

## **Environmental Factors and Aged Abuse in Ibadan, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the environmental factors and aged abuse in Ibadan. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and 1978 WHO '30 by 7' cluster sampling technique in selecting 1,244 aged persons from six local government areas in Ibadan. Environmental Factors Questionnaire with three sub-scales [culture ( $r=0.81$ ); westernisation ( $r=0.79$ ) and social support policy ( $r=0.75$ ) and Aged Abuse ( $r=0.83$ ) scales were used for the data collection. These were complemented with Life-story and In-depth interview sessions with the aged. Multiple regression was used at 0.05 level of significance while qualitative data were content analysed. Environmental factors jointly predict aged abuse among the Yoruba people ( $F_{16, 1243}=1285.59$ ;  $R=.97$ ), accounting for 94.3% of its variance. Cultural beliefs ( $\beta=.24$ ), Westernisation ( $\beta=-0.16$ ), and social support policy ( $\beta=-0.10$ ) factors had relative contributions to aged abuse. Succinctly, eroded culture, weak social support system, and exposure to western culture contributed to aged abuses in Ibadan. There is the need for a value orientation, strong social support and prosecution of Aged abusers.*

**Keywords:** Aged abuse, Environmental factors, Yoruba people, Ibadan

**Word Count:** 161

### **Introduction**

Life is supposed to be lived to its fullness, and every individual aspires to live a flourishing life throughout the three stages of life: birth,

productive and resting stages. Experiences have shown that the first two stages can be blissful (Ayantunji & Ayantunji, 2010); the individual is full of energy and vivaciousness and is easily assisted to grow in the first stage with a reciprocal of errand services because he/she is not economically active. In the second stage, individuals can help themselves to do activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living due to the presence of self-energy in them and are economically active. Also, family and other associates like friends and workmates are there. However, at the third stage, things change. The physical energy has diminished requiring one form of support or the other. In essence, the third stage of life generally is a stage of dependence and many a time, these dependencies or supports are not there as expected thus, leading to one form of abuse or the other.

According to Ayantunji (2016), industrialisation is eroding the longstanding patterns of interdependence between the generations of family, often resulting in material and emotional hardship on the aged in most developing societies, including Nigeria. Researchers (Ajomale, 2007; Nahmias & Schwartz, 2008; Ayantunji, 2020) have observed that aged people are sometimes left to suffer without adequate care and support from their families. Some children who have migrated from their homes in search of greener pastures have been known to have totally neglected their parents at home. Others have accused their parents of witchcraft and driven them out of home, leaving them to wander around and eventually die out of lack and neglect (Ayantunji, 2016). In addition, many young people see their aged parents as a burden; some go to the extent of insulting and beating them up for no just reasons. Nowadays, some even put their aged ones in the old people's homes for care with the excuse that the nature of their job will not permit them to give adequate care; forgetting that these old people who are now seen as a burden, some years back had the option of either doing their primary duty or casting their children to the orphanages when they were young (Vintagesam, 2012). The idea of old people's home is western and not the culture of the Yoruba people. The culture of the Yoruba people prioritises communal living, which gives care and support to the aged by living together with different generations in the family and not casting the aged to the old people's home.

Poverty is rife in the country, and aged persons may be more at risk since they are no longer in the economically active phase of life, and no efficiently national and social security can provide an economic buffer for them in their old age. Access to health care is severely limited by paucity of health facilities and manpower and by out-of-pocket payment arrangements. A social network is dwindling, and the traditional family support is decreasing as urbanisation and migration take young Yoruba family away. Also, social changes affect the position of the Yoruba aged in society and lead to a reduction in their social status and influence in the community.

Ayantunji (2016) opined that aged people are subjected to psychological and physical challenges inherent in ageing and "ageist" attitudes that discount the value or ability of aged adults to contribute to society through the use of their acquired knowledge and experience. In addition to barriers to treatment and intervention for elder abuse, barriers also exist in the prosecution of the abusers. The death of an aged person, despite signs of abuse, may not be as closely scrutinised as the death of a younger person, particularly if medical or psychological conditions relating to ageing are observed (Dyer, Connolly & McFeeley, 2003). Thus, the presence of all these age-related conditions and factors increases a Yoruba aged person's risk of abuse or neglect.

