

**ELDER ABUSE AND SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION STRATEGIES IN
OVBIOGIE COMMUNITY**

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CERTIFICATION

We certify that this project was carried out by Marvellous Miracle Inulus with Matriculation Number: PG/SSCI510806 of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria and has been presented to the Board of Studies for the award of Master degree in Social Work (MSW).



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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for his infinite mercy that knows no bounds on me and my family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the God almighty. For the grace and the enablement all through the years in this great institution.

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ABSTRACT

This study is on elder abuse and social work intervention strategies in Ovbiogie Community, Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The study uses a research survey design to gather first-hand information about elder abuse among adults aged 18 and above in Ovbiogie Community, Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The sample size is 357 respondents, selected using the Krejcie and Morgan (1990) sample size table. The research instrument is a structured questionnaire divided into two sections, A and B, covering socio-demographic variables and objectives. The instrument undergoes content validity review by an expert to ensure it is structured and relevant to the study's purpose. The instrument is also subjected to internal consistency testing to ensure its reliability. The researcher assists two research assistants in administering and collecting the questionnaires, and the data is analyzed using SPSS version 27. The frequency distribution method and charts are used for easier interpretation and understanding for educated, partially educated, and non-educated residents or stakeholders in the community. The findings highlights the high prevalence of elderly abuse in the community with nearly half experiencing it due to cultural taboos, economic dependency, and limited access to healthcare and social services. Social workers can intervene and influence policy decisions.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Globally, an individual who is 65 years of age or older is referred to as older adults or senior citizen (Guptal et al., 2024) and as people get aged, they become unable to provide for their own needs hence, they depend on external support in other for these needs to be met. In developing nations like in Africa, the aged depend on members of their family (particularly their children) for the provision of these needs. However, in a situation whereby they do not have children of their own, or their children are far away in other nations in search for greener pasture or their children lack the capacities and other requirements to help their aged parents meet their needs, the extended family and members of their community and neighbourhood become their support system (Abdi et al., 2019).

Elder abuse is a widespread global problem that can have negative impacts on elderly persons, their families, and communities (Ernst & Maschi, 2018). Elderly people are more prone to be mistreated because they commonly experience communication issues, are unable to recognize abuse, and encounter difficulties contacting support groups should they become victims of abuse. Many factors, such as the aging population's declining health and independence, which increases the risk of abuse, can have an impact on how people interact with family and other people (National Academies of Sciences, Division of Behavioral Medicine Division, Board on Behavioral Sensory Sciences, 2020).

In sub-Saharan Africa where the population of elderly is expected to grow significantly by 2030, it was projected that individuals over 60 years will constitute nearly 20% of the population, up from about 5% in 2020 (He et al., 2020). Older individuals in this part of the world are revered

for their wisdom and life experience. They are often seen as the custodians of traditions and cultural practices, and their opinions are valued in family and community decision-making. Nonetheless, Lodha and De-sousa (2018) opined that the elderly seem to require support on a constant basis for their physical, material, and mental welfare. The Lodha and De-sousa emphasised that older adults depend more on others for their physical and mental survival, which increases the likelihood of physical abuse and due to their weakness and inability, they can no longer execute the majority of personal responsibilities.

Sharkey (2014) pointed that the degree of maltreatment frequently has an impact on the self-respect and personality of the elderly but still, the abuser might not be aware of or believe that his actions are to be blamed for such injury. The younger generation frequently blame such mistreatment on unexplained problems, which can lead to emotional abuse and mood disorders in the elderly (Zarei et al., 2024). When a family member behaves in such a way that the elderly person feels fear, mental pain, emotional sorrow, or sadness, it is psychological or emotional abuse. Insults, age-related jokes, threats, and disregard for their mental health are examples of this type of behaviour (Foli & Thompson, 2019). Elderly abuse frequently occurs in a variety of families with diverse circumstances, especially when the elderly lack the resources to contribute to their own well-being or if they never take care of the younger generation before their old age (Schlz et al., 2020).

In Nigeria, elderly abuse is a growing concern that reflects broader societal issues and cultural dynamics and whiles the country has a cultural tradition of respecting the elderly, cases of abuse do occur, often hidden from public view (Sorokin, 2017). In the curbing of elder abuse, the public health practices that serve to reduce the risk of abuse and foster positive relationships with the elderly can be linked to the prevention of elder abuse hence primary prevention, which

entails legislation, awareness-building, campaigning, and education, is aided by social work intervention (Alias et al., 2023). While successful prevention intervention processes focused on screening and identifying high-risk groups as well as relieving caregiver stress through education, information, and support groups social interventions may be used to alleviate existing issues, lessen loneliness among older persons, and provide supportive services (Germain & Knight, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) statistical analysis predicts that by 2030, one in every six persons on earth will be 60 years of age or older and this means that by 2050, the current number of one billion people who are 60 years of age or older will have doubled to. By 2050, the number of persons who are 80 years of age or older is predicted to triple from its current level, reaching 426 million. Similarly, data show that between 2020 and 2050, there will be three times as many elderly people in Africa from 74.4 million to 235.1 million (Edelstein et al., 2017).

The population of the elderly people will rise rapidly than any other region of the globe over the next three decades and with the majority of African countries having an older population of less than 7% by 2050, it is expected that just over one-fifth of the countries in the continent will still have a low proportion of older people (Jakovljevic, 2021). Umezulike (2016) opined that by 2050, Nigeria is projected to have the 11th-largest elderly population in the world, up from its current ranking of 19th in 2020. As a result, statistical research shows that Nigeria has 206 million elderly citizens. These figures represent 64% (5.1 million) of the 9.4 million seniors and 46% (4.3 million) are of the female population (Chigbu, 2018).

The psychological, physical, and biological repercussions of elder abuse may be connected to disabilities (Storey, 2020). The social gerontological society has long argued that a paradigm shift that is culturally suitable to understand, prevent, and address elder's abuse is necessary

(Samantha, 2017). Samantha, pointed out that elderly abuse is a social and structural phenomenon that requires the application of practice methods appropriate to the local settings. Elderly abuse is a culturally defined issue that illustrates distinctions between acceptable and inappropriate interpersonal behaviours that also vary between cultures (Okazaki & Sue, 2016).

Social work practice entails a comprehensive assessment of elderly people's problem as they carry out the intervention by assessing the problems that their clients are facing regardless of the situation, the problem area, or the demographic (Lynch 2013). The evaluation of the objectives embraced by social work interventions include gathering, synthesizing, and evaluating critical information regarding retirement and aging in order to build a suitable and effective intervention method (Parker 2020).

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Ageing is a fundamental challenge to government in Africa as shown in their inability to pay the entitlements of their retirees who have served meritoriously in civil and military capacities. The government is also unable to provide social services and health care facilities for the needs of the ageing populations (Abonyi et al., 2024). As of 2023, the percentage of the population aged 65 and above in Nigeria was reported to be approximately 2.99% according to the World Bank. Additionally, in 2020, it was noted that there were about 9.4 million people aged 60 years and older (World Health Organization, 2022). Elderly abuse is widespread problem that afflict the aged irrespective of colour, race or ethnicity. Persistent abuse of the elderly has detrimental implications on the victims and society such as early mortality, illness, decreased productivity, a high risk of hospitalization, malnutrition, human rights violation and dignity among others (Hernandez-Tejada et al., 2020; Honarvar et al., 2020).

These pervasive cases of elder abuse run counter to the core values of respect for human rights, social justice, and diversity that underlie the practice of social work (Bows & Penhale, 2018; Cox, 2020). In order to act in the best interests of senior citizens and protect them from any kind of injustice and human rights violations, the issue of elder abuse requires attention from social welfare agencies, especially social work experts with a broad knowledge base and theoretical orientation, WHO (2017) mandated that all governments, health and social welfare specialists should confront the issue of elder abuse due to its significance public health and human rights concerns.

Ukoh (2010) asserted that social workers duties are very challenging due to the daily increase in the elderly population. Hence social workers don't disregard or denigrate someone who needs their services. With an increasing senior population, there is an unavoidable increase in the varieties and severity of their needs and challenges. But the poor elderly in Nigeria suffer greatly as a result of an increasingly hostile, insensitive, and unbearable reality of the society (Uche, 2020). In contrast to Nigeria, the elderly are largely cared for in two ways in the United States and other advanced countries institutional care for the old and private care in homes.

In Nigeria, family often provides informal care for older people, making the latter situation uncommon as they provide 80 to 90 per cent of elderly long-term care, whereas elderly care in the United States rooted in both institutional and private settings (Tanyi et al., 2018). In Nigeria elderly people in live in their homes and are cared for by their children or other family members (Ene et al., 2022).

Many older adults for example, would choose to continue living in their own or the homes of their family rather than paying the high costs of institutional care where healthcare, meal preparation home, and homemakers are available. In light of this, this study aim to fill a gap in

the literature by the evaluation of elderly abuse and social work intervention options in Ovbiogie community.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to find out the social work intervention strategies on the effect of elder abuse on the elderly in ovbiogie community, and the specific objectives are to:

- 1) determine the extent of elder abuse in ovbiogie community.
- 2) ascertain the factors influencing elder abuse in ovbiogie community.
- 3) explore the effect of elder abuse on the wellbeing of the elderly in in ovbiogie community.
- 4) identify the available policies on ground to curbing elder abuse in ovbiogie community.
- 5) enumerate the social work intervention strategies for elder abuse in ovbiogie community.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions are to guide the study:

1. What is the extent of elder abuse in ovbiogie community?
2. What are the factors influencing elder abuse in ovbiogie community.?
3. What is the effect of elder abuse on the wellbeing of the elderly in ovbiogie community.?
4. What are the available policies on ground to curbing elder abuse in ovbiogie community?
5. What are the social work intervention strategies for elder abuse in ovbiogie community.?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will be relevant to Ministry of Health as suggestions allow for policy inclusion for the elderly in Nigeria. The study will also be relevant to would-be elders as they make preparation to navigate the challenges of old-age and live fulfilled life. This study will serve as a relevant document to both existing and potential researchers in the field of social gerontology. The study will properly analyse the abuse and neglect of the elderly for a better understanding of the nature

and causes of mistreatment. The recommendations from the study will enlighten stakeholders and government alike for prompt policy action in favour of the elderly population.

This study will serve care caregivers the best way and method of handling the elderly and will provide relief or escape from stress that normally results to abuse of the elderly by the caregivers. The recommendations from the study will be an additional reservoir of knowledge and also tool for policy formulation. The study will serve as a stepping stone for further research on the same field and its suggestions will be relevant towards enlightening the elderly on improving their health through regular physical activity.

1.7 Definition of Terms/Concepts

Elderly: Older citizens who are over 65 years old. It is the age at which pensions, social security, or medical benefits for the elderly become accessible.

Intervention Strategies: This refers to strategies that specify how to achieve a certain goal through the use of specific tactics, techniques, cues, programs, or tasks.

Social Work: This refers to practice-based profession and an academic field that supports social growth, cohesion, and the liberation and empowerment of individuals.

Abuse: This is a form of maltreatment or the act of mistreating someone or treating them poorly, as well as failing to provide adequate care for such a person's needs..

Wellbeing: This refers to how people feel and how they function both on a personal and social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT CONCEPTS

Preamble

Senior citizens are frequently the victims of elder abuse, which is a problem that will only get worse as the world's population ages. It is also accepted that it goes against social standards that call for respect for senior citizens (Yon et al., 2017). The author emphasised that a number of senior people is growing, and older people are more vulnerable to abuse. The risk of abuse is inversely connected with the increase in functional limitations and impairments that older people experience on a daily basis (Hosseinpoor et al., 2016). Elder abuse is sometimes described as careless behavior by family members or other close relatives that puts older individuals in risk or causes them pain (Naderi et al., 2019). Naderi et al. stated that affecting people's personal, moral, cultural, and financial life are issues like elder abuse. Elder abuse is currently believed to be a global problem with a range of manifestations that vary by country and social structure (Naderi et al., 2019).

2.1.1 Extent of elder abuse

Elder abuse is a violation of human rights and is prevalent across all cultures and societies as it is estimated that 1 in 6 older adults experience some form of abuse in community settings (Yon et al., 2017). Yon et al. opined that elder abuse is often overlooked, with many cases going unreported due to stigma, fear, or lack of awareness. There is a regional variation to elder abuse globally as the extent varies from one part of the world to another as e.g. in Iran, a systematic review found that the overall prevalence of elder abuse is 48.3%, with neglect being the most common form of mistreatment as it is often influenced by social, economic, and cultural factors (Nemati-Vakilabad et al., 2023).

Elder abuse and mistreatment in Sub-Saharan Africa is a pressing issue that has garnered increasing attention in recent years as the region faces unique challenges that contribute to the prevalence of elder abuse, including cultural attitudes, socioeconomic factors, and a lack of awareness and resources (Mussie et al., 2022). Gedfew et al., (2024) indicated that the pooled prevalence of elder abuse in Sub-Saharan Africa is approximately 46.73% hence this statistic highlights a significant issue, with nearly half of older adults experiencing some form of abuse as approximately 29.27% of older adults reported experiencing physical abuse 5.35% experiencing sexual abuse. The cultural taboos surrounding discussions of elder mistreatment contribute to the underreporting of abuse as many communities may view the mistreatment of older adults as a private matter, leading to a lack of awareness and intervention. The prevalence of elder abuse can vary significantly across different countries and communities within Sub-Saharan Africa as factors such as local customs, economic conditions, and the availability of social services play a crucial role in shaping the experiences of older adults (Mouton & Southerland, 2017)

Elderly persons typically rely on others and are particularly vulnerable to abuses such as sexual, financial, physical, mental, or psychological (Cadmus & Adebusoye, 2023). Physical abuse includes leaving older victims with cuts, bite marks, welts, bruises, fractures, burns, and other unexplained ailments (Ebimgbo & Okoye, 2021). Emotional abuse includes verbal abuse; abuse threats, harassment, and intimidation are all forms of emotional mistreatment that can cause withdrawal, despair, dread, and other negative emotions. Name-calling, humiliation, intimidation, shouting, insults, threats, lack of respect, disregard for his or her wishes, restriction of access to important others, inability to satisfy their health and social needs, and many other forms of emotional abuse are common in Nigerian society (Ifayomi et al., 2024).

