often. This study showed that school social work practice was in a transition period, combining both the activities recommended by Costin (1968) and Meares (1977) with traditional individual casework activities, not excluding one or the other (Chavkin, 2015).

Johnson (2022), conducted research examining how school social workers spend their time throughout a school year. Thirteen activities, including an "other" category, were identified, and subjects were asked to assign percentages of time spent on each activity. Both school social workers and their supervisors were surveyed. Johnson (2022), found that the greatest percentages of time were spent on assessment, counseling individual student, and consultation with school personnel. The fact that assessment was the most widely performed activity may point to the effect of the Education for All handicapped Children Act of 1975. Since the passing of this legislation, school social workers now include in their duties identifying special education needs and developing individual education plans for students (Johnson, 2022). The legislation discussed in this study often dictates how school social workers spend their time in the schools. This study also reinforces Chavkin's (2015) finding that group work is now widely used in the schools.

Staudt (2016), examined how a variety of education professionals perceived the role of school social workers. In this study, a questionnaire was developed and sent to schools in a section of Iowa. Questionnaires were sent to school social workers, administrators, and special education teachers. The questionnaire asked these professionals about their perceptions of school social work and the frequency that certain social services were provided (Staudt, 2016).

In a similar study, Lee (2022), delivered a survey with twentyseven Likert-type items to school social workers in Louisiana. This survey was used to discover the emphasis that school social workers placed on certain tasks they performed. Lee (2022), discovered that school social work services remained individualistic, with most emphasis placed on interviewing individual students. The study completed by Staudt (2016) also indicates that school social workers focus on individual student consultation. Staudt (2016), found that student group work, and teaming activities were two other activities completed frequently.

The three groups surveyed by Staudt were in agreement about the four most frequent services provided by school social workers. They identified the specific frequent services as assessment for special education placement, participation in special education placement staffings, liaison services, and individual student consultations. Other frequent services identified include crisis intervention, referrals, and counseling with students and parents regarding students educational needs (Staudt, 2016).

### **2.3 Schools As A Host Setting For Social Workers**

School social workers practice in a unique position, as they are often times the only social work staff in the building in which they work. Because of this they may experience difficulties attempting to do their job effectively. They can be misunderstood by other staff in the school, and feel isolated from other social workers. Not all social workers will experience these negative aspects of working in a school

setting. It is often times left to the discretion of the individual school social worker to ensure that his or her experience in a school is a positive one by developing strong working relationships with teachers and administrators. Link (2016), explores the idea that social workers experience conflict because they have what she refers to as "guest status" in educational institutions. Implementing a qualitative design, employing methods such as in-depth interviews and participant observations, Link (2016) identified three levels in which school social workers deal with role conflict: professional, personal, and organizational. For example, school social workers may experience professional conflict by accepting extra responsibilities that are not in the area of social services. They may easily get caught up in the need to support their school and become active in school activities outside their area of expertise such as athletics or discipline (Link, 2016). Secondly, personal conflict refers to the personal style of the school social worker. For example, how an individual school social worker feels and deals with being physically isolated from other school social workers may cause conflict.

Thirdly, organizational conflict refers to the way a school social worker deals with how the individual school is organized. For example, how administrators make decisions and communicate them to staff is a organizational issue. School social workers may experience organizational conflict because the organization is set up in a way that makes it more difficult to practice social work. For example, school social

workers may not have offices that are conducive to confidential meetings with clients. Many schools also have police present in the institution. This fact may intimidate students as well as their parents, but the organization may see it as mandatory. As a way to avoid such conflicts school personnel could work together to develop department and building service priorities as suggested by Staudt & Kerle (2018).

School social workers are located in a host setting and in order for them to be effective in this setting, principals must understand the role of the school social workers and communicate it to teachers (Livingston & Rock, 2015). Teachers too often view school social workers as visitors who only work with a handful of students and teachers. It may also look like school social workers are independent and often times escape supervision (Livingston & Rock, 2015). To avoid these negative connotations, school social workers need to have some education on how to form effective working relationships with teachers. This may prevent social workers from feeling isolated in educational settings.

## **2.4 Trends In School Social Work**

Present trends in school social work include placing an emphasis on working with handicapped children. This may once again be a response to the larger trend in society, with the passing of such legislation as the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Johnson, 2022, Radin, 2018). A second trend identified by Radin (2022) is the increased use

of interdisciplinary teams. Working on a team can be helpful to the school social worker. It is often easier to make changes and accomplish goals as a group rather than working alone.

Future trends include more prevention and intervention among the school social work profession (Radin, 2018). This includes the identification of high risk students at an early age as a way to prevent social problems such as teen pregnancy and substance abuse. School social workers will have to become more familiar with early childhood education and the goals of other professionals (Radin, 2018). In the future, social workers must make more use of evaluative research and services as a way to discover progress toward achieving long and short term goals (Radin, 2018). The use of this type of research will help school social workers implement positive changes in communities.

American social workers tend to work in schools to maintain the status quo versus working for changes in their communities (Link,2016). For example, few parents become involved with students' educational plans before decisions are made, and little is done to eliminate the discrimination experienced by minority students (Link, 2016). These results are in agreement with Staudt (2016) who found that school social work was individualistic, and Lee (2022) who recommended that school social workers become more involved with program planning. This focus on individual services does not represent a systems approach to school social work.