Ayantunji (2016) said the increase in the number of the aged raises a concern about the need to have a proper and deeper understanding of its predisposing factors to control the intensity of the abuse in Nigeria. There have been various previous studies on the aged and their associated challenges. Some have focused on the intergenerational family supports (Aboderin, 2006); ageing and its attendant socio-economic implications (Ajomale, 2007); preparation for retirement (Ayantunji & Ayantunji, 2010); prevalence and correlates of elder abuse (Eniola & Owoaje, 2012); caring, health and longevity (Fajemilehin, 2009); institutional social security provisions (Kester, Adeyeye & Ogunyinka, 2007); aged abuse in Yoruba land: a critique (Ayantunji, 2020). Succinctly, most of these previous studies have focused more on the aged care, health and social security provisions and where they focus on the issue of aged abuse, it is with gender acclamation. Hence, there is a dearth of empirical studies to

determine the predisposing factors of aged abuse, particularly among the Yoruba where the intergenerational ties are known to have been culturally rooted for ages.

The little existing literature on aged abuse among the Yoruba has not prioritised such predisposing factors as environmental factors. An environmental or ecological factor is any factor that influences living organisms like sunlight, temperature, water and soil in which an organism lives; and the presence of external elements (economy, politics, regulations, technology, cultural trends, and relationships) which can negatively affect the well-being of an individual or aged person. Furthermore, environmental factors are identifiable elements in the physical, cultural, economic, political, regulatory, cultural, policy on social support, westernisation, or technological environment that affect individuals' survival and, operation of individuals, especially the elders.

Culture has been defined as the shared products of the society, including the ideas, norms, and material objects that describe how people handle daily tasks and make sense of their experiences. Social scientists generally agree that culture is learned, shared, transmitted inter-generationally, and reflected in a group's values, beliefs, norms, practices, communication patterns, familial roles, and other social regularities (Ayantunji, 2016). Culture is also dynamic and adaptive. The culture of individuals has a profound effect on the perspective from which they deal with health and illness. Culture has influenced people's convictions, attitudes, knowledge types, values; modes of behaviour, habits and customs; language and tradition. Many decades ago, in developing countries, especially in Africa, the cultures operated the extended family form, with two or more generations living together in a household. Especially in Nigerian society, the majority of the aged are solely taken care of within the family since one of the traditional roles of the family involves taking care of old parents and other older members. Ayantunji (2016) said that the aged provided care to the children who in turn provided care to them in their old age, hence the Yoruba adage, "*ti okete ba dagba tan, omu omo re ni o ma nmu*" (As a rodent becomes aged, it sucks the child's breast).

This is a major reason for the high demand for children. There is a strong reliance on the extended family system to provide for the

aged in Yoruba culture. For many aged persons, family represents comfort and belonging, and home is typically considered a safe environment. Walker (2002) points out that in most industrial and pre-industrial societies; the family has been the main provider of care to the aged relatives. In both developed and developing countries, the aged and those who take care of them prefer that they should be taken care of within the family. However, a society that is preoccupied with youth can send the message that aged people are not valued and aged abuse is tolerated. Also the belief that behaviour within the home, including abuse, is "family matters" fosters an environment that tolerates aged abuse. Communication Barrier is another factor that could affect the aged in the environment. Family structure, cultural and generational values, and language barriers may affect the willingness of aged people and other family members to communicate with people considered "outsiders."

Many aged people are isolated because of physical or mental infirmities. Furthermore, loss of friends and family members reduces the opportunities for social interaction. Cultural norms and traditions such as ageism and a culture of violence are also now recognised as an important underlying roles. According to Ayantunji (2016), aged people are often depicted as being frail, weak and dependent. Aged people are viewed as targets for abuse and exploitation, their vulnerability being as a result of poverty distinguished by a lack of pension support and job opportunities, poor hygiene, disease and malnutrition.