Sexual abuse i.e. non-consensual touching, sexual activity with them while they are unable to understand, reluctant to consent, threatened, or physically coerced into it, as well as leering or making sexual remarks (Tang, 2014). Financial abuse i.e. unjustified modifications to a senior's power of attorney, will, or other legal documents, as well as missing money and missing property, all constitute financial maltreatment (National Centre on Elder Abuse, 2014); Neglect i.e. refusing to give older people the care they need or failing to fulfil any of your obligations to them, especially if you are the one in charge of doing so (Ebingbo & Okoye, 2021).

The elderly face other challenges apart from abuses; one of such is majorly called stereotyping which is as a result of some misguided misconceptions about elder people. The younger generation in Nigeria perceives older people as being dogmatic, resistant to change, witches or wizards, sceptical, reliant, and even a burden to their families (Yidana, 2014).

2.1.3 Factors influencing elder abuse

Elder abuse is a complex and multifaceted issue, influenced by a confluence of factors that operate on individual, societal, and systemic levels (Papadopoulos, 2023). Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. The factors influencing elder abuse and mistreatment may include the following:

i. **Individual Factors:** Caregivers, often family members, may experience financial hardship, leading to resentment and frustration, potentially resulting in abusive behaviours. Caregivers may also lack adequate support from family, friends, or community resources, increasing their burden and stress levels (Gandu & Ekpe, 2022).

ii. **Mental Health Issues:** Caregivers with their own mental health challenges, such as depression or anxiety, may be more likely to engage in abusive behaviours (Orfila et al., 2018). Cognitive Impairments such as dementia can also influence elder abuse and mistreatment as

individuals with dementia are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to their cognitive decline, which can make it difficult for them to communicate their needs or seek help (Alon,2021). Alon pointed that other cognitive impairments, such as memory loss or impaired judgment, can also increase an individual's vulnerability to abuse.

iii. Caregiver and Victim Substance Abuse: Caregivers who struggle with substance abuse are more likely to engage in abusive behaviours, as their judgment and ability to care for others may be impaired. Individuals who abuse substances may also be more susceptible to abuse, as their judgment and ability to protect themselves may be compromised (Stanton-Tindall, 2016).

iv. Personality Traits: Individuals with traits such as aggressive tendencies are more likely to engage in abusive behaviours, regardless of the victim's age. Individuals with traits such as lack of empathy may have difficulty understanding the needs and feelings of others, making them more prone to abusive behaviours (Olashore et al., 2020).

v. Societal Factors: Societal attitudes towards aging can influence the perception of older adults as burdensome, weak, or irrelevant, contributing to a culture of disrespect and tolerance for abuse. Some cultures may have norms that legitimize or condone physical discipline or harsh treatment of older adults, making it more difficult to identify and address abuse (Swift et al., 2017).

vi. Socioeconomic Factors: Poverty as a socio-economic factor can increase stress levels for caregivers, leading to neglect and financial exploitation of older adults as limited access to healthcare, social services, and support networks can leave older adults vulnerable to abuse, as they may lack the resources to protect themselves (Ofuoma, 2024).

vii. Social Isolation: Older adults who lack connection or are isolated from family, friends, and community support are more likely to experience abuse, as they may lack advocates to speak on

their behalf (Ikeorji et al., 2024). This can result in physical limitations, transportation difficulties, or social stigma can prevent older adults from engaging in social activities and forming connections, increasing their isolation.

viii. Systemic Factors: Factors such as lack of awareness and reporting can influence elder abuse as the stigma associated with elder abuse can prevent victims from disclosing their experiences, leading to underreporting and a lack of intervention. Victims may fear retaliation from their abusers or caregivers, making them hesitant to report the abuse (Chane & Adamek, 2015).

ix. Inadequate Legal Protections: In some jurisdictions, laws protecting older adults from abuse may be weak or poorly enforced, leaving victims vulnerable (Herring, 2016). Herring opined that older adults may face barriers to accessing legal services, such as financial constraints or difficulty navigating the legal system.

x. Lack of Resources and Support: Limited funding for elder abuse prevention programs, social services, and support networks can hinder efforts to address the problem. A lack of trained professionals, such as social workers, nurses, and law enforcement officers, can limit the ability to identify, respond to, and prevent elder abuse (Adelakun & Obue, 2020).

2.1.3 Effect of elder abuse and mistreatment on the wellbeing of the elderly

It is reasonable to assert that population aging has substantial and far-reaching implications for all facets of society; given the negative impacts aging has on the global community (Nweke & Enyosiobi, 2023). One of the issues older people in Nigeria confront is the lack of interest among its scholars in the field of gerontology, despite the country's increasing number of older adults as they have not shown a keen interest in finding out about the real problems that older people face

(Ene et al., 2024). Older people have problems with their finances, bodies, minds, and social interactions, unlike any other demographic in society.

Economic challenges is another issue frequently confront the significant contributions that older people make to the development and progress of society and this is a result of the government's neglect of the elderly population's financial stability in Nigeria (Tanyi et al., 2018). Poverty is pervasive in Nigeria, and older people are particularly at risk because the majority of them are past their prime and there is no national social security to meet their aging financial requirements (Besong, 2017). Besong pointed that individuals in Nigeria usually make assumptions about someone's aptitude, potential, and competence based on their age, which has a detrimental effect on older persons' economic activity and their capability to access essential services when

Inadequate care is another frequently encountered challenge by the elderly as this result in psychological effects, which necessitate intervention from psychosocial assistance to assist older persons in coping with the psychological and social effects of elder abuse. During this intervention, abuse victims can better understand their circumstances, investigate their issues, and learn about their options for dealing with the abuse (Akbar, 2021).

Ageing in humans starts the moment adulthood is reached and is a normal aspect of life. The loss of cells from these organs causes the performance of several organs, including the heart, kidneys, brain, and lungs, to gradually deteriorate over the course of a person's lifetime, reducing the reserve capacity of the person (Lee et al., 2018). Ageing can also have some physiological effects on individuals in areas such as the cardiovascular system which is the leading cause of death after the age of 60 e.g. heart disease because as people age, their hearts grow more susceptible to illness and gradually perform worse (Amarya et al., 2018); Nervous system i.e. Normal aging does not result in glaring changes to the brain's structural makeup though it is

accurate to say that as we age, our brains start to lose a few of their nerve cells (Dharmarajan, 2021); Skeletal system i.e. the bones gradually lose calcium as we age as they grow slower to heal, more brittle, and more susceptible to shatter even from slight falls as a result (Fadem, 2023); Vision i.e. a decline in the eye's capacity to adjust focus for perceiving close-up and distant things. The steady rise in lens stiffness, which largely occurs between the ages of 10 and 55, is linked to this shift in vision. The prevalence of eye conditions including glaucoma and cataracts rises after the age of 60 (Cheng et al., 2019); Hearing i.e. the ability to discern tones at higher frequencies gradually declines after the age of 60. The inability to perceive high frequencies makes it difficult to recognize people by their voices and to follow a group's conversation, although it typically does not pose a severe barrier to everyday life for the affected person (Wang et al., 2024); Skin i.e. a progressive decline of suppleness is the main age-related change in the skin called wrinkles. Wrinkles can also form as a result of other reasons like weather exposure and inherited features (Mohiuddin, 2019).

2.1.4 Policies on Elder abuse

The diverse social and cultural differences makes it quite difficult for the existence of a global policy on ageing, but nonetheless, there are global initiatives by the United Nations on ageing called the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030). This is a global initiative aimed at improving the lives of older people and promoting healthy aging. It aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, aiming to ensure all individuals can live long, healthy, and fulfilling lives. Key objectives include promoting healthy aging, enhancing social inclusion, supporting caregivers, strengthening health systems, and encouraging research and data collection. These initiatives aim to promote policies and practices that support the health

and well-being of older adults, address ageism and discrimination, improve caregiver well-being, strengthen health systems, and encourage research on aging and healthy aging factors.

The African Charter on the Rights of Older Persons, adopted in January 30 2016 and it emphasizes the importance of special protection for older individuals. It states that they have the right to physical or moral measures of protection, access to necessary care and support services, and to be treated with dignity and respect, which are crucial for their well-being. The charter emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to older persons' rights.

In Nigeria, Prior to the National Policy on ageing, the National Social Development Policy 1989 was in vogue and it aimed to promote the wellbeing of older Nigerians. Subsequently National Policy on Ageing was formulated and it has made strides in addressing the needs of its aging population. The National Policy on Ageing in Nigeria was approved on February 11, 2021, with the primary objective of creating a society where senior citizens are guaranteed security, independence, participation, and comprehensive care. The policy addresses emerging issues related to aging in Nigeria, considering global, regional, and national contexts. It recognizes the need for a structured approach to support older persons. However, there are significant challenges, such as the lack of a functional national policy specifically focused on the care and welfare of older persons, the breakdown of traditional family structures, and changing demographics. The policy emphasizes the need for comprehensive care and support systems for older adults, aiming to enhance their quality of life and ensure their rights are respected.

Furthermore, the maintenance and Welfare of Senior Citizens Act 2011 was signed into law.

Part 2 (section 4) of the of the Bill established a body known as the senior citizens welfare community, also called the Commission which is the regulatory organization in respect of the rights of senior citizens in Nigeria.

Part 4 (section 12) makes provision for social security for every senior citizen in Nigeria

Other parts and sections make provisions as follows;

- i. Entitlement for free vaccinations against diseases associated with old age - Part 4 (section 13)
- ii. Exemption from the payment of individual income tax - Part 4 (section 14)
- iii. Free medical and dental services in government facilities – Part 4 (section 16)
- iv. Accessible express lanes for senior citizens or priority shall be given to them in all roads, Federal and State as well as commercial and government establishments - Part 4 (section 19)
- v. Establishment of senior citizens retirement communities which allows only senior citizens to buy or rent housing - Part 4 (section 21)
- vi. Protection against crime – Part 4 (section 22)
- vii. Part 4 (section 25) - makes provision of the sum of N20,000.00 (Twenty Thousand Naira) only as compensation for the nearest surviving relative for any deceased senior citizen.
- viii. Obligation of family to senior citizen- Part 4 (section 26)
- ix. It shall be an offence to wilfully or negligently deny any senior citizen the privileges and or benefits contained in the Act - Part 5 (section 29)

The provision of this law could be a better way of addressing the rights of senior citizens in Nigeria.

2.1.5 Social Work Intervention with the Elderly

Challenges older people face include communication difficulties, the stigma associated with seeking assistance, being far from family, transportation problems, a lack of money or expertise,

and the reality that many of them live in long-term poverty (Reynolds et al., 2020). A lot of elderly have challenges and culturally supportive treatments should be offered since the combined impacts of being old have a detrimental impact on mental health. The goal of all elderly welfare measures should be both national and decentralized. In order for all older people to benefit from welfare programs, they should be easy to utilize. Policies should concentrate on regionally specific cultural challenges. For low-income households to provide elder care and treatment, which is crucial in a developing (Saberini et al., 2023)

The idea that old age is accompanied by physical and cognitive decline that impairs older people's capacity to report abuse is a strong justification for social workers to report it (Tarzia & Barret, 2024). Additional duties played by social workers include safeguarding vulnerable seniors by setting up respite care, arranging prompt referrals for legal and medical interventions, and setting up follow-up meetings with other caregivers and the victim's family to exchange information and make crucial decisions and this entails making assessments of the victims and creating care plans for them (Bows & Penhale, 2018).

According to the body of research, social workers coordinate educational and public awareness campaigns to help seniors discover their strengths mend and create positive relationships with families, communities, and other seniors (Kirk et al., 2019). Moreover, social workers are in charge of protecting elderly clients' belongings from improper handling. Social workers can use their expertise and interpersonal skills to make prompt interventions, such as organizing family meetings, if mismanagement is suspected (Spreadbury & Hubbard, 2020). This will ensure the protection, welfare, and needs of older people in the future.

Moreover, social work represents advocacy for improved welfare outcomes for elder abuse victims. Social workers conduct advocacy campaigns using their knowledge, skills, and

principles to help victims of elder abuse exercise their rights, take part in choices about their care, and achieve the fullest level of autonomy (Milnie & Nieman, 2024). As a result, social workers engage in social policy and research to have an impact on decisions and policies pertaining to the protection of senior citizens at the macro level (Bows & Penhale, 2018). Hence, in gerontological research, especially in wealthy and industrialized countries, the reaction of social work to elder abuse has garnered substantial attention (Kirk et al., 2019).

According to the Wamara (2022), there are six main social work intervention options to combat elder abuse. The majority of these, according to the study, were created to lessen older people's vulnerability and poverty, which, according to the study's participants, decreased the danger of elder abuse. Social workers employed by the government handled elder abuse through widespread poverty eradication programs, while the rare direct and deliberate interventions that addressed elder abuse were undertaken by social workers working with NGOs.

Firstly, the majority of social work intervention specialists agreed that increasing awareness of elder abuse is essential to controlling it and this entails empowering older adults by educating them about their rights, allowing them to confront and report mistreatment. When older adults are informed of their legal rights and applicable legislation, they can be determined to demand such rights (MacGregor, 2003). This stage of awareness-building relies on in-person instruction sessions, radio talk shows, radio commercials, posters, and stickers.

Wamara (2022) gave an instance that a strategy of intervention known as cash transfer in few countries involves delivering cash to elderly and impoverished persons. Under the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE), social work intervention specialists are to offer grants to senior citizens 80 years of age and older in order to address urgent issues like their

nutrition, access to healthcare, improved savings, and decreased dependence on the extended family and this older adults were able to visit hospitals and obtain medical attention.

Secondly, Social work intervention specialists used livelihood support activities to address the triple challenges of poverty, vulnerability, and marginalization in order to combat elder abuse. While some of the livelihood assistance programs specifically aimed at the elderly, others gave them the tools they needed to care for orphans (Kirk et al., 2019). Several social workers put older individuals in groups, helped them with registration, established group constitutions, and opened bank accounts for them since NGOs and government agencies prefer to support older people in groups. Social workers were crucial in determining the appropriate companies for the elderly to increase their income, including piggery, apiary, poultry, and goat-rearing operations. Professionals in social work interventions provide financial support for elderly individuals, particularly abuse victims, in the amount of (US\$140). They purchase piglets, chicken, and agricultural supplies with this money (Wamara, 2022). Several of the elderly people also worked at crafts including manufacturing arrows, bowls, and native musical instruments as during the government's Wealth Creation Program, some of them were given farm inputs like seeds, seedlings, and other planting supplies. Yet, this was only available to those who had the physical stamina to work in agriculture (Wamara, 2022). Support for livelihoods is thought to contribute favourably to the empowerment of seniors between the ages of 60 and 74. Their socioeconomic well-being is improved, and this may be seen by an increase in their income level by avoiding the uncertainties of old age, they can manage their annual expenses (Waniganeththi, 2013)

Thirdly, Social workers use mediation as an intervention approach to settle family disputes on behalf of elderly clients. They specifically assisted elderly persons and their families in identifying important points of contention, comprehending opportunities for mutual benefit, and

developing a strategy (Wamara, 2022). Professionals in social work intervention mediate disputes and examines methods for identifying family conflict hotspots as after coming up with a list of potential solutions to the family's conflict, social workers support the family in coming up with a plan of action. Making follow-ups and reviewing the action plan is the purpose of social work intervention (Kirk et al., 2019). Because disputes are resolved inside families, social work intervention specialists think mediation is less intrusive than the criminal court system. The complexity of mediation, however, has led some social work intervention specialists to question its efficacy. The success of the mediation rests entirely on who implements the action plan, particularly if individuals who mistreat older people are expected to do so (Milnie & Nieman, 2024).