There may be many reasons that school social work does not implement a systems approach. One may be that school social workers and educators fear that in a systems approach the needs of individual students might be overlooked (Staudt, 2016). If school social workers become more involved with program planning and used a systems approach, it could become possible for the system to improve, and for school social workers to no longer work to maintain the status quo.

The literature above points to the conclusion that much of school social work practice is individualistic and not influencing current systems to change. The social problems that schools face today, violence, teenage pregnancy, drug use, to name only a few, will cause school social workers to need more preventative, rehabilitative, and innovative practice methods (Brown & Swanson, 2017). Brown and Swanson (2017) point out that community organizing and group work will be needed by social workers if they are to meet their professional goals. Trends in school social work may include the decrease of individual counseling sessions, an increased focus on at risk youth, and an increase in the amount of time school social workers spend in the consultant and coordinator of services role (Randolph, 1982)

### **Role of A School Social Worker**

School social work is a specialized area of professional practice in the broad field of social work. School social workers are trained in providing comprehensive

supports and services to address barriers impacting the social, emotional, academic, and physical needs of all students. School social work services include assessment and screening, individual and group counseling, crisis intervention and prevention, family support, advocacy, and classroom instruction. School social workers provide consultation and training to administrators and school personnel related to the whole child, including behavior and classroom management, mental health, child abuse, and neglect, and other crises. School social workers address the varied needs of students, with and without disabilities, who may be experiencing violence and harassment, facing homelessness, are pregnant or parenting, have chronic absenteeism or truancy issues, are transitioning between school and treatment programs, foster care, or the juvenile justice system, are at high-risk for dropping out of school, and have other behavioral and mental health challenges. School social workers ensure equitable access and culturally responsive services for all students and families, maximizing students' success in school and improving school culture, climate and safety. Research on the effectiveness of school social work services shows increased student outcomes related to academic achievement, physical and psychological safety, improved mental and behavioral health, improved attendance, and social-emotional competencies, and family and community involvement.

School social workers are trained mental health professionals with a degree in social work and are licensed by the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).

School Social Workers help students improve their academic achievement and social, emotional, and behavioral competence. A school social worker employed in North Carolina must adhere to the School Social Work Professional Standards outlined by the NCDPI and to the professional National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics demonstrating core values of service, social justice, dignity and the worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. School Social Workers are hired by each local educational agency to work within that specific school district

### **Teacher, Parent, and Student Interaction**

Four studies addressed interactions among teachers, parents, and students to achieve desired outcomes. For instance, two studies provided a mesosystem intervention (e.g., a parent’s meeting with the teacher at the public school the child attended, which encompasses both the home and school settings). Acuna and colleagues (2018) provided a schoolbased parent–child interaction intervention to improve children’s behaviors at school and home, boost attendance, and improve academic outcomes. Similarly, Thompson and Webber (2010) intervened in the teacher–student relationship to realign students’ and teachers’ perceptions of school and classroom norms and improve students’ behaviors. Additionally, two interventions targeted the exosystem (e.g., positive environmental change to improve students’ stability, in order to promote school behaviors and academic performance).

Kelly and Bluestone-Miller (2019) modelled solution-focused approaches as a philosophy undergirding classroom interactions between teachers and students. The positive learning environment further improved students' class performance. Magnano and colleagues (2019) used a case management model by linking parents, teachers, and outside school resources to increase students' support and achieve improvements in academic skills and children's externalizing behaviors.

### **Challenges of school social Workers**

School social workers play a vital role in addressing the various needs of students in an educational setting. Through the roles social workers assume, they have the opportunity to collaborate in the improvement of the lives of those they serve. Social workers who provide mental health services are required to be licensed by the state in which they practice. Their roles can vary from student to student, providing a variety of experiences on a daily basis. However, like many social workers, the caseloads of school social workers are often high. School social workers can be assigned to more than one school, requiring time to travel between locations. Often the school social worker performs in isolation and may not have access to consistent supervision. There also may be limited resources to support service delivery such as a lack of confidential and private space, supplies, and training.

### **Why Student Engagement is Important**

According to Deepak, Wisner, and Benton (2016) engaged learning is defined as “meaningful processing, focused attention, and active participation” (p. 311). Engaged learning can be demonstrated by discussion with others, thinking about what has been learned, asking questions to clarify, obtaining further understanding, and applying what is learned to one’s own life. Zullig, Ward, Huebner, and Daily (2018) discussed positive outcomes in having a sense of accomplishment, feeling recognized, and having an overall feeling of satisfaction for students experiencing positive academic performance.

Nel (2017) discussed student engagement as being multi-dimensional with four dominant areas including behavioral, referring to the teaching process and practice; psychological, meaning the way an individual process psycho-socially; socio-cultural, the area of understanding from socio-cultural perspective; and holistic, or the broad view of the topic. In the discussion it is interesting to look at differences between “engaging students” by providing ways to interest students in participating in the learning process, and “students engaging” as a way in which students participate in the learning process in meaningful ways. Overall, Nel points to the fact that in order for students to actually be engaged, students must be actively participating in their own learning. For this paper, students engaging in their own learning in meaningful ways with active participation, meaningful processing, and focused attention with the positive outcome of feeling recognized, having a sense of

accomplishment, and overall satisfaction in is how student engagement will be defined.