Ayantunji (2016) opined that there is a strong reliance on the extended family system to provide for the aged in Yoruba culture. Also, there is an increasing need in the wake of the apparent decline in the adequacy of material family support that has occurred in recent times and the rising deprivation and poverty to which growing numbers of aged people are exposed (Aboderin, 2006). The lack of a social security system for aged people accelerates this process. The notion that investments in one's children serves as social security in old age is now disputed as adult children find it difficult to secure a job not to talk of receiving an income sufficient to meet their immediate needs especially in Nigeria.

At the moment, there is no Social Security Scheme (SSS) policy in old age for the aged in Nigeria. The Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) (insurance) was recently reformed, with 7.5% contributions paid by the employer and 7.5% by the employee, affecting only those in the formal sector. Whereas, aged artisans, farmers, fishermen, commercial drivers, and so on, are not included in any organised scheme of social security in old age except those with individual investments in the form of assets, shares, stocks, bonds. Further, the scheme bedevilled with many problems is yet to make an appreciable impact on the lives of older people. Old age comes with a reduced capacity for work and difficulties in accessing health care and other essential services, which further increases the likelihood of aged persons becoming and remaining poor (Ferreira, 2004; Ajomale, 2007).

Besides, most aged people who cannot earn an income and that are not covered by the contributory pension scheme are left at the mercy of the vagaries of life. Social pensions that could reduce old age poverty and support households target development aid to the poorest and contribute significantly to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Ajomale, 2007). In the African circumstances where the proportion of the population employed in the formal sector is very small, the numbers of aged who benefit from this type of social security scheme are very few. The present economic realities of Nigeria with a harsh government reform programme, with little or no consideration for the aged people has created an army of beggars. Material deprivation and neglect of aged people have emerged as increasingly visible and social problems.

The family in Nigeria used to consist of members of the extended lineage which serves as a social structural phenomenon serves as a form of social insurance (traditional safety net) for old age (Ayantunji, 2016). The aged were well taken care of under this type of arrangement. However, westernisation came to “destroy” the concept of the extended family system and replaced it with a nuclear family system. Such changes include an increasing emphasis on smaller family units, the nuclear family of “me, my wife and my children”, migration to urban areas, female employment, and changing values and also, social and economic changes currently occurring, threaten the

continued viability of such traditional arrangements for the aged (Ajomale, 2007) at the expense of other members of the wider family network, especially the older ones who look to the younger generation to provide them with economic security in old age. Compared to other developed countries these changes in family structure in Nigeria have caused gradual disintegration of the extended family and the communal sense of living in Nigerian society. Besides, in today's world, with the fast technological advancement and awareness in the world, many people have become too busy to dedicate time towards the care of the aged. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2006), abuse is the use of something in a wrong or harmful way. In other words, it is an unfair, cruel or violent treatment of somebody: for examples, child abuse, sexual abuse, and so on. Abuse is a violation of an individual's civil or human rights by any other person or persons. Abuse is a deliberate act of the caregiver, an intentional act, or an act of commission to inflict injury. Abuse creates potentially perilous situations and feelings of worthlessness, and it isolates the aged individuals from people who can help.

Further, Ayantunji (2016) opines that cultural values need to be taken into account in defining what is considered abusive or negligent behaviour. Certain cultures may be less willing to report abuse or neglect or even accept the help offered. The kinds of roles different cultural groups have for the aged in their communities and how these perceived roles play a part in determining abusive or negligent behaviour remain largely unanswered.

Aged abuse is a growing problem, and it refers to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult (National Centre on Elder Abuse [NCEA], 2005; Ayantunji, 2016). Aged abuse can be seen as "any act of commission or omission, intentional or unintentional that causes an older person to experience distress, harm, suffering, victimisation or loss that usually occurs within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust".

Further, various definitions of aged abuse have been developed, separating physical, psychological, and financial acts from omissions. Aged abuse is an act developed or commissioned to inflict harm directly or indirectly on an aged person to reduce his or her self-

worth and self-esteem. In addition to the typical Western schema that comprises physical, verbal, financial and sexual abuse, and neglect. Also, there is loss of respect for aged, which is equated with neglect; accusations of witchcraft; isolation, discrimination, abandonment and abuse by systems (mistreatment at health clinics and by bureaucratic bodies).