Lastly, professionals involved in social work interventions stated conducting advocacy work and research to affect laws and key decision-makers. Many social workers claimed that they should create advocacy campaigns to call for better social protection systems, gender-inclusive budgets, protection laws, inclusive financial services, and the participation of elderly people in government initiatives. In order to combat abuse and discrimination against older persons, the participants networked and worked with local and national groups.

According to one social worker, social workers who specialize in intervention work with social protection platforms to promote social protection funds so that elderly people can receive basic welfare (Han & Mosqueda, 2020). Social workers who specialize in intervention have noticed that the majority of elderly people lack some type of social security, which causes them to suffer. Also, advocacy entailed making an effort to persuade the government to adjust its priorities and reallocate resources to address the needs of senior citizens (Wamara, 2022).

The social work intervention experts disclosed that they used significant holidays like the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and the International Day for Older People as venues for inter-country discussion. Some participants also partnered with legal aid organizations to provide senior citizens with free legal services. The social work intervention specialists also engaged in research, such as conducting surveys on the experiences of ageism, needs evaluation for older refugees, and rights and voices of older persons. This serves to allow evidence-based advocacy against elder abuse (Roundtable, 2021).

2.2 Review of Related Empirical Studies

According to Joosten et al., (2017), elderly abuse has been defined as a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to another person. The Joosten et al. stated that with the global population of older people (age 65 and above) predicted to triple from 672 million in 2006 to almost 1.9 million in 2050, concerns around older abuse are increasing which required urgent attention and solution. Age is a typical way to measure aging, and it is an unavoidable process. Gorman (2017) opined that older people receive comparatively limited support and have few alternatives for using social services when compared to other age groups.

Elder abuse is a global issue affecting millions of older adults annually as approximately 1 in 6 individuals aged 60 and older experience some form of abuse in community settings (Yon et al., 2017). Types of abuse include psychological abuse, which affects 12% of older adults, physical abuse, which affects 7%, and neglect, which is a common form. In Iran, the prevalence of elder abuse is as high as 48.3%, with neglect and mistreatment being the most reported forms. Global studies show that the issue is not confined to any region but requires attention and action as risk

factors contributing to elder abuse include social isolation, dependency on caregivers, and mental health issues (Storey, 2020).

Elder abuse is a significant issue in Sub-Saharan Africa, with an alarming prevalence of 46.73% as nearly half of older adults may experience some form of abuse, with physical abuse being the most prevalent form at 29.27% (Aborisade & Shontan, 2017). Sexual abuse is less common but still significant at 5.35%. Older adults in Sub-Saharan Africa face vulnerability factors such as social isolation and dependency on caregivers due to a lack of support systems. Comprehensive programs are needed to prevent elder abuse and protect the rights of older adults, focusing on raising awareness, providing support, and implementing protective measures. However, the abuse and violence against older persons, including financial exploitation, remain significant challenges in many parts of Africa, necessitating a concerted effort from governments, communities, and organizations (Baker et al., 2016).

Onanubi et al., (2017) indicated that the lifetime prevalence of elder abuse was approximately 18.6% in rural areas and 17.6% in urban areas. The one-year prevalence of elder abuse was reported to be 14.7% in rural settings and 13.3% in urban settings. Elder abuse is a significant issue in Nigeria, with estimates ranging from 30% to 81.1% as physical abuse, a less common form due to cultural respect, still occurs, with a lifetime prevalence of significant impact (Cadmus & Adebuseye, 2023). Psychological abuse often underreported but serious, affects the mental well-being of older adults. Neglect, particularly in rural areas, is a common issue. Vulnerability factors include social isolation, dependency on caregivers, and cultural context. Many elderly individuals live alone or are marginalized, increasing their vulnerability. The cultural emphasis on respecting the elderly may mask the prevalence of abuse, but neglect and psychological abuse still occur hence there is a pressing need for comprehensive programs to

prevent elder abuse in Nigeria, focusing on raising awareness, providing support, and implementing protective measures for older adults (Tamuno-Opubo et al., 2024).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The theories employed for this study includes the Social learning theory and the ageing and attitude to ageing theories. These theories are explained below:

Social Learning

SLT is often described as the ‘bridge’ between traditional learning theory (behaviourism) and the cognitive approach. This is because it focuses on how mental (cognitive) factors are involved in learning. Unlike Skinner, Bandura (1977) believes humans are active information processors and think about the relationship between their behaviour and its consequences. Albert Bandura’s social learning theory suggests that people learn new behaviours by observing and imitating others.

The theory emphasizes the importance of observational learning, where individuals acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs by watching the actions of others and the consequences that follow, leading to the modelling and adoption of observed behaviours.

Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the importance of observing, modelling, and imitating the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Albert Bandura’s social learning theory (SLT) suggests that we learn social behaviour by observing and imitating the behaviour of others (Banduras, 1989). Bandura realized that direct reinforcement alone could not account for all types of learning, so he added a social element to his theory, arguing that people learn by observing others. This theory is regarded as the bridge between behaviourist and cognitive learning theories, encompassing attention, memory, and motivational processes (Muro & Jeffrey, 2008). The SLT states that in response to observation, imitation, and

modeling, learning can occur even without changing behaviour. Learning is about interacting with the environment and making a permanent change in knowledge or behaviour that improves human performance (Driscoll, 1994).

Social learning theory is based on the premise that people learn not only through direct experience, but also by observing others. Albert Bandura, a Canadian psychologist, developed this theory in the 1960s, enriching it with these key concepts: firstly, that in social settings, people learn best through observation and imitation; secondly, that a person's mental state can affect this learning process; and lastly that even when something is learned in this environment, it does not mean that there will necessarily be a permanent change in behaviour in the learner (Phelan, 2013).

Social learning theory, a cornerstone of behavioural psychology, offers a powerful lens for understanding how elder abuse can emerge and persist. This theory, developed by Albert Bandura, posits that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. How this applies to elder abuse:

1. **Observational Learning:** Individuals who witnessed or experienced abuse in their own families are more likely to engage in abusive behaviours themselves. This can occur through direct observation of violence, or through the normalization of aggressive communication and conflict resolution styles. The media, popular culture, and even everyday interactions can portray and reinforce harmful stereotypes about older adults, contributing to a societal acceptance of mistreatment.

2. **Vicarious Reinforcement:** If caregivers observe others engaging in abusive behaviour without consequences, they may be more likely to imitate those actions. This can occur within families, where a perpetrator's actions are excused or minimized. If a caregiver sees a perpetrator receive

positive reinforcement (e.g., praise, attention) for abusive actions, they may be more likely to engage in similar behaviours.

3. Direct Reinforcement: A caregiver might be reinforced for abusive behaviour if it leads to a desired outcome, such as gaining control over the elder's finances or receiving praise for "managing" a difficult elder. Abusive behaviour might be reinforced if it eliminates an unwanted stimulus. For example, a caregiver might yell at an elder to make them stop complaining or demanding attention.

4. Cognitive Factors: Perpetrators may justify their actions by blaming the elder for their own behaviour, attributing it to age-related decline or personality flaws. This allows them to rationalize their actions and avoid taking responsibility. Negative attitudes towards older adults, such as seeing them as burdens or incapable, can increase the likelihood of abusive behaviour.

Providing caregivers with education, resources, and support services can help reduce stress, improve coping skills, and decrease the likelihood of abusive behaviour.

Social learning theory offers a crucial lens for understanding the development and perpetuation of elder abuse. By recognizing the role of observation, imitation, and reinforcement, we can develop effective interventions that address the root causes of this complex issue and create a safer environment for our aging population. The cycle of abuse in elder care is a complex issue that can be traced back to intergenerational transmission, where individuals who witnessed or experienced abuse in their own families are more likely to engage in abusive behaviours themselves. This cycle can continue unless intervention is taken. Risk factors include exposure to violence, societal norms, and caregiver education. Individuals who have experienced violence in their own lives are at a higher risk of becoming perpetrators of elder abuse. Social norms and cultural attitudes also play a role in shaping behaviour.

To break the cycle of abuse, early intervention programs that teach healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and empathy can help break the cycle. Public awareness campaigns that challenge negative stereotypes about aging and promote positive attitudes towards older adults can create a more supportive environment for elders and reduce the likelihood of abuse. Caregivers can also benefit from education and support to develop healthy coping mechanisms and learn non-violent ways to address challenging situations.

Reinforcement plays a crucial role in the cycle of abuse. Positive reinforcement, such as praise or attention, can make caregivers more likely to repeat abusive behaviour. Negative reinforcement, such as the removal of unwanted stimuli, can also increase the likelihood of repeating abusive behaviour. Targeting cognitive factors, such as changing beliefs and attitudes, and promoting empathy, can help individuals recognize the impact of their actions and reduce the likelihood of engaging in abusive behaviour.

Ageing and Attitudes Theory

Age-related information, experiences (expectations, fears, emotions), and behaviours (actions, decisions) are all referred to as attitudes toward aging. Attitudes are influenced by both personal and societal factors. They vary based on cultural values and are affected by the advancement of modern medicine as well as changes in the health of an aging population. Health, social, and informal family care during old age contribute to feelings of dignity, security, and satisfaction (Ayanilo, 2018). All of these elements, along with the highly valued values of activity, achievement, employment, consumerism, and competition in contemporary societies, are the origins of myths that affect how seniors and society see aging.

Age-related preconceptions and prejudices are examples of myths. They touch on many facets of senior life, including job, health, sexuality, mobility, decision-making, leisure pursuits, and

psychological traits including concerns and fears. The most prevalent fallacies surround seniors' deteriorating physical and mental capacities and their inescapable rise in need on others' assistance. Ageing is portrayed as a time of losses and old age is seen as being feeble and decrepit rather than wise and mature (Phelan, 2013). Ageistic ideology, which Robert Butler first defined as the systematic discrimination of people based on their age, is a manifestation of negative views toward aging. While losses are primarily the hallmarks of aging, seniors' experiences are quite varied.

Surprisingly, the study's findings, which involved asking older persons directly about aging, revealed that they frequently saw aging as an opportunity for growth, development, and positive transformation. The "ageing paradox" refers to this lack of a negative age effect (Animasahun & Chapman, 2017). Old age is merely one part of the human life from a lifelong perspective, a multidimensional experience, where both losses and gains are present, similar to other periods of both losses and winnings are present, like in other phases of life. According to certain beliefs, the aging process is a stage of the life cycle with particular developmental tasks. Erikson talked about the integrity and wisdom stage, when a person is able to accept the course of their life as they have lived it and get ready for death.

Ageing theory plays a crucial role in preventing and addressing elder abuse. It provides insights into social dynamics, such as disengagement and activity theories, which suggest that aging can lead to isolation and vulnerability to abuse. Understanding these dynamics can help create inclusive environments that encourage social engagement. Symbolic interactionism theory emphasizes the importance of cultural values and expectations in shaping behaviours, which can help identify abusive behaviour. Promoting cultural awareness and respect for older adults can help prevent elder abuse. Intervention strategies, such as education programs for caregivers, can

effectively reduce elder abuse. Ageing theories also emphasize the importance of caregiver well-being, which can lead to abusive behaviours. Support and resources for caregivers, such as respite care and counseling, can reduce the risk of elder abuse. Policy development aimed at protecting the elderly can also benefit from ageing theories, as policies that promote social support systems, community engagement, and caregiver training can create a safer environment for older adults.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOD

This section covers the research method that was adopted for the study and was discussed in the following sub-headings: research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, research instrument, validity of the instrument, method of data collection, and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Area

This study was carried out in Ovbiogie community which is located in Ovia North-East Local government area in Edo State, Nigeria, which covers about 2,301 km² and with a population of 153,849. Ovbiogie community is closer to notable communities in Ovia-North East like Okada, Uhen, Utese, Okokhuo, Uhiere, and Isiuwa as part of Edo State's eighteen local government areas as represented in the Senate.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopts the research survey design as this design was deemed suitable for the study because it tends to take a cross section of the total population as a sample with the result generalised back on the population. The nature of the research design also made it very attractive because it is cost effective.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of this study consist of adults eighteen and above living in Ovbiogie Community in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State irrespective to sex, ethnic nationality or religious inclination. This population is chosen because they have lived with an older person one way or the other before in the community which therefore enables them, to have first-hand information and experiences about elder abuse.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study consists of 357 respondents which were randomly selected in the study area. In deriving this number, the Krejcie and Morgan (1990) sample size table was employed. Krejcie and Morgan table is a widely used tool for determining the appropriate sample size for research studies based on a given population size. Although it is cited as 1990, the foundational work was published in 1970.

3.5 Research Instrument

The study adopts the structured questionnaire as instrument of data collection and the four point likert scale was adopted for the instrument. The instrument was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A covers the socio-demographic variables of respondents while section B was address the questions raised from the objectives or research questions. The Questionnaire was adopted because of its time efficiency that is, considering the fact that the study is quantitative in nature.

3.5 Validation of the Instrument

The content validity were employed for the study as the instrument was reviewed by an expert to ensure that questions raised are structured in a way that allows the researcher to obtain information pertinent to the study's purpose. Based on their comments and suggestions, changes will be made before the questionnaire was administered.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to internal consistency which is a method for testing the reliability of instrument. It measures the extent to which items within a test are consistent in measuring the same construct.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

The researcher was assisted by two researches assistant that administered to, and collect the questionnaire from the respondents. The respondents' questions were addressed after the response items are provided to them in order to make sure they understand. The most appropriate options will be selected by respondents as their responses to each question on the survey. The questionnaires was read and interpreted to the uneducated ones by the researcher before recording their responses.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondent was sorted, coded and analysed according to the sections A and B present in the instrument. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 27 was employed for the data analysis. The frequency distribution method and charts were used for the analysis because of its simplified nature as it is easier to understand and interpret for the educated, partially educated and non-educated residents or stake holders in the community.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings of the data collected from the respondents using the survey instrument on elder abuse and social work intervention strategies in ovbiogie community.