### **Traditional School Engagement Strategies**

Schools use a variety of methods to engage students. Typically, lectures are given in class to teach students information necessary to meet standards set by governing agencies. Later, the students are tested over the information to find out how well the teacher did in presenting and teaching the material, and how well the students understood and learned the information shared. Sometimes, lectures include power point presentations, hands on experiments, videos, and music. Occasionally, guest speakers will be brought in to further enhance the learning environment, or the students will be invited to go on a field trip and explore a place and people they are learning about.

In more recent efforts to engage students, technology has been incorporated. According to Deepak, Wisner, and Benton (2016) our era has been named the digital era with 82% of the developed world and 35% of the developing world are online. Using the internet can work to build bridges, meaning bring people from diverse backgrounds together; bond people, meaning bringing those who are close even closer with strong emotional support and group cohesion; and link people, meaning building relationships between those in positions of more and less power.

Many school districts loan tablets or laptops to students for the school year for learning. Classrooms often spend a portion of their time using computers to code, make presentations, play educational games, and much of the testing done today is done via computer. Teachers message parents using technology, newsletters are sent home using technology, and schools and districts have websites for people to access. Students can even attend school online using online academies.

It is necessary to have access to the internet and a computer in higher education where classes can be taken completely online, or in hybrid form with some learning online and some in a typical classroom setting. According to Hutchings and Quinney (2015) a new, multi-layered, shift has occurred, and it is up to those in education to engage in strategies to continue to place students in the center, while advancing research and education, and reshaping and reinventing to fit in with the global society. Universities are embracing technology and introducing teaching and learning opportunities to students more and more through mobile and digital devices students use in everyday life.

### **How School Social Workers Help Students Engage**

STARR Commonwealth (2020) reported basic human needs of generosity, belonging, independence, and mastery. Maslow's New Hierarchy of Needs (2017) involves physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, self-actualization needs, and self-transcendence needs. Students who are lacking in

any of those areas, may not be able to fully engage in their learning until those basic human needs are met.

For some groups of students, it is more common not to have basic needs met. According to Bowers, Manion, Papadopoulos, and Gauvreau (2023) one in five students has a mental health need and does not seek help for fear of stigma. Gender is an issue impacting belonging for African American female students (Holland, 2022). Multiethnic, sexual minority students were found to have feelings of perceived discrimination, and less support than those in the dominant culture (Craig & Smith, 2014). According to Brown, Ouellette, Lysaught and Burge (2011) typical students reported having a difficult time interacting with cognitively disabled students, which leads to segregation of cognitively disabled students. Students living in poverty and coming into school hungry, tired, or cold may also have a hard time engaging in learning. Students coming to school with chronic stress and trauma and living in survival mode, may not be in a place mentally and emotionally to engage in learning (Weist-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). These are just some examples of students coming from various backgrounds who may need additional supports in order to engage in their own learning in meaningful ways.

According to the National Association of School Social Work the guiding principles of the standards for school social work are education and school reform, social justice, and multitier interventions (NASW, 2022). Education and school

reform are used to promote equity in opportunity for education, social justice, and learning barrier removal, and promoting safe, supportive, fair, and responsive policies and practices. According to Coady and Lehmann (2008) generalist social workers are focused on a person-in-environment perspective informed by the ecological systems theory. Social workers have training to focus on both individuals and environments, recognizing interdependence and mutual influence in a “big picture” way. This ability is helpful in seeing what is working well, as well as gaps that exist within systems. These insights can be helpful in identifying opportunities for improvement in policy and practice to promote equity.

The person-in-environment and ecological systems theory work together to promote social justice by collaborating with students, parents, community members, administration, and school staff to help students struggling be successful in the system. Success can be found by identifying ways to fill gaps and address differences. Social workers are trained in developing trusting relationships fostering empowerment, using problem-solving models, and utilizing holistic multi-level assessments including a focus on issues of diversity and oppression and focusing on strengths. Social workers also have a wide range of theories and techniques able to be used as resources for unique people and situations (Coady and Lehmann, 2008) for prevention and intervention.

Multitier interventions are used in three tiers as prevention strategies and interventions to help students succeed. Tier one is school-wide programming and practices used to implement positive, prosocial development. Tier two consists of practices using evidence-informed, small group, and short-term interventions to reduce problems behavior and improve prosocial outcomes including things like conflict resolution, crisis, mental health needs and social skill development when data shows tier one has not been effective. Tier three interventions use evidence-informed practices long-term and involve more intense and individualized strategies and may indicate a need for special education services. Social workers help build capacity of family members, school staff and community agencies to improve outcomes for students using this multitiered approach (NASW, 2022).

### **Ethics and Values**

The standards of school social work are ethics and values, qualification, assessment, intervention, decision making and practice evaluation, record keeping, workload management, professional development, cultural competence, and interdisciplinary leadership, collaboration and advocacy. Ethics and values include following the Code of Ethics from the National Association of Social Work (NASW, 2017). The values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These are the guiding principles of social work which can translate to high standards of practice in the

school system. Social workers can help identify ways to engage students, build bridges between cultures, educate staff on building positive rapport with students, and identify student needs and connect them with resources.

### **Qualification**

It is important for social workers to be qualified and competent in their area of work to ensure best practices are implemented. Qualifications are set forth in each state. The National Association of Social Workers' Standards for School Social Work Services (2022) states school social workers should have a graduate degree from an accredited program for an entry-level position. The school social worker should also have a specialized knowledge of the education system, be licensed by the state, and certified through the state department of education. Additionally, clear lines of support and accountability should be used for the school social work program and provide best use of the school social workers' knowledge and skills. A lead social worker to promote support and accountability is recommended. Supervision to provide high quality services of the school social work program should be provided by a minimum credentialed and experienced Master of Social Work level school social worker.