Granny battering, material exploitation, castigation, of elders, the use of the aged as the family 'watch dog', violation of rights, and neglect for the aged medication, deprivation of feeding, and shelter are acts of aged abuse, which are common. Aged abuse is any deliberate act intended to maltreat an aged person. Further, this mistreatment could take the form of denial of: freedom of expression, movement, or interaction of an aged person.

Generally, aged abuse is an intentional action that causes a serious harm to a vulnerable elder by a caregiver or person who stands in a trust relationship with the elder, or failure by a caregiver to satisfy the aged basic needs or to protect the aged from harm (Ayantunji, 2016; 2020). This definition encompasses two (2) key ideas: that the aged person has suffered injury, deprivation, or unnecessary danger, and that a specific individual fails to prevent the abuse. It is important to consider the many forms that these acts or omissions can take and be aware of subtle signs of abuse and neglect.

It may take place in a variety of settings, including people's own homes, day centres, nursing homes and hospitals. Unfortunately, Aged abuse and neglect are much more common and could be happening right next door. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) has presented a more accurate picture of aged abuse that most incidents of aged abuse do not occur in nursing homes and the vast majority of nursing home residents are being cared for without being subjected to abuse or neglect; most neglect occurs in the home and when aged abuse happens, the abuser is usually a household member or a paid caregiver; there is no single pattern of aged abuse in the home and sometimes, the abuse is a continuation of long-standing physical or emotional abuse patterns within the family; infirm and mentally impaired people are not the only aged who are vulnerable to abuse that is, aged who are ill, frail, disabled, mentally impaired, or depressed are at greater risk of abuse, but those who do not have

these obvious risk factors can also find themselves in abusive situations and relationships.

According to the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's Report (2002) and World Health Organization (WHO, 2008), aged abuse is 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 an aged person”.

According to Ayantunji (2016), abuse may be of a physical nature, it may be psychological (involving emotional or verbal aggression), or it may involve financial or other material maltreatment. Regardless of the type of abuse, it will certainly result in unnecessary suffering, injury or pain, the loss or violation of human rights, and a decreased quality of life for the older person. Ayantunji (2016) said “whether the behaviour is termed abusive, neglectful or exploitative will probably depend on how frequently the mistreatment occurs, its duration, severity and consequences, and above all, the cultural context”.

At a broader level, abuse also occurs when the civil rights of aged people are violated within the health and social care context. This may occur when older people are not provided with comprehensive, accurate and accessible information about their rights and options (such as alternative forms of medical treatment). It can occur when aged people are not consulted about decisions affecting their lives (for example, changing medication, or transferring them between locations without consultation). It can also occur when statutory providers deliver poor or negligent care, or when appropriate services are not available. Aged abuse generally has two characteristics which are an injury or deprivation has occurred to the aged person and someone else bears responsibility for causing the injury or deprivation or failing to prevent it.

However, the definition of aged abuse must not be overstretched to include broader social problems such as low incomes, poor housing and age discrimination. Although, all these factors might adversely affect the well-being of aged people. A major motivation for this study is the presence of a handful of the aged at the parks, garages and along major streets of most urban centres begging for alms. This trend that was uncommon and unacceptable to the Yoruba people and their culture has become worrisome and serves as the main impetus for