The findings were presented in relation to the research objectives stated in the study.

4.1.1 Section A: Demographics of the Respondent

Table 1: Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	100	28.0
Female	257	72.0
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 100(28%) respondents are males while 257(72.0%) are females. This shows that there are more female respondents who took part in the study than males as the number of females more than doubled that of the male. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 1:

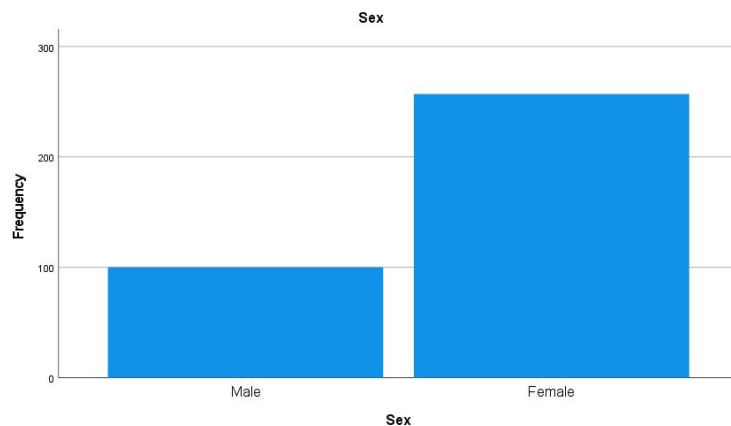


Table 2: Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-23	82	23.0
24-28	63	17.6
29-34	75	21.0
35-40	66	18.5
41 and above	71	19.9
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 82(23.0%) are age 18-23, 63(17.6%) are 24-28, 75 (21.0%) is 29-34, 66 (18.5%) are age 35-40 while 71(19.9%) are age 41 and above. This shows that the highest age range of respondents that filled the instrument are between age 19-23 at 82(23.0%). This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 2:

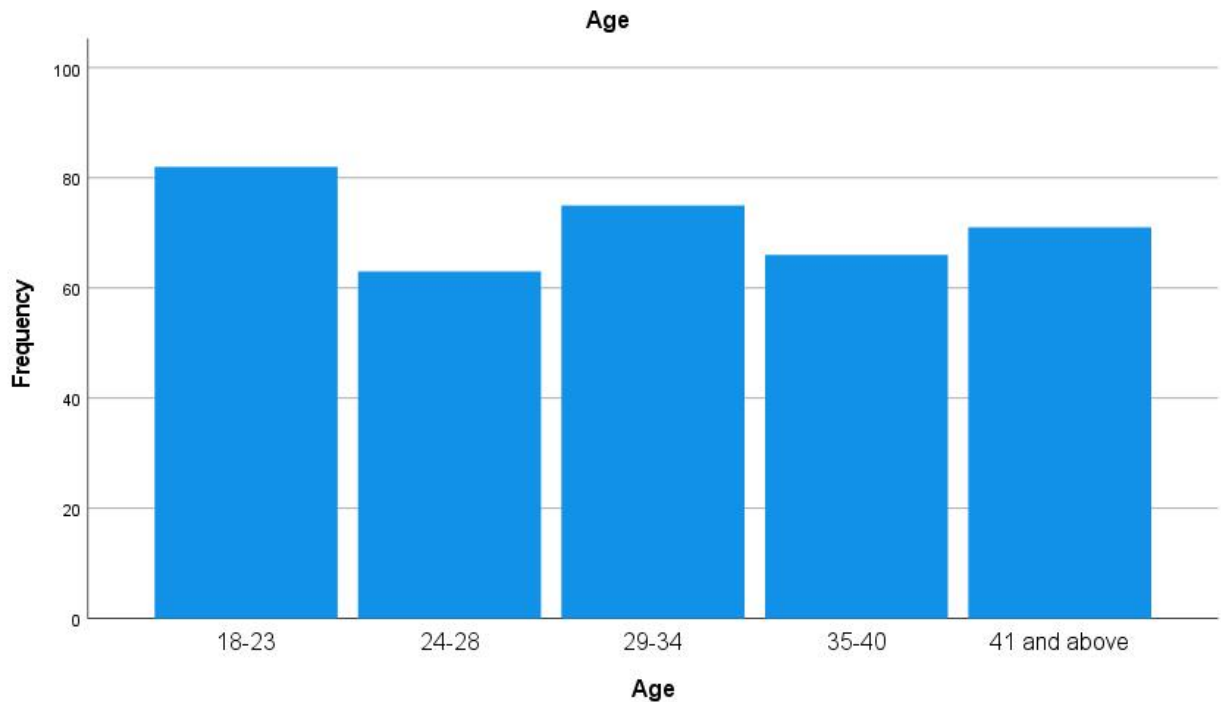


Table 3: Education

Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Basic Education	29	8.1
Secondary	120	33.6
Bsc/HND	83	23.2
Post graduate	28	7.8
Artisan	97	27.2
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 29(8.1%) attained basic education, 120(33.6%) are secondary school graduates, 83(23.2%) are Bsc/HND graduates, 28(7.85) are post graduates while 97(27.2%) are artisans. This shows that the respondents with the highest numbers are those with secondary school certificates and this is followed by artisans at 97(27.2%). This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 3:

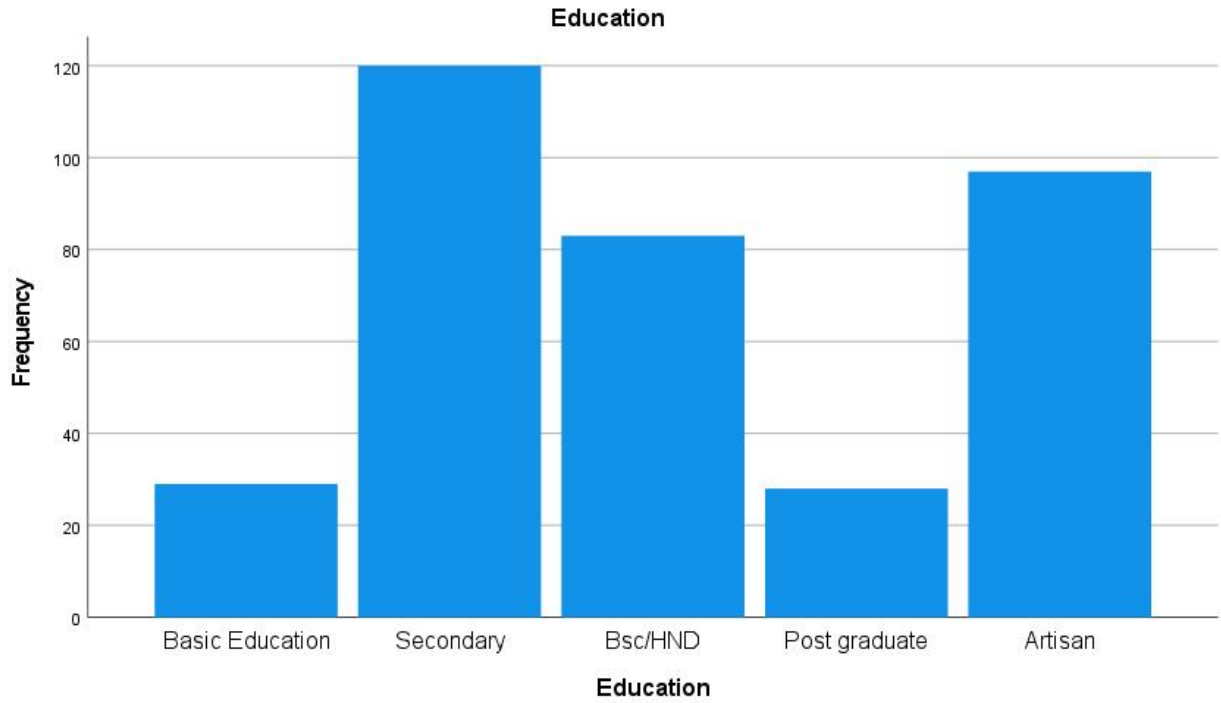


Table 4: Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	246	68.9
Islam	27	7.6
ATR	63	17.6
Others	21	5.9
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, the respondents that practice Christianity are 246(68.9%), Islam 27(7.6%), African traditional religion 63(17.6%) while those practicing other religions are 21(5.9%). This shows that majority of respondents who took part in the study practice Christianity and they more than tripled those that practice other religions. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 4:

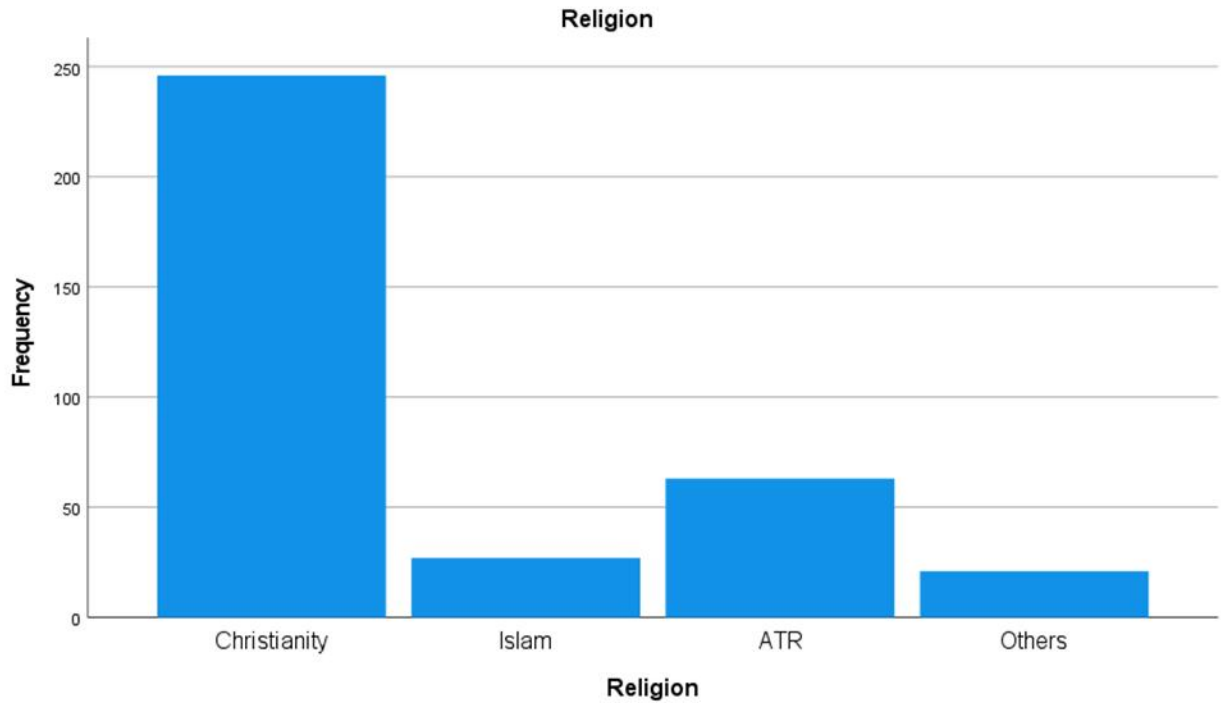


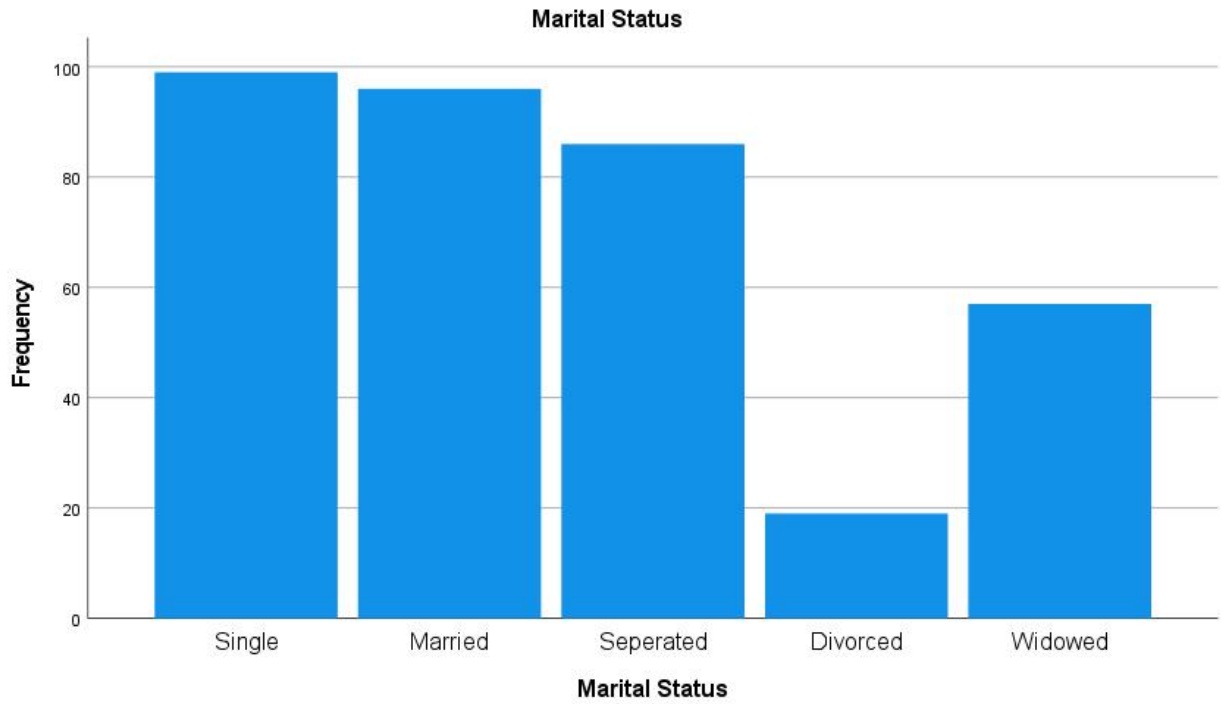
Table 5: Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	99	27.7
Married	96	26.9
Separated	86	24.1
Divorced	19	5.3
Widowed	57	16.0
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 99(27.7%) of respondents that took part in the study are single, 96(26.9%) are married, 86(24.1%) are separated, 19(5.3%) are divorced while 57(16.0%) are widowed. This shows that the highest number of respondents are single at 99(27.7%) and are closely followed by those that are married at 96(26.9%). This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 5:



SECTION B

Table 6: Some Elders Face Abuse

Some Elders Face Abuse	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disagree	21	5.9
Agree	244	68.3
Strongly Agree	92	25.8
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 21(5.9%) disagree, 244(68.3%) agree while 92(25.8%) strongly agree. This shows that the respondents agree that some elders in the community face abuse at 244(68.3%). This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 6:

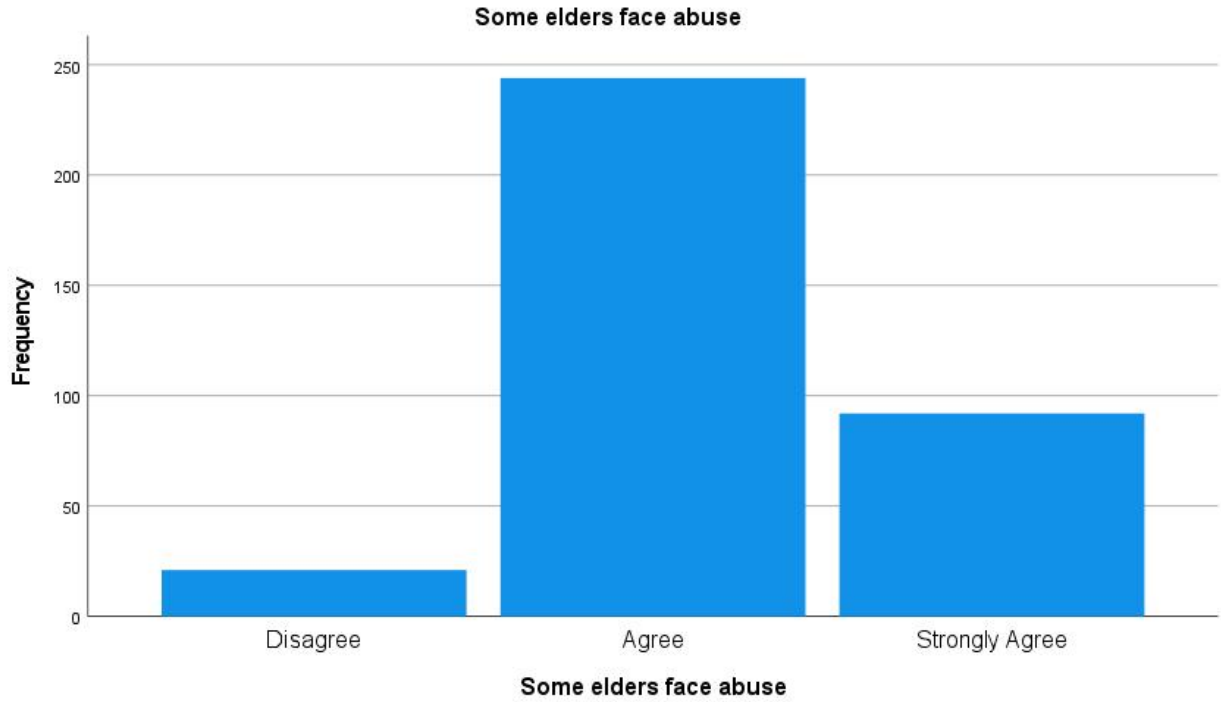


Table 7: The Extent of Abuse is high

The Extent of Abuse is high	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	63	17.6
Agree	294	82.4
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 63(17.6%) strongly disagree while 294(82.4%) agree. This shows that the extent of abuse in the community is high and this is reflected with the 294(82.4%) response that agrees. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 7:

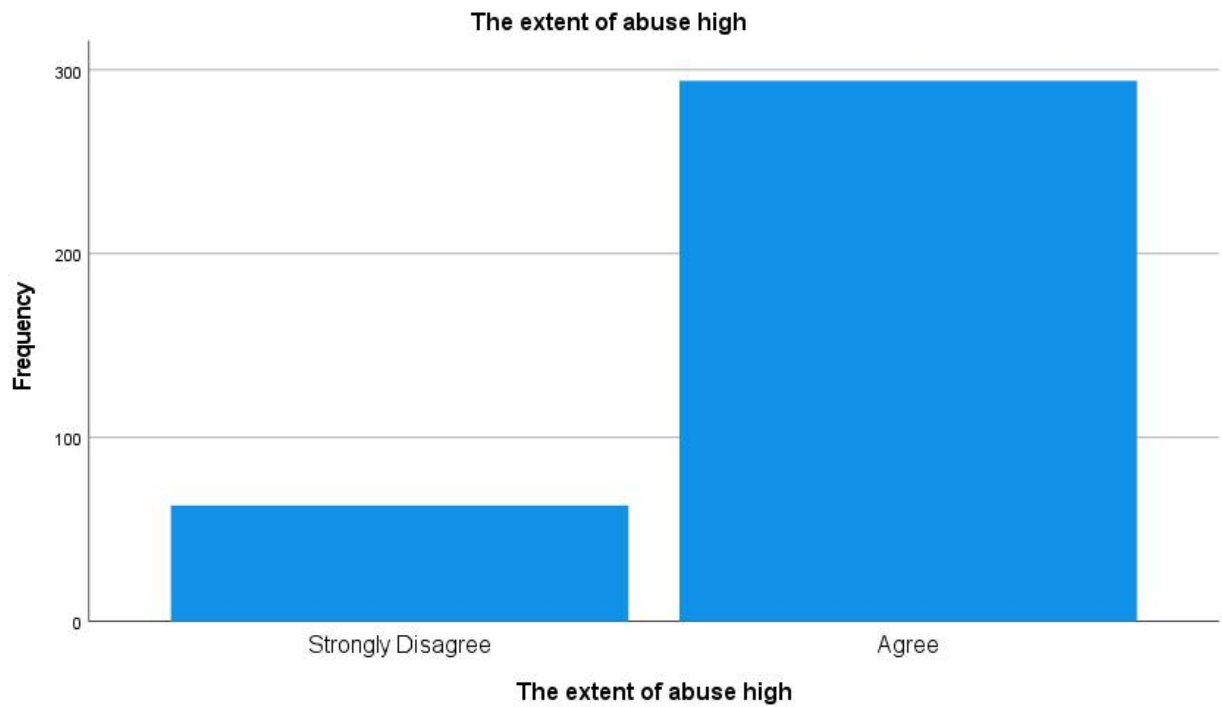


Table 8: The Extent of Abuse can be reduced

The Extent of Abuse can be reduced	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disagree	43	12.0
Agree	127	35.6
Strongly Agree	187	52.4
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 43(12.0%) disagree, 127(35.6%) agree while 187(52.4%) strongly agree. This shows that the extent of abuse in the community can be reduced and this is reflected with

the 127(35.6%) response that agrees and the 187(52.4%) that strongly agree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 8:

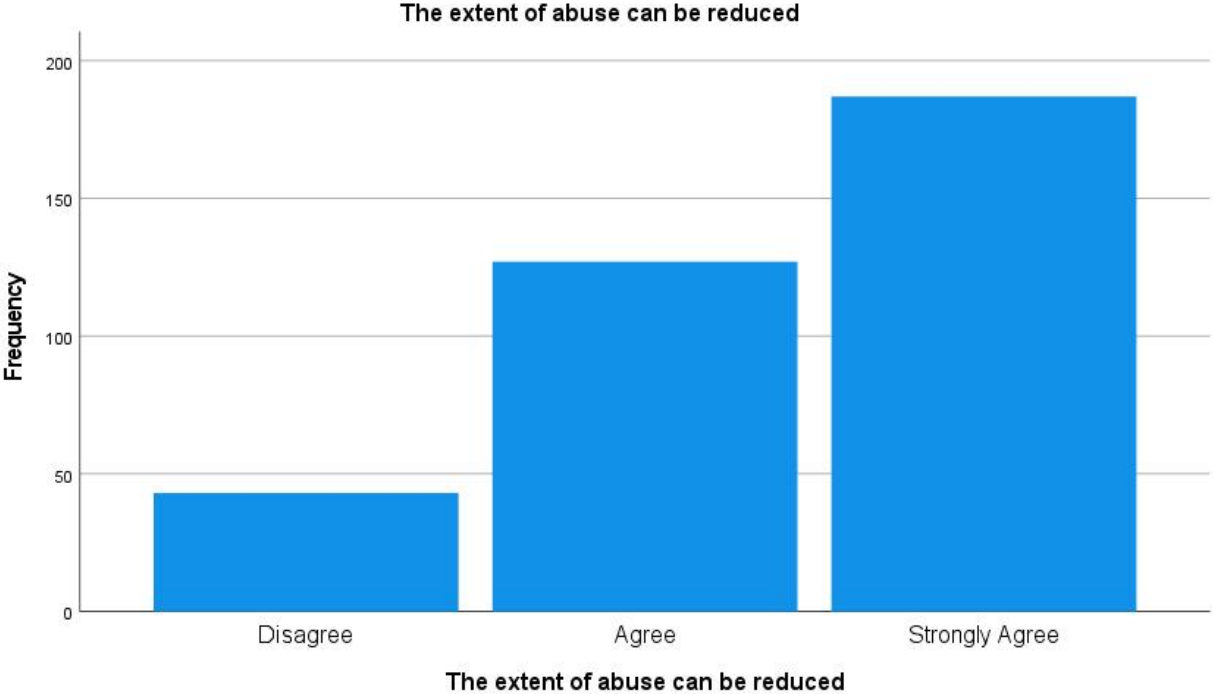


Table 9: Socio-cultural factors causes elder abuse

Socio-cultural factors causes elder abuse	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disagree	47	13.2
Agree	296	82.9
Strongly Agree	14	3.9
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 47(13.2%) disagree, 296(82.9%) agree while 14(3.9%) strongly agree. This shows that there are social cultural factors that cause elder abuse. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

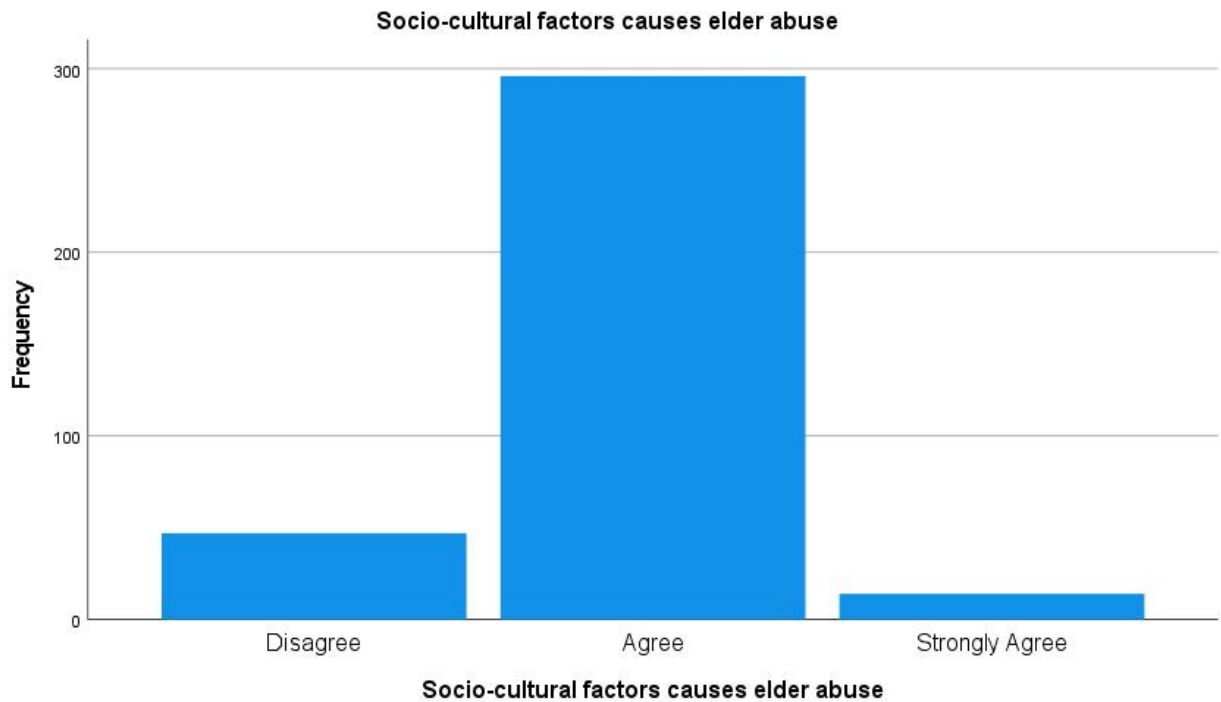


Table 10: Financial dependency causes elder abuse

Financial dependency causes elder abuse	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disagree	43	12.0
Agree	89	24.9
Strongly Agree	225	63.0
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 43(12.0%) disagree, 89(24.9%) agree while 225(63.0%) strongly agree. This shows that financial dependency causes elder abuse and this is reflected with the 89(24.9%) response that agrees and the 225(63.0%) that strongly agree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 10:

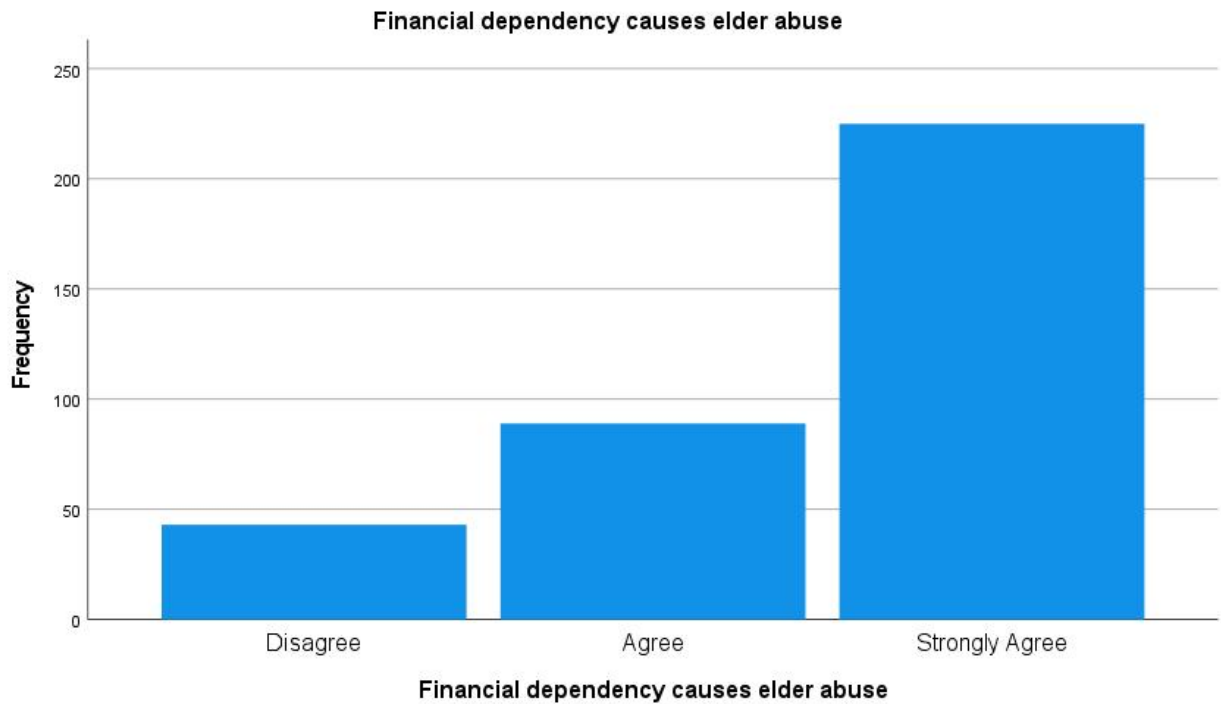


Table 11: Not knowing how to care for the elderly causes elder abuse

Not knowing how to care for the elderly causes elder abuse	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	27	7.6
Disagree	28	7.8
Agree	222	62.2
Strongly Agree	80	22.4
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 27(7.6%) strongly disagree, 28(7.8%) disagree, 222(62.2%) agree while 80(22.4%) strongly agree. This shows that not knowing how to care for the elderly causes elders to be abused and this is reflected by the 222(62.2%) respondents that agree and the 80(22.4%) that strongly agree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 11:

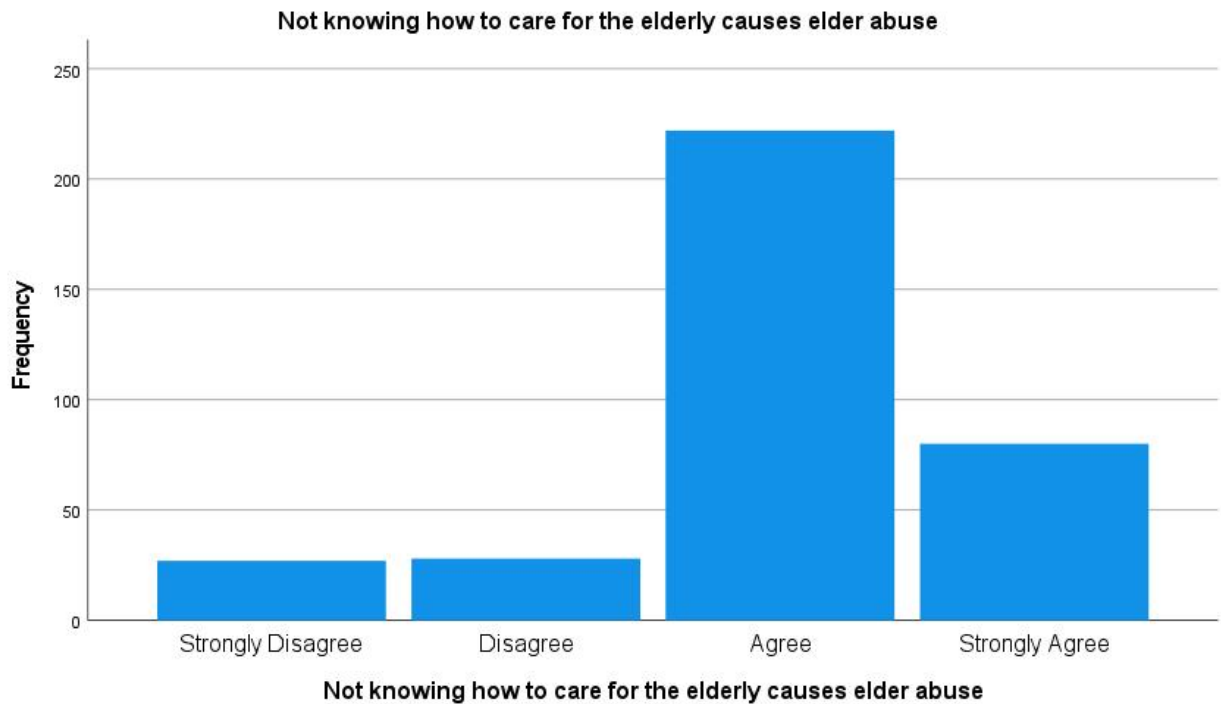


Table 12: Abuse physically affects the elderly

Abuse physically affects the elderly	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	122	34.2
Strongly Agree	235	65.8
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 122(34.2%) agree while 235(65.8%) strongly agree. This shows that abuse physically affects the elderly and this is reflected by the 122(34.2%) respondents that agree and the 235(65.8%) that strongly agree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 12:

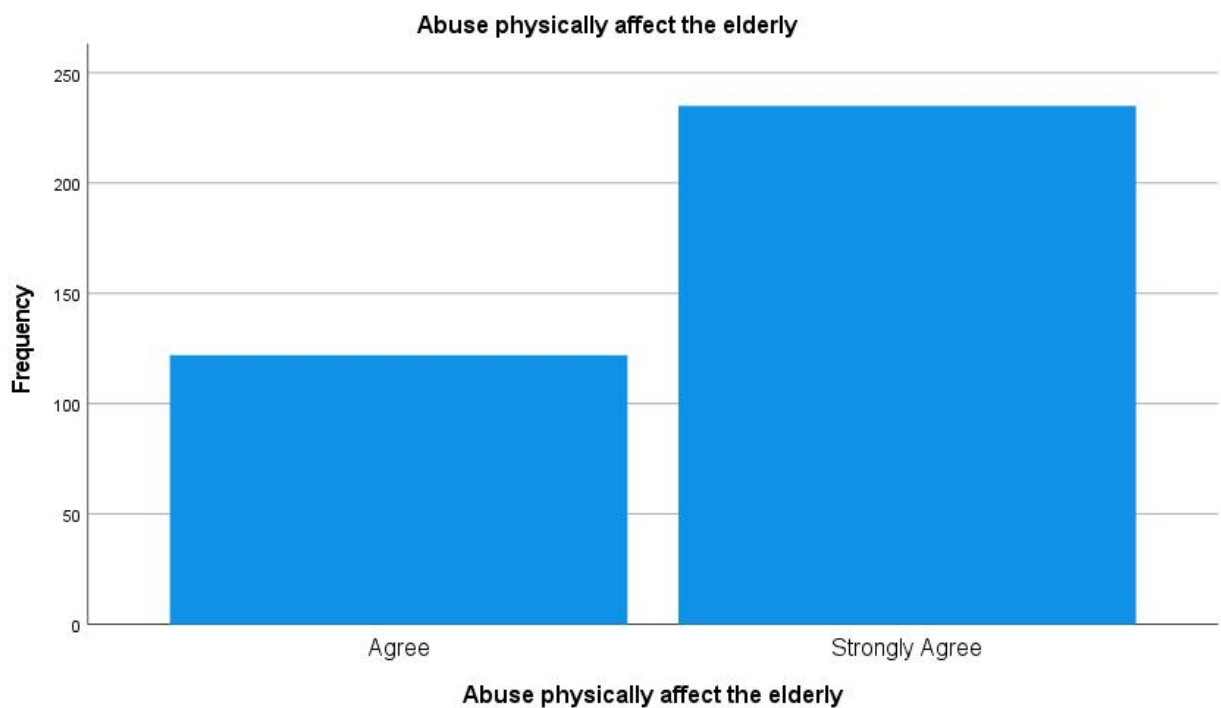


Table 13: Abuse psychologically affects the elderly

Abuse psychologically affects the elderly	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	239	66.9
Strongly Agree	118	33.1
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 239(66.9%) agree while 118(33.1%) strongly agree. This shows that abuse psychologically affects the elderly and this is reflected by the 239(66.9%) respondents that agree and the 118(33.1%) that strongly agree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 13:

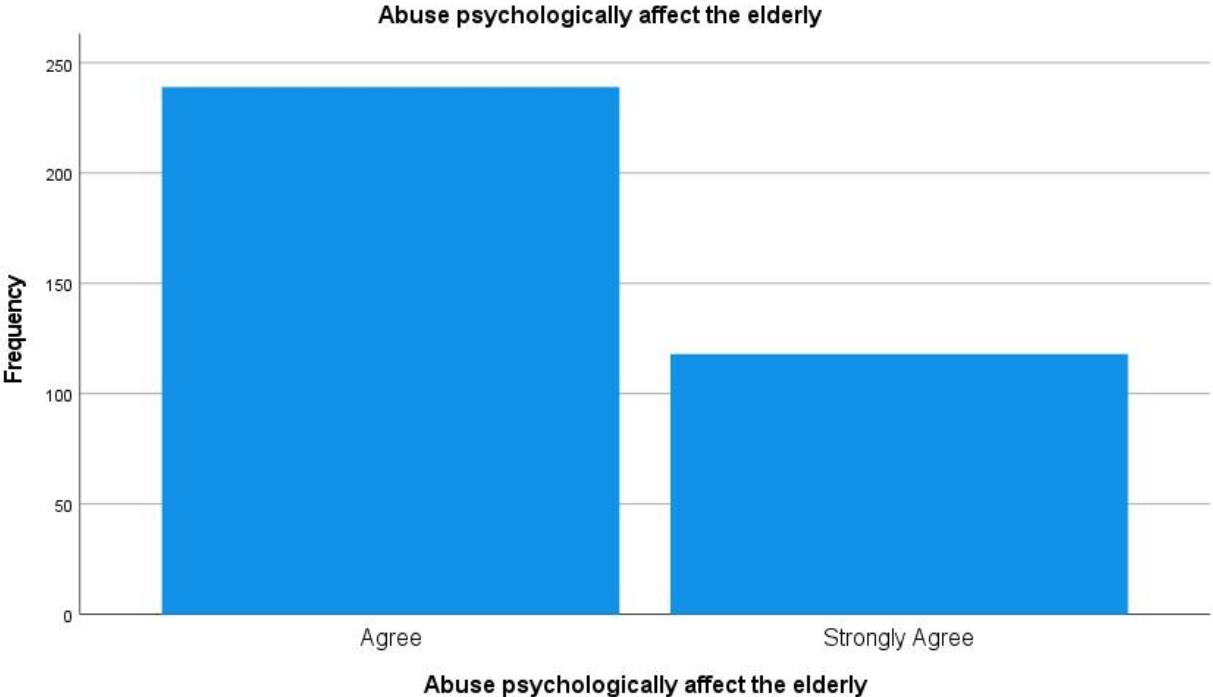


Table 14: Abuse causes cognitive decline of the elderly

Abuse causes cognitive decline of the elderly	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	18	5.0
Disagree	17	4.8
Agree	297	83.2
Strongly Agree	25	7.0
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 18(5.0%) strongly disagree, 17(4.8%) disagree, 297(83.2%) agree while 25(7.0%) strongly agree. This shows that abuse causes cognitive decline of the elderly and this is reflected by the 297(83.2%) respondents that agree This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 14:

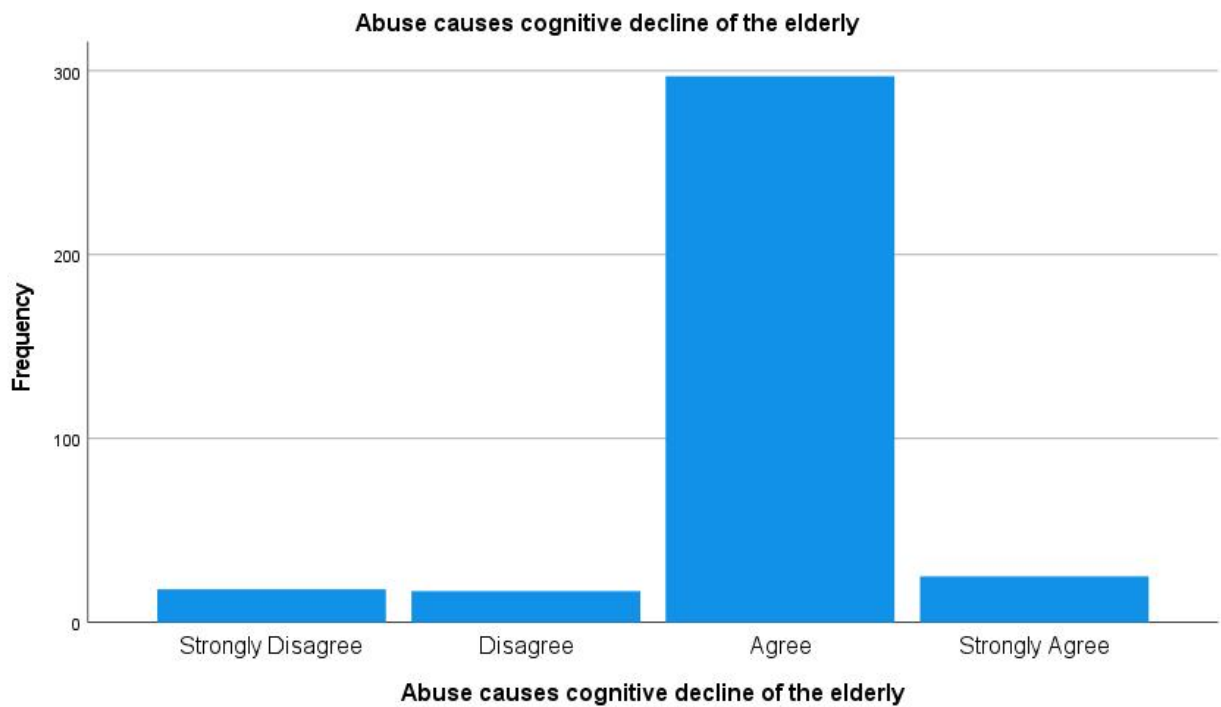


Table 15: There are policies to help care for the elderly

There are policies to help care for the elderly	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disagree	164	45.9
Agree	193	54.1
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 164(45.9%) disagree while 193(54.1%) agree. This shows that there are policies to help care for the elderly and this is reflected by the 193(54.1%) respondents that agree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 15:

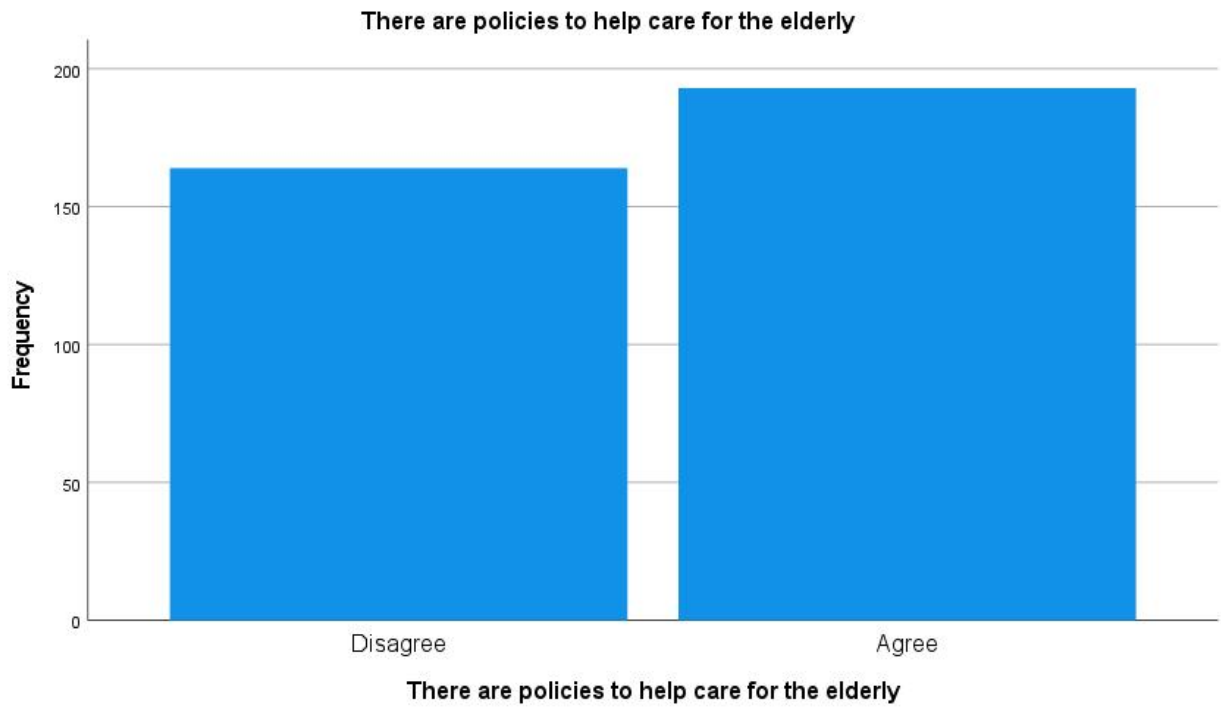


Table 16: I know policies that help care for the elderly in my community

I know policies that help care for the elderly in my community	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	190	53.2
Disagree	152	42.6
Agree	15	4.2
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 190(53.2%) strongly disagree, 152(42.6%) disagree, while 15(4.2%) strongly agree. This shows that the respondents are unaware if there are policies that help to care for the elderly in the community. This is reflected by the 190(53.2%) respondents that strongly disagree and the 152(42.6%) that disagree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 16:

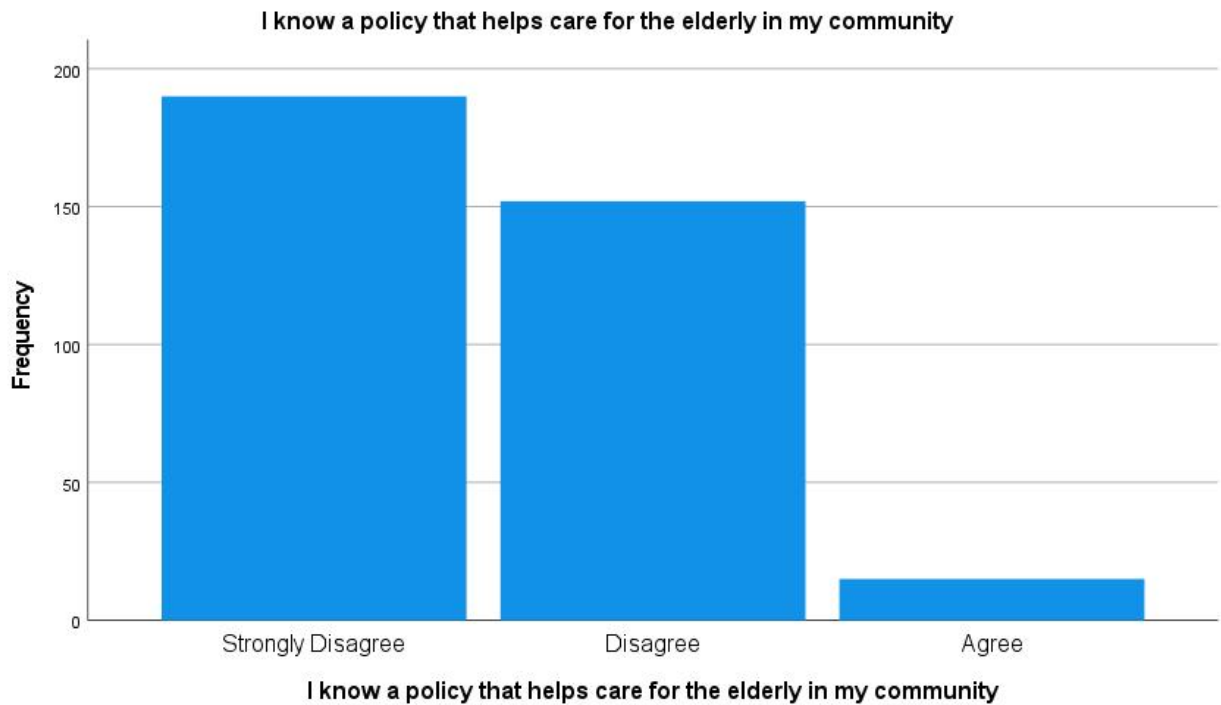


Table 17: The policy I know is a working policy

The policy I know is a working policy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	223	62.5
Disagree	134	37.5
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 223(62.5%) strongly disagree and 134(37.5%) disagree. This shows that the policies for the elderly are not working. This is reflected by the 223(62.5%) respondents that strongly disagree and the 134(37.5%) that disagree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 17:

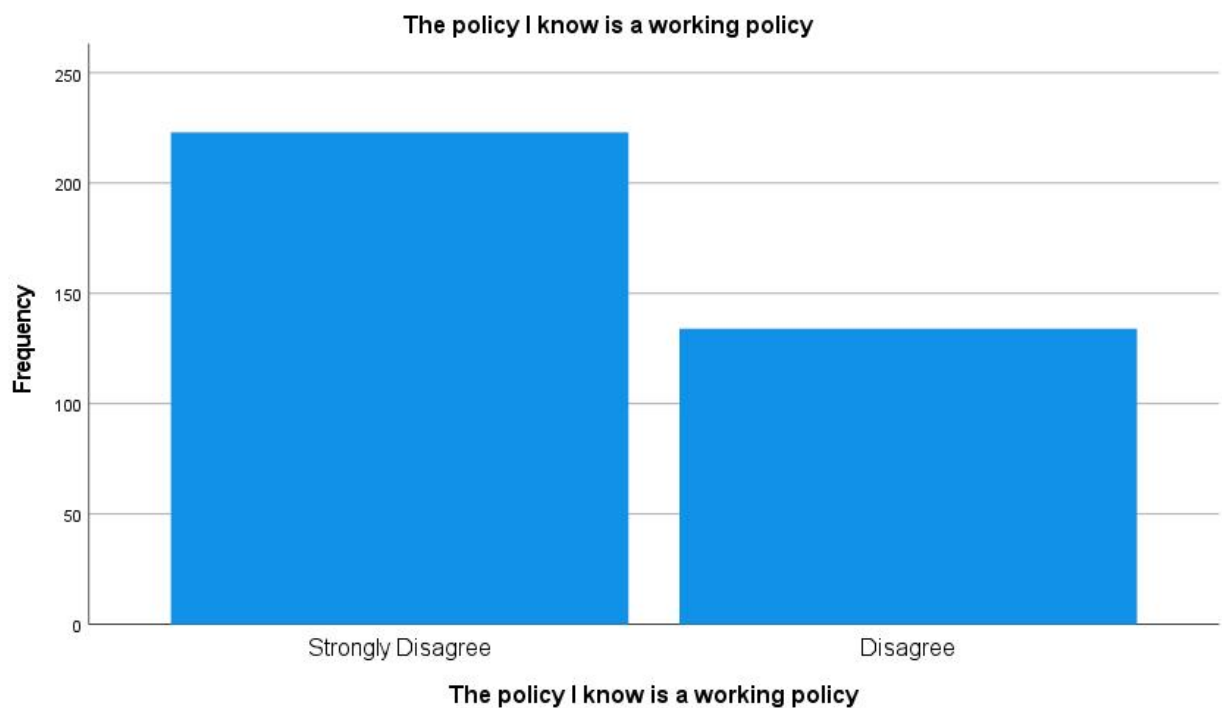


Table 18: There are ways Social workers can help older adults facing elder abuse

There are ways Social workers can help older adults facing elder abuse	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disagree	131	36.7
Agree	226	63.3
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 131(36.7%) disagree and 226(63.3%) agree. This shows that there are ways Social workers can help older adults facing elder abuse. This is reflected by the 226(63.3%) respondents that strongly agree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 18:

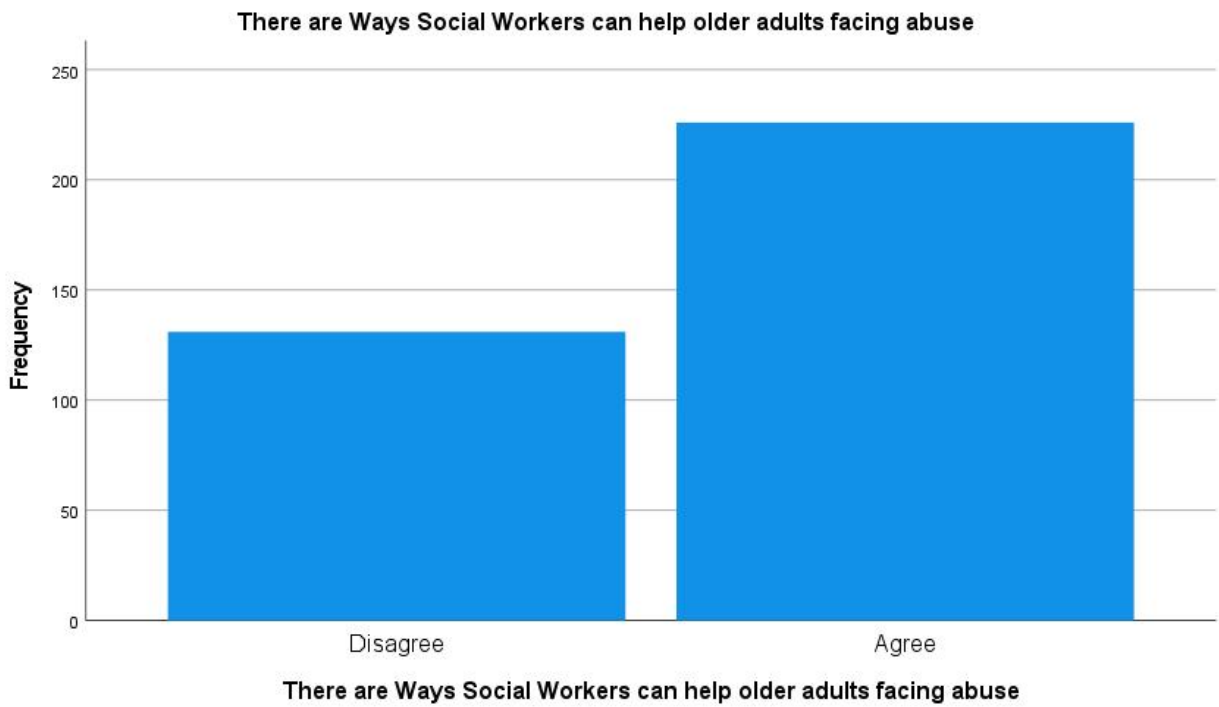


Table 19: Social workers advocate for better policies for older adults

Social workers advocate for better policies for older adults	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disagree	131	36.7
Agree	226	63.3
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 131(36.7%) disagree and 226(63.3%) agree. This shows that Social workers advocate for better policies for older adults. This is reflected by the 226(63.3%) respondents that strongly agree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 19:

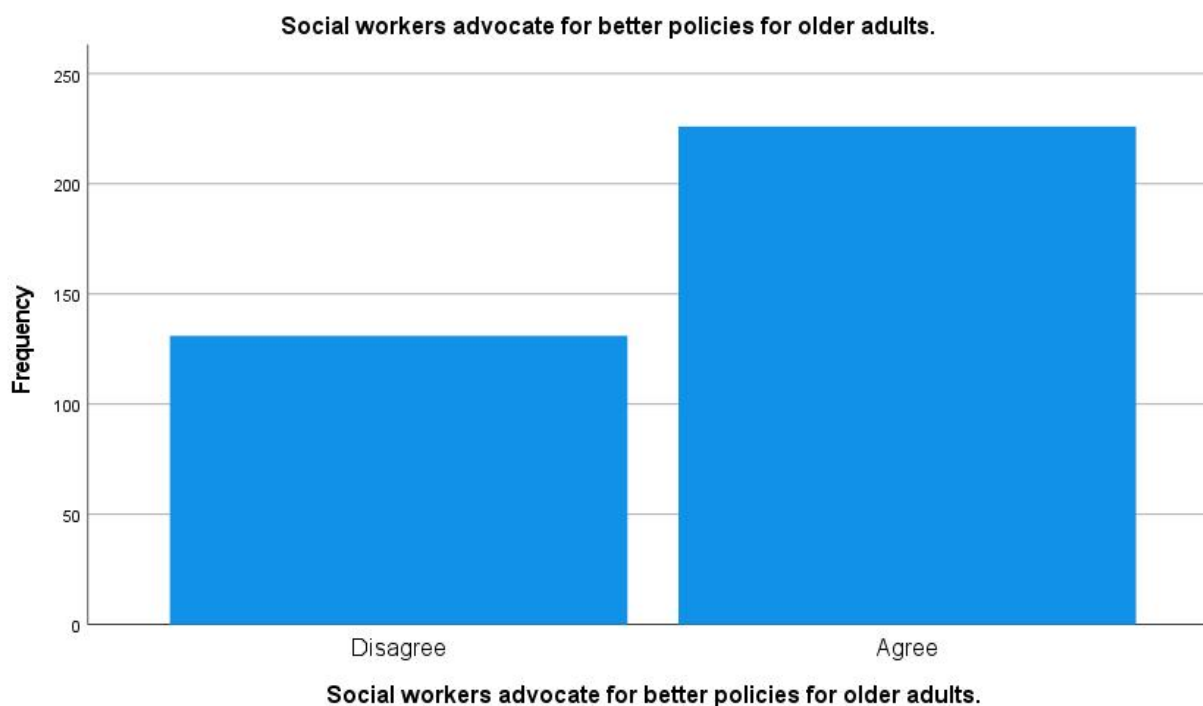


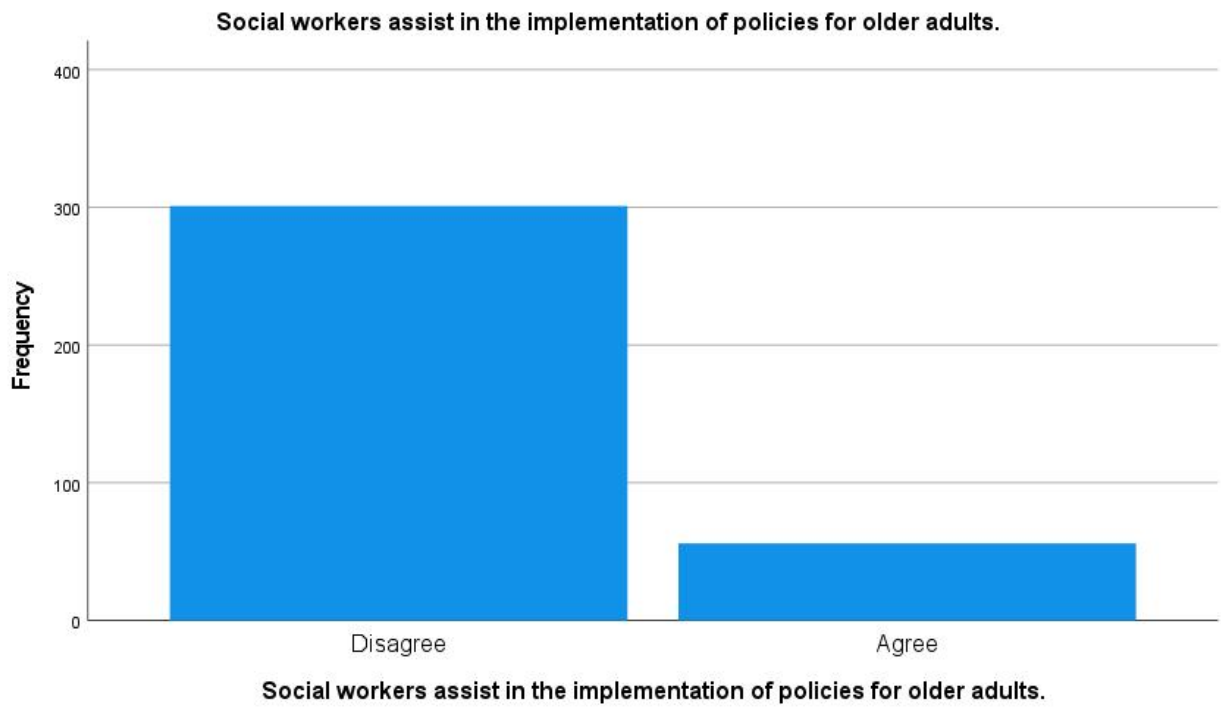
Table 20: Social workers assist in the implementation of policies for older adults

Social workers assist in the implementation of policies for older adults	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disagree	301	84.3
Agree	56	15.7
Total	357	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2025*

From the table above, 301(84.3%) disagree and 56(15.7%) agree. This shows that Social workers do not assist in the implementation of policies for older adults. This is reflected by the 301(84.3%) respondents that disagree. This is further illustrated in the chart below:

Figure 20:



DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study shows that the extent of elderly abuse is high and his is in agreement with Gedfew et al., (2024) who indicated that the pooled prevalence of elder abuse is high and is approximately 46.73% hence it is a significant issue, with nearly half of older adults experiencing some form of abuse as approximately 29.27% of older adults reported experiencing physical abuse 5.35% experiencing sexual abuse. This is also supports Mouton and Southerland (2017) which opines that elder abuse is high as cultural taboos surrounding discussions of elder mistreatment contribute to the underreporting of abuse as many communities may view the mistreatment of older adults as a private matter, leading to a lack of awareness and intervention.

Secondly, the findings show that there are social cultural factors that cause abuse which includes economic or financial dependency, ignorance of the significant other or carer on what constitutes elder abuse. This is in agreement with Swift et al., (2017) which opines that social or societal attitudes towards aging can influence the perception of older adults as burdensome, weak, or irrelevant, hence contributing to a culture of disrespect and tolerance for abuse. The findings is also in line with Ofuoma (2024) which posits that poverty as a socio-economic factor can increase stress levels for caregivers, leading to neglect and financial exploitation of older adults as limited access to healthcare, social services, and support networks can leave older adults vulnerable to abuse, as they may lack the resources to protect themselves.

Thirdly, the findings show that elder abuses have physical, psychological and cognitive effect on the elderly. This is in agreement with Lee et al., (2018) which points that physical abuse can have physical effect on the elderly as a result of ageing because when a person is ageing, the loss of cells from their organs causes the performance of several organs, including the heart, kidneys,

brain, and lungs, to gradually deteriorate over the course of a person's lifetime, thereby reducing the reserve capacity of the person. The findings is also in tandem with Akbar, (2021) which postulates that inadequate care is another frequently encountered challenge by the elderly and this result in psychological effects, which necessitate intervention from psychosocial assistance to coping with the psychological and social effects of elder abuse.

Furthermore, the findings shows that there are policies on ground to curb elder abuse and this is in agreement with This is in agreement with which states that there is a National Policy on Ageing in Nigeria which was approved on February 11, 2021, with the primary objective of creating a society where senior citizens are guaranteed security, independence, participation, and comprehensive care. The policy addresses emerging issues related to aging in Nigeria, considering global, regional, and national contexts. It recognizes the need for a structured approach to support older persons. Similarly, there is the maintenance and Welfare of Senior Citizens Act 2011 which was signed into law. The Part 2 (section 4) of the of the Bill established a body known as the senior citizens welfare community, also called the Commission which is the regulatory organization in respect of the rights of senior citizens in Nigeria and the Part 4 (section 12) makes provision for social security for every senior citizen in Nigeria

Finally, the findings show that there are social work interventions on elder abuse or ways social workers can help elders facing abuses. This is in agreement with Bows and Penhale (2024) which opines that social workers engage in social policy and research to have an impact on decisions and policies pertaining to the protection of senior citizens at the macro level. The finding also agrees with Milnie and Nieman (2024) which stated that social workers helps the older adults by conducting advocacy campaigns using their knowledge, skills, and principles to

help victims of elder abuse exercise their rights, take part in choices about their care, and achieve the fullest level of autonomy.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study reveals a high prevalence of elderly abuse, with nearly half of older adults experiencing some form of abuse. This is supported by cultural taboos and underreporting of abuse due to cultural views. Social cultural factors, such as economic dependency and ignorance of elder abuse definitions, contribute to the issue. Socio-economic factors like poverty can increase stress levels for caregivers, leading to neglect and financial exploitation. Limited access to healthcare, social services, and support networks can leave older adults vulnerable to abuse. Elder abuses have physical, psychological, and cognitive effects on the elderly, as they age and lose cells from their organs, reducing their reserve capacity. Inadequate care is another common challenge faced by the elderly, resulting in psychological effects. Intervention from psychosocial assistance is needed to cope with the psychological and social effects of elder abuse. Overall, the study highlights the need for increased awareness and intervention to address the issue of elder abuse.

The findings indicate that Nigeria has policies in place to combat elder abuse, including the National Policy on Ageing, which aims to create a society where senior citizens have security, independence, participation, and comprehensive care. The Maintenance and Welfare of

Senior Citizens Act 2011 establishes the senior citizens welfare community, the Commission, as a regulatory organization for senior citizens' rights and social security. Social workers also play a role in addressing elder abuse, engaging in social policy and research to impact decisions and policies related to senior citizens' protection. They conduct advocacy campaigns to help victims exercise their rights, participate in care choices, and achieve their fullest level of autonomy. These policies aim to create a secure and inclusive society for older persons.

The study reveals that social workers can intervene in elder abuse cases, influencing macro-level decisions and policies. They engage in social policy and research to protect senior citizens, and conduct advocacy campaigns to help victims exercise their rights and participate in care decisions.

5.2 Conclusion

Elder abuse is a global issue affecting elderly individuals, their families, and communities. Elders often face communication issues, difficulty recognizing abuse, and difficulty contacting support groups. The declining health and independence of the aging population increase the risk of abuse. The elderly population is projected to grow significantly by 2030, with individuals over 60 years old constituting a fair percentage of the population. Elders are revered for their wisdom, life experience, and cultural practices. However, they require constant support for their physical, material, and mental welfare. They depend more on others for survival, increasing the likelihood of physical abuse. Additionally, their weakness and inability make them unable to fulfill most personal responsibilities.

Elder abuse is a significant issue globally, with 1 in 6 older adults experiencing some form of abuse in community settings. However, many cases go unreported due to stigma, fear, or lack of awareness. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the prevalence of elder abuse is 46.73%, with nearly half of older adults experiencing some form of abuse. Cultural taboos surrounding discussions of elder mistreatment contribute to underreporting, as many communities view the mistreatment of older adults as a private matter. Elderly persons are particularly vulnerable to abuses such as sexual, financial, physical, mental, or psychological. Physical abuse includes leaving older victims with unexplained ailments, while emotional abuse includes verbal abuse, threats, harassment, and intimidation. In Nigeria, name-calling, humiliation, intimidation, shouting, insults, threats, lack of respect, disregard for wishes, restriction of access to important others, inability to satisfy health and social needs are common forms of emotional abuse.

Elder abuse is a complex issue influenced by individual, societal, and systemic factors. Factors such as financial hardship, mental health issues, substance abuse, personality traits, socio-economic factors, social isolation, lack of awareness and reporting, inadequate legal protections, and limited resources and support can contribute to elder abuse and mistreatment. Caregivers may experience financial hardship, lack adequate support, and struggle with mental health issues, such as depression or anxiety. Cognitive impairments, such as dementia, can also increase vulnerability to abuse. Caregivers struggling with substance abuse may also be more susceptible to abuse due to impaired judgment and ability to care for others. Personality traits, such as aggressive tendencies, can also contribute to abuse. Societal attitudes towards aging can influence the perception of older adults as burdensome or irrelevant, contributing to a culture of disrespect and tolerance for abuse. Socio-economic

factors, such as poverty, can increase stress for caregivers, leading to neglect and financial exploitation. Social isolation can also increase the likelihood of abuse.

5.3 Recommendation

Due to the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should be more publicity on elder abuse to create awareness to families and caregiver's on what constitutes elder abuse as this will help increase the awareness of the phenomenon.
2. The government should try to find ways to reduce poverty which is one of the factors necessitating elder abuse.
3. The government should try to ensure that health care services are subsidised for the elderly to reduce their burden of care.
4. Policies should be put in place to support the elderly financially to make them assets to their families instead of been seen as a liability.
5. Social workers should try to create more awareness on elderly abuse and increase the advocacy for the welfare of older adults.

5.4 Recommendation for further research

1. The impact of the National Policy on ageing on the wellbeing of older adults in Ovbogie Community.
2. The role of social workers in the enactment and implementation of National policy on ageing in Nigeria.

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APPENDIX A
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY
QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

My name is Marvellous Miracle Itulua and I am currently a postgraduate student in the Department of Social work, University Of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. As part of the requirement for the award of M.Sc Social work. I am required by the University of Benin to conduct a research project under the supervisor of Prof. Sunday Ofili Ibobor. This consent form is the first step in fulfilling this requirement. I will greatly appreciate your participation in the study. The objective of this Questionnaire is to obtain relevant information which will help in providing answers to the research questions of the study. Upon completion of this study will be useful to government agencies; non-governmental organizations, national and local policy makers, counselors, Parents and Social workers alike. You are hereby assured that the

information gathered with this questionnaire is basically for academic and administrative purpose and it will be treated with utmost anonymity and confidentiality.

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

Thanks for your co-operation.

Please tick where necessary [/]

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

This section requires the demographic characteristics of the respondents

Instruction: Please tick (√) the appropriate box

1. Sex: Male () Female ()
2. Age: 18-23 () 24-28 () 29-34 () 35 -40 () 41 and above ()
3. Education: Basic () Secondary () BSc/HND () Post graduate () Artisan ()
4. Religion: Christianity (), Islam (), African Traditional Religion (), others ()
5. Marital status of parents: Single () Married () Separated () Divorced () Widowed ()

SECTION B: Elder Abuse and Social Work Intervention Strategies in Ovbiogie Community

	Extent of elder abuse	SD	D	A	SA4
6	Some elders face abuse				
7	The extent of abuse high				
8	The extent of abuse can be reduced				
	Factors influencing elder abuse				
9	Socio-cultural factors causes elder abuse				
10	Financial dependency causes elder abuse				

11	Not knowing how to care for the elderly causes elder abuse				
	Effect of elder abuse on the wellbeing of the elderly				
12	Abuse physically affect the elderly				
13	Abuse psychologically affect the elderly				
14	Abuse causes cognitive decline of the elderly				
	Policies on ground to curbing elder abuse				
15	There are policies to help care for the elderly				
16	I know a policy that helps care for the elderly in my community				
17	The policy I know is a working policy				
	Social Work Interventions				
18	There are Ways Social Workers can help older adults facing abuse				
19	Social workers advocate for better policies for older adults.				
20	Social workers assist in the implementation of policies for older				

	adults.				
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