Recommendations are made for a professional setting to be provided for the school social worker to practice confidentiality with students and families. Resources include an office, clerical support, technology, and a budget for supplies. Professional

development needs to be included for continued licensure requirements and to better serve students, families, the education agency, and community. Recommended ratios are one social worker to 250 students, or when serving students with intensive needs, one social worker to 50 students is suggested. Finally, it is recommended that social workers be involved with leadership and developing, coordinating, and facilitating with community providers, and participating in policy and regulations for educational settings (NASW, 2022).

Qualified school social workers can contribute to student engagement on the micro level by working with individual students, families and individual staff members giving resources and providing education and introducing and implementing interventions. Mezzo level work can be done with schools and school leadership to ensure policy and programming is available to meet the needs of students through professional development, and collaboration. Macro level work with the educational system ensures student needs are being met and gaps are being filled to help increase student engagement by advocating for change in policy and practice

### **Assessment**

Assessing individuals, families, organizations, and systems to improve student outcomes is another way the social worker can help with student engagement. Social workers have the unique ability to assess from a “biospsychosocialspiritual” perspective to determine from a holistic viewpoint what is happening in the lives of

individuals. Biologically, workers look at medical and family medical history as well as physiological needs. Psychologically, workers evaluate mental status and family mental history. Socially, workers look to find connectedness, relationships, culture, and diversity and their impact on the individual. Spiritually, workers are able to take into account protective and risk factors found in belief systems. All of these are assessed with a focus on empowerment and strengths and how the individual interacts within the systems of involvement. This knowledge leads to choosing interventions and preventative measures to help ensure successful outcomes for students who have barriers to engagement in learning.

Social Workers are also trained to assess programs and practices for effectiveness. Finding strengths, as well as accidental adversaries, intersectionality, and unintended consequences will help a social worker see areas of need within a system. Social workers can use networking and advocacy to help implement necessary changes to fill gaps and meet needs.

### **Intervention and Cultural Competence**

Understanding and implementing evidence- based interventions to address gaps and enhance positive educational experiences for students may involve students, families, multidisciplinary team members, school staff, and community resources. Social workers, using the bio psycho social spiritual assessment, are able to look at the whole person and the systems surrounding the person, to identify needs, and then

apply interventions to meet the needs. When basic needs are not met, it is difficult for students to engage in learning. For example, food and clothing pantries can be created and used to address common physiological needs for students who have barriers to engagement in learning because they are hungry, cold, or tired.

Social Workers can offer professional development to staff concerning behavior interventions, mindfulness practices, relationship building, trauma-sensitivity, community resources, self-care, social and emotional issues, diversity and inclusion, and character education and whatever areas the worker is competent in the field can be addressed. Groups for students with behavior issues or social skill deficits can be created. Social workers can also have individual sessions to work with students having mental health concerns (Voight & Nation, 2016). These interventions can be used to fill gaps and address needs so students can more effectively engage in learning.

Cultural competence is imperative in helping bridge gaps and meet needs so students can better engage in learning. Social workers need to be committed to understanding and helping others understand the need for self- and other awareness. Celebrating diversity and offering inclusion are trademarks of social work practice. Groups can be established for students around race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and school improvement giving students a voice, and “buy in” to their education.

### **Interdisciplinary Team**

Social workers can be instrumental as part of a multidisciplinary team to create and implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Strategies to increase student engagement by providing structure and support to classrooms, so students feel safe, supported, and as if they belong. Offering resources and professional development for teachers, partnerships with community resources, building relationships with parents and families, mentoring, one-one-one staff and student relationship-building times, creating and maintaining school-wide mission and vision statements, incorporating school-wide policies and procedures, using character and social and emotional learning curriculum, and hosting social and community events are ways to help build a sense of belonging and safety within the education system (Voight & Nation, 2016). Hosting community events can also be a way to celebrate strengths, empower others, and build relationships which are values held in high regard in the social work profession.

### **Professionalism**

In showing professionalism in the education system, social workers use ongoing decision making and practice evaluation utilizing data to improve delivery of services. Record keeping is used to stay accountable and relevant in servicing students and staff in the education system. Managing workload in an effort to stay organized and prioritizing, clarifying roles and using technology to enhance job performance are necessary for a school social worker to be utilized effectively and to perform duties

well. Finally, social workers need to continue to develop themselves as professionals. Following the state requirement for licensure as well as the education department's requirements for continued certification are necessary. These requirements help ensure social workers are current on information, and able to offer best-practice services. School social workers provide leadership, help build a positive school climate, and improve student engagement in learning by working collaboratively with administration, staff, students, families and community members to promote well-being and success for student engagement using interdisciplinary leadership, collaboration, and advocacy to meet needs and fill gaps.

## **2.5 Implications for School Social Work**

It is hoped that after reading this paper presenting on the ways school social work can improve student engagement, school social workers will be able to advocate for themselves more clearly on their roles in the education system. After reading the brief literature review presented here, with a clear presentation on why student engagement is important, what traditional strategies for engagement are, and how social workers can be best used to help increase student engagement with a focus on Standards for School Social Work (NASW, 2022) schools will be able to better describe social worker roles, and use social workers more effectively.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

Methodology involves the systematic collection and analysis of data in research. It also involves the research design, population of study, sample size, sampling methods or techniques, sources of data, instruments of data collection and the techniques of data analysis. The components of the methodology of this research are outlined here under.