conducting this study. This paper was divided into seven parts, starting with the introduction, statement of the problem, methodology, results, discussion, recommendation and conclusion.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The growth in the numbers of aged people inevitably has increased the range and intensity of their problems and needs. Other than health problems and functional impairments to which most aged persons are vulnerable, old age in Nigeria may predispose to some social and economic problems. The inability of the government to cope with the regular payment of pensions to the retired workforce, the inadequate social services and health facilities to cater for the needs of an ageing population, pose threats to the aged. The westernisation and its culture of 'me and my wife'; policy on social support and its implementation; poor culture and cultural orientation expose the aged to abuse. However, aged people become dependent or partially dependent on others for care because of vulnerability and may be exposed to maltreatment in the form of physical, psychological, financial abuse and neglect (Ayantunji, 2016). It is based on this that the study examined the extent to which the components of environmental factors predicted aged abuse in Ibadan; hence, this study was anchored on the under listed null hypothesis: There is no significant influence of environmental factors (culture, policy on social support and westernisation) on aged abuse.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted the descriptive survey design of the *ex-post facto* type. The population of the study comprised all the Yoruba aged people who were 65 years and above in Ibadan. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select six local government areas. The 1978 WHO '30 by 7 cluster' sampling technique (known as the modified two-stage cluster sample) was adopted to divide each LGAs into seven clusters, making a total of forty-two clusters. Subsequently, thirty aged persons were randomly selected, making a total of one thousand two hundred and sixty aged persons used for the study.

Two main instruments were used for data collection, namely Environmental Factors Questionnaire with three sub-scales (Culture;

Westernisation and Social Support Policy) and Aged Abuse scales. The scales were tested in a pilot study among 20 respondents in Oluyole Local Government Area which is outside the areas used for the proper study. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.81, 0.79, 0.75 and 0.83 respectively for the instruments; indicating high accuracy of the instruments. These were complemented by the qualitative technique of the life-story interview method (Atkinson, 1998) and an in-depth interview (IDI) to elicit information from four aged respondents in each LGA; making a total of twenty-four respondents as shown in Table I.

Out of the total 1,260 copies of the questionnaire administered, 1,244 were filled correctly and used for data analysis. Quantitative data were analysed using the multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance while the qualitative data were subjected to content analysis.

**Table: I: Schedule of Qualitative Interviews for the Study**

| Local Government |            | Total No. of Respondents for the Qualitative interviews per LGA | Date conducted           | No. of Respondents Per Session |
|------------------|------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Ibadan           | North-West | 4   | October 5, 2021          | 1                              |
| Lagelu           |            | 4   | November 27, 2021        | 1                              |
| Ibadan           | South-East | 4   | January 7 and 14, 2022   | 1                              |
| Akinyele         |            | 4   | January 6, 2022          | 1                              |
| Ibadan           | North      | 4   | December 20, 2021        | 1                              |
| Ido              |            | 4   | November 16 and 30, 2021 | 1                              |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2021/2022**

## Results

**Table 2a: Summary of Joint Contribution of the Environmental Factors on Aged Abuse**

Multiple R(adjusted)=0.971  
Multiple R<sup>2</sup>(adjusted)=0.943  
Standard error of estimate= 6.35

| Analysis of Variance |                    |             |             |         |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|---------|
|                      | Sum of Square (SS) | DF          | Mean Square | F       |
| Regression           | 828896.81          | 16          | 51806.05    | 1285.59 |
| Residual             | 49445.23           | 1227        | 40.30       |         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>878342.04</b>   | <b>1243</b> |             |         |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2022**

The Table 2a shows that the independent variables environmental factors (culture, policy on social support and westernisation), when pulled together, had a significant influence on Aged abuse among the Yoruba in Ibadan ( $F_{16, 1243} = 1285.59$ ;  $R = .971$ ); accounting for 94.3% of the variance of Aged abuse among the Yoruba people in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

**Table 2b: Summary of the Relative Contributions of the Environmental Factors on Aged Abuse**

| Model          | Unstandardised Coefficients |            | Standardised Coefficients | t       | Sig.  |
|----------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---------|-------|
|                | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |         |       |
| (Constant)     | -27.438                     | 1.811      |                           | -15.147 | 0.000 |
| Culture        | 1.462                       | 0.093      | 0.238                     | 15.658  | 0.000 |
| Policy         | -0.332                      | 0.078      | -0.100                    | -4.274  | 0.000 |
| Westernisation | -1.066                      | 0.066      | -0.155                    | -16.189 | 0.000 |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2022**

Table 2b shows that each of the environmental factors relatively contributed to the prediction of Aged abuse as follows: culture ( $\beta = .238$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), westernisation ( $\beta = -.155$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and social support policy ( $\beta = -.100$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