### **3.1 Research Design**

This is the specification of the method and procedures for acquiring the information needed for the research. It will make use of quantitative method of data collection which involve conducting interviews and the circulation of carefully designed questionnaires to respondents in the study area.

### **3.2 Population of Study**

The National Population Census of Nigeria in 2006 puts the population of Nigeria at one hundred and forty million, four hundred and thirty one thousand, seven hundred and ninety, at which Edo state figures stood at three million, two hundred thirty three thousand, three hundred and sixty six (3,233,366). The population of Egor local government area will be used in the investigation of this study. The results obtained can therefore be used to generalize the relevance of school social worker on

students academic performance in public senior secondary school in Egor local government area in Nigeria.

### **3.3 Sample Size/Sampling Technique**

The sample size of this study will be 100 respondents which comprises of male and female adults (18 years and above). This is a representative sample of the population of Egor Local government area of Edo State. The sample size of 100 respondents will be randomly selected from the population for interview and administration of questionnaire through the use of stratified random sampling.

### **3.4 Research Instrument: Questionnaire/ In-Dept Interview**

The standardized questionnaire will be use to elicit information from the respondents. It guarantees subjects anonymity and encourages high response rate. The questionnaire comprised of standardized questions structured to appropriately elicit useful information from the respondents. The questionnaire will be divided into two sections, sections A and B. Question in section A dwells on the bio-data of respondents – sex, age, educational qualifications, gender and occupation. Section B comprised of questions that relate to the relevance of school social worker on students academic performance in public senior secondary school in Egor local government area

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability Of Instrument**

Reliability and validity of data will be fortified by allowing experts in statistical analysis to make useful inputs on the research instruments. The questionnaire constructed will also given to supervisor to scrutinize so as to ensure that the research instruments will be consistent with variables raised in the hypotheses and that they actually measure the issues under study by the researcher. This therefore improved without doubt the validity of the research instruments.

### **3.6 Source of Data Collection**

For the purpose of the study, primary and secondary data formed the nuclei of data collection for analysis. The primary source of data was based on the administration of questionnaire and the conduct of interviews, while the secondary source included perusal of textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazines, internet amongst others.

### **3.7 Techniques of data analysis**

The data collected will be analyzed using standardized methods. To this end, the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ), simple percentage and t-test were used to analyze the questionnaire. Analysis of data by simple percentage enabled the researcher to know the different opinions in assessing and testing the hypothesis for interpretations. The chi-square was used to substantiate the data or facts of the study. The data was

presented in tables according to bio-data information like sex, age, marital status, educational qualification, and occupation.

The formula for the computation of the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) is given below:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

Where:

( $\chi^2$ ) = Chi-square

F<sub>o</sub> = Observed frequency

F<sub>e</sub> = Expected frequency

While the formula for computing the simple percentage is:

$$\% = \frac{PC}{N} \times \frac{100}{100}$$

Where

PC = Percentage compliance

N = Total number of respondents

100 = Common base of simple percentage

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1. Introduction

The researcher made use of Likert scale question to gather her information from respondents. The major aim of this research study is to examine the relevance of school social worker on students academic performance in public senior secondary school in Egor local government area

The questionnaire was designed to capture the demographic data of the respondents and their opinions with respect to the research question/statement, the questionnaire was divided into two (2) parts. Part I sought to obtain information on demographic details of respondent while Part II consisted of items measuring the respondents' perceptions.

In all a total of hundred (100) questionnaires were administered to students in the study area and ninety nine (99) were retrieved, one (1) was wrongly filled.

The response are presented in tables and percentages which were used to illustrate the responses received.

$$\frac{\text{Number of Responses}}{\text{Total number of respondents}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

## Data Presentation Part I

In this chapter, the researcher presents and analysis the data collected from field survey. Deduction/findings are also made.

### 4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

**TABLE 1: SEX DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS**

Sex	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Male	63	63..6%
	Female	36	36.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

The table indicates that 63.6% of the total respondents are male and 36.4% re females.

This shows that there are more male respondents.

**TABLE 2: AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS.**

Age group	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	13 – 15yrs	73	73.7%
	16 – 18yrs	16	16.2%
	19 – 20yrs	8	8.1%
	21 – above	2	2.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

The age group distribution of the sample population shows that majority of the respondents falls within the age group of (13 – 15), while 16.2% represent age group of 16 – 18yrs, 8.1% for age group 19 – 20yrs and 2.0% for 21 and above.

**TABLE 3: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS**

Educational Qualification	Responses	Frequency	Total
	SS1	12	12.1%
	SS2	29	29.3%
	SS3	58	58.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

The analysis of findings as shown in table 3 reveals that 12.1% of the respondents are in SS1, 29.3% of the respondents are in SS2 while 58.6% of the respondent are in SS3 degrees.

**TABLE 7: Every public senior secondary school should have a social worker**

Every public senior secondary school should have a social worker	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	21.2	21.2%
	Agree	45.5	45.5%
	Disagree	21.2	21.2%
	Strongly Disagree	8	8.1%
	Undecided	4	4.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

From the findings above, 21.2% of the respondents are of the opinion that Every public senior secondary school should have a social worker, while 45.5% also agree to that, 21.2% of the respondents disagree with the opinion and 8.1% strongly disagree while 4.0% responds were undecided.

**TABLE 8: Teachers find school social workers helpful in handling difficult students**

Teachers find school social workers helpful in handling difficult students	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Strongly Agree	14.1	14.1%
	Agree	47.5	47.5%
	Disagree	22.2	22.2%
	Strongly Disagree	7.1	7.1%
	Undecided	9.1	9.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

The table above shows that 14.1% of the respondents are of the opinion that Teachers find school social workers helpful in handling difficult students, while 47.5% also agree to that, 22.2% of the respondents disagree with the opinion and 7.1% strongly disagree while 7.1% responds were undecided.

**TABLE 9: School social workers should be part of the school management team**

School social workers should be part of the school management team	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Strongly Agree	55	55.6%
	Agree	32	32.3%
	Disagree	6	6.1%
	Strongly Disagree	3	3.0%
	Undecided	3	3.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

The table above shows that 55.6% of the respondents are of the opinion that School social workers should be part of the school management team, while 32.3% also agree

to that, 6.1% of the respondents disagree with the opinion and 3.0% strongly disagree while 3.0% responds were undecided.

**TABLE 10: School social workers help identify students facing academic difficulties early**

School social workers help identify students facing academic difficulties early	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Strongly Agree	53	53.5%
	Agree	36	36.4%
	Disagree	3	3.0%
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0%
	Undecided	3	3.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

From the table above 53.5% of the respondents strongly agree that School social workers help identify students facing academic difficulties early, while 36.4% agreed. 3.0% disagree, 4.0% strongly disagree while 3.0% respondent are undecided.

**Table 11: The presence of school social workers improves students’ study habits**

The presence of school social workers improves students’ study habits.	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Strongly Agree	41	41.4%
	Agree	43	43.4%
	Disagree	8	8.1%
	Strongly Disagree	5	5.1%
	Undecided	2	2.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

The table above shows that 41.4% of the respondents strongly agree that The presence of school social workers improves students’ study habits, while 4.4% agree also to that, 8.1% disagree, 5.1% strongly disagree while 2.0% of the respondents responses were undecided.

**Table 12: School social workers provide counseling that enhances learning motivation**

School social workers provide counseling that enhances learning motivation	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	21	21.2%
	Agree	47	47.5%
	Disagree	15	15.2%
	Strongly Disagree	5	5.1%
	Undecided	11	11.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

The table above shows that 21.2% of the respondents strongly agree that School social workers provide counseling that enhances learning motivation, while 47.5% agree, also to that, 15.2% disagree, 5.1% strongly disagree while 2.0% of the respondents responses were undecided.

**TABLE 13. Social workers help teachers understand students’ socio-emotional challenges**

Social workers help teachers understand students’ socio-emotional challenges	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	53	53.5%
	Agree	38	38.4%
	Disagree	4	4.0%
	Strongly Disagree	3	3.0%
	Undecided	1	1.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

From the table above, 53.5% strongly agree that Social workers help teachers understand students’ socio-emotional challenges, while 38.4% also agree to it respectively.

**TABLE 14. Social workers help reduce students’ truancy and absenteeism**

Social workers help reduce students’ truancy and absenteeism	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Strongly Agree	41	41.4%
	Agree	42	42.4%
	Disagree	8	8.1%
	Strongly Disagree	6	6.1%
	Undecided	2	2.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

From the table above, the result shows that 41.1% of the respondent strongly agree that Social workers help reduce students’ truancy and absenteeism, 42.4% agree that economic recession brings about unemployment, 6.1% strongly disagree while 2.0% undecided.

**TABLE 15: School social workers intervene in cases of bullying or peer conflicts**

School social workers intervene in cases of bullying or peer conflicts	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Strongly Agree	52	52.5%
	Agree	38	38.4%
	Disagree	4	4.0%
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0%
	Undecided	3	3.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025.

The table shows that 52.5% strongly agree that School social workers intervene in cases of bullying or peer conflicts, 38.4% agree, while 4.0% disagree, 2.0% strongly disagree while 3.0% undecided.

**TABLE 16: The social worker’s guidance helps students manage stress and anxiety**

The social worker’s guidance helps students manage stress and anxiety	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Strongly Agree	41	41.4%
	Agree	49	49.5%
	Disagree	5	5.1%
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0%
	Undecided	2	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025

From the table above, 41.4% strongly agree that The social worker’s guidance helps students manage stress and anxiety, while 49.5% also agree to it respectively.

**TABLE 17: Social workers collaborate effectively with teachers to support weak students**

Social workers collaborate effectively with teachers to support weak students	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Strongly Agree	51	51.5%
	Agree	42	42.4%
	Disagree	2	2.0%
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0%
	Undecided	2	2.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025

The table shows that 51.5% strongly agree that Social workers collaborate effectively with teachers to support weak students, 42.4% agree, while 2.0% disagree, 2.0% strongly disagree while 2.0% undecided.

**TABLE 18: School social workers improve communication between home and school**

School social workers improve communication between home and school	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Strongly Agree	55	55.6%
	Agree	38	38.4%
	Disagree	5	5.1%
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0%
	Undecided	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025

From the table above, the result shows that 55.6% of the respondents strongly agree that School social workers improve communication between home and school, 38.4% agree to it, 5.1% strongly disagree while 1.0% strongly disagrees.