## **Discussion**

As shown in tables 2a and 2b, Aged abuse among Yoruba people in Ibadan was significantly predicted by environmental factors (culture, policy on social support and westernisation). The finding shows that the environmental factors made significant contribution to the influences of aged abuse among the Yoruba people of Ibadan. The joint effect of the independent variables and the relative contribution of each of the independent variables are significant. It indicates that a combination of the three independent variables (culture, westernisation, and policy on social support) were significant in predicting aged abuse among Yoruba people in Ibadan. This in essence means that the combination of the variables is capable of influencing aged abuse among Yoruba people of Ibadan.

This study reveals that culture is an influencing factor to aged abuse by the fact that the aged agreed that they are treated with disdain in our society especially among the elites in Yoruba land this shows that the culture of given adequate respect and care to the aged has been eroded leading to the abuse of the aged in Yoruba land. The aged people are culturally forbidden to speak their own language or to wear traditional clothes in some homes because of the exposure to western culture that have become the order of the day. Also, this finding reveals that people's attitude and beliefs surrounding the aged is that they are witch or wizard. The culture of the aged not living in the in-law's house in Yoruba land especially if all the children were female exposes the aged to abuse and the culture of forced levirate marriages and expulsion from home even during old age exposes the aged to abuse in Yoruba land.

This finding also reveals that westernisation is an influencing factor on aged abuse among Yoruba people of Ibadan which is in line with the finding of Nagpaul (1997) on elder abuse in India which revealed five key factors associated with abuse and neglect namely lack of value system and negative attitudes towards older persons, inadequate housing facilities, space and living arrangements, lack of adjustment and lastly financial and mental dependence of the aged on their families and he found out that consequences of urbanisation have had profound effects on families in India to the extent that traditional cultural values such as the veneration of the old is now giving way to

more abusive and negligence situations in the context of family care giving.

This finding shows that policy on social support and its implementation is an influencing factor on Aged abuse of the aged among Yoruba people of Ibadan. The monetary support giving to the aged is not okay and majority of these aged are not aware that there are policies made by government to protect them in Nigeria. Also pension system is not structured to be of benefit to the aged in non-formal sector people like the artisans, farmers, traders, and so on that are not in the formal sector of the economy. Nigeria as a country does not have a system that pays adequate and regular pensions. The government does not design and carry out more effective prevention strategies and stronger laws and policies to address all aspects of abuse of the aged. There is low implementation of policies to effectively check violation of aged right in the society. Further, the government, its agencies and other corporate individuals does not have structured plans for the aged. Extortion and control of pension money is affecting the aged. There is lack of social welfare facilities and services for the aged. These aged are referred to as old school in the society and to crown it up poverty and poor housing affect the aged nowadays. The lack of a social security system for aged people accelerates this process. The notion that investments in one's children serves as social security in old age is now disputed as adult children find it difficult securing employment and receiving an income sufficient to meet their immediate needs.

This finding shows that environmental factors (culture, policy on social support and westernisation) influenced aged abuse which is consistent with the findings of Steinmetz (2008) which proceeded to further explore factors contributing to abuse of the aged and environmental conditions were found as determinants of elder abuse and neglect. This study also revealed that the onset of urbanisation and industrialisation in Nigerian societies have seemingly restructured the basic family support networks causing the caregiving role to be viewed more as a 'burden' than as a 'responsibility' towards one's aged parents. Aged who were most vulnerable, such as the oldest-old, the cognitively impaired, the most dependent and the isolated were

found to be most abused and or neglected (Nagpaul, 1997; Ayantunji, 2016).

Therefore, there is an indication that the younger a society is in terms of its population profile, the higher the assumption that the more the aged people in such society will be treated as 'non-valuable entities' and the more the aged abuse is perpetuated (Ayantunji, 2016).