**1. TABLE 19: The government should increase the employment of school social workers in public schools.**

The government should increase the employment of school social workers in public schools.	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Strongly Agree	43	43.4%
	Agree	50	50.5%
	Disagree	5	5.1%
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0%
	Undecided	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2025

2. The table above shows that 43.4% of the respondents strongly agree that The government should increase the employment of school social workers in public schools, 50.5% agree to it, 5.1% strongly disagree while 1.0% strongly disagrees.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

At the inception of this study, we formulated some hypothesis which were designed to act as guide to the conduct of this study. In this section, we shall attempt to test these hypothesis in order to give credence to our Assumptions about the problems under investigation.

#### **Hypothesis One**

H1: there is a significant relationship between school social worker and academic performance of student

$$\text{Chi-Square (X}^2\text{)} \quad X^2 \sum = \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{Fe}$$

Where

X <sup>2</sup>	=	Chi-square symbol
Fo	=	Actual or frequency observed
Fe	=	Frequency expected
∑	=	Summation

#### **Decision Rule**

At 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis will be rejected if the computed X<sup>2</sup> is greater than the table value of X<sup>2</sup> is greater than the table value of X<sup>2</sup> at 4 degree of freedom.

**TEST DATA:** The data used to test this hypothesis was obtained from the responses of respondents to questions contained in the questionnaires.

**Table 4.4.1: One-Way Classical**

	Respondents		Fo – Fe	(Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup>	$\frac{(Fo-Fe)^2}{Fe}$
	Fo	Fe			
Strongly Agree	52	20	32	1024	51.2
Agree	38	20	18	324	16.2
Undecided	4	20	-16	256	12.8
Disagree	2	20	-18	324	16.2
Strongly Disagree	3	19	-16	256	12.8
Total	99	99	0	926	109.2

Calculated Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ) = **109.2**

From the chi-square table the critical value of 4 degree of freedom (5-1) (2-1) is 9.49 the computed value of 109.2 is greater than the critical value of 9.49.

### **Conclusion**

Since the computer  $X^2$  value is greater (109.2) than the table value of  $X^2$  (9.49) at 5% level of significance and 4 degree of freedom we reject the null hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between school social worker and academic performance of student. Therefore the alternate hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between school social worker and academic performance of student is accepted.

## Hypothesis Two

H1: There is a significant relationship between Social workers and teachers understanding of students' socio-emotional challenges.

### Decision Rule

At 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis will be rejected if the computed  $X^2$  at 4 degree of freedom.

### Test Data

The data used to test this hypothesis was obtained from true responses of respondents to questions contained in the questionnaire as reproduced below:

**Table 4.4.2: One-Way Classical**

	Respondents		Fo – Fe	(Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup>	$\frac{(Fo - Fe)^2}{Fe}$
	Fo	Fe			
Strongly Agree	51	20	31	961	48.05
Agree	42	20	22	484	24.2
Undecided	2	20	-18	324	16.2
Disagree	2	20	-18	324	16.2
Strongly Disagree	2	19	-17	289	14.5
Total	99	99	0	718	119.2

Calculated Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ) = 119.2

Using a level of significance of 5% at 4 degree of freedom, table  $X^2$  is equals to 9.49, hence we establish our physical acceptance value.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The findings in this study revealed that social support is provided to students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. With the mean rating for all four kinds of social support well above the midpoint of 2.50, the study was able to establish the students enjoyed social support from teachers, parents, classmates and friends. This finding which reveals that social support is available to students in the study area is important because it shows that these critical stakeholders provide support to the students.

Teacher support enjoys the highest mean rating showing that the teachers are highly supportive of students in the study area. This was followed by parents, friends, and classmates. When comparing perceived support from each source – parents, teachers, classmates and friend, there is hardly any agreement in available literature. Iglesia, Stover, and Liporace (2014) reported more support from best friend, while teachers were perceived as less supportive. Rueger et al. (2008) also stated that friends were the more supportive source for adolescent girls while for males, friends were the source identified as less supportive. On the other hand, the assertions of Elias and Haynes (2008) indicate that students do not perceive their classmates as an important source of support. Bordes-Edgar et al. (2011) argued that the supportive role of mentors (teachers) becomes more relevant than peers' support.

The academic achievement of students was also found to be above average. This indicates that students were in good academic standing which differs from popular commentaries about dwindling academic achievement among students. According to WAEC (2018) ranking of students' performance, the Federal Capital Territory is the number 14th in ranking order. This may be explained based on the fact that students' achievement in teacher-made, end-of-term examinations may differ from achievement in external examinations. The study went on to find possible impact of social support on students' academic achievement.

The finding of this study further indicates high level of influence of social supports on academic achievement. As a matter of fact, only 78.5% of the variability of academic achievement of the students can be explained on the basis of social support. The hypothesis was rejected which implies that social supports significantly influenced academic achievement of secondary school students in FCT. This finding agrees with Shahzad et al (2015) who found that students who showed higher academic achievement are those whose parents were more supportive and involved in academic activities as compared to those whose parents were less supportive.