This study further revealed that the aged abuses were more of family matters which is always committed within the homes; as such it portend an environment that tolerates aged abuse which is in line with the opinion of Ayantunji (2016) that family structure, cultural and generational values, and language barriers may affect the willingness of aged people and other family members to communicate with people considered "outsiders." Cultural norms and traditions such as ageism and a culture of violence are playing an important underlying role in the abuse of the aged. Aged people are often depicted as being frail, weak and dependent.

Further, westernisation came to "destroy" the concept of the extended family system and replaced it by nuclear family system. Such changes include an increasing emphasis on smaller family units, the nuclear family of "me, my wife and my children syndrome", migration to urban areas, female employment, and changing values. Also, social and economic changes currently occurring, threaten the continued viability of such traditional arrangements for the aged (Ajomale, 2007; Ayantunji, 2016), at the expense of other members of the wider family network, especially the older ones who look to the younger generation to provide them with economic security in old age. Compared to other developed countries these changes in family structure in Nigeria have caused gradual disintegration of the extended family and of the communal sense of living in Nigerian society. To collaborate this, some respondents in IDI interview said:

*Modernisation and westernisation have changed the old method of communal living that gives adequate care and support to the aged. See me I am like this because my children are living a life of 'me and my wife' type of family structure. I cannot live with them because I will not see someone to talk with, when my child and*

*the wife have gone to work and the children to school. It will be only me in a large apartment. It is a life of loneliness with them.*

To corroborate this fact some respondents of IDI said:

*The Yoruba culture makes provision for the care of the aged, unfortunately westernisation has eroded this provision. Despite this as the culture belief that a child that does not take care of his aged will suffer later on in life.*

A respondent has this to say from Life-Story Interview method that:

*I cannot live with my only child because she is a female that is married; the Yoruba culture is that someone that stays in an in-laws house is lazy. If a person dies in that in-laws house then, the corpse will be taken out through the window.*

To corroborate the issue on policy on social support, a respondent has this to say from IDI that:

*I do not even know about any policy, if there are policies and is being implemented will I be suffering like this? No money and the government do not know that we exist. It is only those that retire from the formal sector that they make provision for. They (government) have forgotten that those in the non-formal sector too contribute to the growth of the country.*

## **Conclusion**

It is obvious that culture, westernisation, and social support policy were components of environmental factors that influenced aged abuse among Yoruba people in Ibadan. The eroded culture, exposure to western culture and weak social support system contributed to aged abuses among the Yoruba people in Ibadan. There are evidences that most educated or elite Yoruba people due to overexposure to western culture as a result of education have neglected the culture of taking care of the aged. They have allowed the demands of their work to override the care and attention for their aged. Thus relegating the care of the aged to either their young children or house helps, and in the process these aged were exposed to different form of abuses ranging from neglect, physical, psychological and financial abuses.

In addition, the researcher want to point out that there were some inherent limitations in the course of conducting this study, even though such limitations were not enough to invalidate the results and findings of the study. Most respondents used in this study were at first reluctant to respond because they have a feeling that speaking on a topic like this, is like, exposing their family secrecy to an outsider. Besides, most of the aged felt their children or caregiver could as a result reprimand or punish them for such an act. Apart from this, most of the aged respondents could not read or write in English language, relying on the research assistants to assist them in filling the research questionnaire because they do not want their family member to know their true responses.

### **Recommendation**

Therefore, based on the findings above, the researcher recommended the following:

1. the Yoruba culture that teaches family communalism should be inculcated more into the younger generations, while the western culture of “me and my wife or immediate family syndrome” should be discouraged so that the younger Yoruba generations can go back to the old ways of family life in the traditional Yoruba communities by living a communal life system. This traditional Yoruba communal living will give adequate care and love for one’s extended family members, especially the aged where it is not possible then the Yoruba people should find a way of mingling the Yoruba communal living system with the western way of living, in order for the aged to have adequate care and support during old age period.
2. the implementation of policies should be emphasised more in Nigeria;
3. the social support given by the government should be extended to the non-formal workers in order for them to enjoy little bliss during old age, since they have contributed to the Nigeria’s economy one way or the other during their active years.
4. there is the need for strong social support ; and
5. the aged abusers should be prosecuted if found guilty of the offense.

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