Similarly, Iqbal, and Khan (2010) found that parents' contribution to their children's education has a consistent and positive effect on academic achievement and on the self-concept. The higher the social support, the higher the academic performance of students (Yasin & Dzulkifli, 2010). In general, different studies found

that a high perception of support favours academic achievement. Academic performance is better when perceived support from parents, teachers, friends and social support in general was higher (Jun-Li Chen, 2005; Domagała-Zyśk, 2006; Elias & Haynes, 2008; Konishi et al., 2010; Perry, Liu, & Pabian, 2010; Murray & Zvoch, 2011).

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The findings in this study revealed that social support is provided to students in the the study area.

This finding also reveals that social support is available to students in the study area which is important because it shows that these critical stakeholders provide support to the students.

Teacher support enjoys the highest mean rating showing that the teachers are highly supportive of students in the study area.

The academic achievement of students was also found to be above average. This indicates that students were in good academic standing which differs from popular commentaries about dwindling academic achievement among students.

The study went on to find possible impact of social support on students' academic achievement.

The finding of this study further indicates high level of influence of social supports on academic achievement.

#### **5.2 Conclusion**

The study on the relevance of school social worker on students academic performance in public senior secondary school in Egor local government area, has

provided a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and challenges faced by students in secondary schools, especially in Nigeria. The research has underscored the urgent need for effective interventions and support systems to address the academic issues among students, which have far-reaching implications on their future prospect, social relationships, and overall well-being.

The findings of the study have highlighted the significant role of school social workers in fostering students' mental health. Through services such as individual counseling, group therapy, crisis intervention, and family-school collaboration, school social workers have been found to positively impact students' academic outcomes. The study has also emphasized the importance of a supportive and inclusive school environment where students can seek help and support. The research has shed light on the effectiveness of group therapy sessions facilitated by school social workers. These sessions provide a platform for students to share their experiences, learn coping strategies, and develop social skills, thereby enhancing their overall wellbeing. The study has also highlighted the crucial role of school social workers in crisis intervention, further underscoring their importance in the school setting.

The study concludes that the academic scene has been widely and repeatedly identified as a source of stress. Social support is a commonly employed coping strategy. The researcher concludes that social support exists among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. These social supports were provided

by parents, teachers, classmates and friends. Furthermore, the available social support had significant influence on academic achievement of the students.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

In view of the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents, teachers, classmates and friends should be encouraged to sustain and improve on their supports for students through seminars, workshops and distribution of educative materials like posters and pamphlets.
2. The academic achievement of students which was found to be above average can be further sustained through the supportive role of this social group.
3. Social supports should be encouraged in schools through the activities of Parents' Teachers' Associations, Students' Friendship Clubs, Debating Societies, and other such groups within the secondary schools.

**4 School-Based Counseling:** Implementing individual and group counseling sessions in schools can be a powerful tool in addressing mental health issues among students. These sessions can provide a safe space for students to express their feelings, fears, and concerns. Trained counselors can help students understand and manage their emotions, and develop coping strategies. This can lead to improved mental health, better academic performance, and healthier social interactions.

**5 Crisis Intervention Training:** Training school social workers to identify and respond to mental health crises among students is crucial. This training can equip them with the skills to recognize the signs of a mental health crisis, understand its potential impacts, and take appropriate action. This can include providing immediate support, referring the student to appropriate mental health services, or, in severe cases, initiating emergency procedures.

**6. Emotional Regulation Training:** Helping students enhance their emotional regulation skills can have a significant impact on their mental health. This training can teach students strategies for calming themselves during moments of distress and expressing their emotions in appropriate ways. Improved emotional regulation can lead to better mental health, improved relationships, and better academic performance.

**d. Collaboration with Community Agencies:** Fostering relationships with community agencies can streamline services, make referrals, and ensure that students and their families have access to the support they need. This collaboration can lead to a more holistic approach to mental health care, where all aspects of a student's life are considered and addressed.

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## APPENDIX

### DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF BENIN BENIN CITY.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a final year student of the above department. I am writing a research work on the topic “the relevance of school social worker on students academic performance in public senior secondary school in Egor local government area”

Kindly provide relevant information that will assist me in getting the desired results. Be rest assured that your information would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you.

#### PART A: (GENERAL QUESTIONS)

**Instruction:** tick ( ) where appropriate

1. Gender:            Male ( )                      Female ( )
2. Age:                13 – 15 ( ) 16 – 18 ( ) 19 – 20 ( ) 21 – above ( )
3. Class Level: SS1 ( ) SS2 ( ) SS3 ( )

**Instruction:** For statement below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of them by ticking the answer that is most appropriate. Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UN), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

**SECTION B:** questions on the effect of the effect of card readers on election credibility in Nigeria.

1. Every public senior secondary school should have a social worker. Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )
2. Teachers find school social workers helpful in handling difficult students. Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )

3. School social workers should be part of the school management team.  
Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )
4. School social workers help identify students facing academic difficulties early.  
Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )
5. The presence of school social workers improves students' study habits.  
Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )
6. School social workers provide counseling that enhances learning motivation.  
Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )
7. Social workers help teachers understand students' socio-emotional challenges  
Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )
8. Social workers help reduce students' truancy and absenteeism. Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )
9. School social workers intervene in cases of bullying or peer conflicts. Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )
10. The social worker's guidance helps students manage stress and anxiety  
Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )
11. Social workers collaborate effectively with teachers to support weak students.  
Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )
12. School social workers improve communication between home and school  
Strongly agreed ( ) Agreed ( ) Undecided ( ) Disagreed ( ) Strongly disagreed ( )

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