

**EFFECTS OF CHANGING CULTURAL VALUES ON THE STATUS OF THE
ELDERLY IN ENUGU OBE, NKANU WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA ENUGU
STATE NIGERIA**

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that OKECHUKWU, VICTORIA CHINONSO, an undergraduate student in the Department of Sociology/Psychology with registration number GOU/U22/SOC/141 under the supervision of Prof. Aniche Alex has completed the research required for the award of Bachelors of Science (B. Sc.) Degree in Sociology at Godfrey Okoye University, and that this project has not previously been submitted for any degree in this, or any other institution.

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APPROVAL PAGE

The research was undertaken by OKECHUKWU, VICTORIA CHINONSO (GOU/U22/SOC/141) and has been approved as having met the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Degree in Sociology in the Department of Sociology/Psychology, Godfrey Okoye University Enugu.

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DEDICATION

This academic project owes its success to God Almighty, who has enabled it through his heavenly assistance.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined changing cultural values and the effect on the status of the elderly in obe, Nkanu West local government Area Enugu state. The study was carried out to investigate the major cultural values that have changed over time in the community ,examine how these changing values has affected status and welfare of elderly persons ,determine the influence of modernization,education and rural -urban migration on family care and social support systems,and identify the socioeconomic and emotional challenges faced by elderly persons in obe community.The study was guided by four research questions and four hypothesis.The study adopted a descriptive survey research design .Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were employed .Questionnaire and interview schedule were used as instrument for data collection from the respondents.The population of the study was comprised of residents in obe community in Nkanu West Local Government Area while taro yamane's formula was used to derive a sample size of 395 respondents. A multi-stage sampling technique involving purposive stratified, and simple random sampling method was adopted for the study. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages were used to analyze the research questions while the hypothesis was tested using chi-square(χ^2) statistical analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that major traditional cultural values such as respect for elders, communal living, family support system and rural-urban migration have weakened traditional family support system for elderly persons. Findings further showed that elderly persons faced several social-economic and emotional challenges including financial difficulties, loneliness neglect inadequate family care , and loss of social roles within the community . the hypothesis tested revealed that cultural values have a significant effect on the elderly in Nkanu West Local Government Area . based on these findings,the study concluded that the erosion of traditional cultural values has negatively affected the welfare, dignity and social relevance of elderly persons in obe community. The study therefore recommended the revival of positive cultural values, strengthening of family support systems, implementation of government welfare programmes for elderly persons and increased community awareness aimed at improving the welfare and social inclusion of elderly people in society.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background To The Study

Cultural values organize society and the lives of people both across cultures and across generations. These values had been ingrained in the traditional African communities through kinship, reverence for the elderly, communal life and responsibility. The elderly were held in special esteem as carriers of wisdom, mediators in dispute and as bridges between past and present. Their power was not just based on their chronological age, but also on the experience of their lives, social engagements, and the connection with their ancestral heritage (Adewuyi, 2020). In recent years, however, all these value systems have begun to crumble due to the rapid social transformation that has been happening on the African continent and particularly in Nigeria. Ideals of urbanization, westernization, religious pluralism, and globalization have upset the concept of what the family and interpersonal relations are and look like (Okoye & Asa, 2022). Traditionally, in the Igbo society old age was a secure source of social respect and material support from younger kin. In the modern world, due to the changing socio-economic dynamics, extended family life-situations have been reduced and individual lifestyles have taken the place of the extended family, which frequently has left the elderly at the fringes. The ageing population (age 60 and over) in Nigeria is approximately 10 million or 5% of the total population according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2023). But, these old folks experience a decrease in social recognition, an economic shortfall and neglect during their arthritic years. According to a World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) report, in Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 60 percent of older people are entirely relying on informal family care systems, which are also stressed by poverty and

migration. The changing dynamics has significant consequences for social cohesion and intergenerational solidarity.

Traditional culture which used to support the unity of the community and respect for parents is being replaced by values that are based on materialism and the social ideals in Nigeria in the south east region (Nnamani, 2021). In the state of Enugu, the Igbo way of life which includes Cultural emphasis on unity (Igwebuike), Market sharing (Nsakwi), authority of elders, and respecting of elders; are being slowly undermined by urban mobility, wage employment and Western media influences. The young are being drawn to the cities for schooling and job opportunities and their older relatives are left behind in rural areas to look after themselves. The young are drawn to the cities for education and work and the old are left behind in rural areas, without adequate assistance from them. This has reinvented traditional ideas about family responsibility and has lessened the moral restraints that were in place to safeguard the old. This shift is especially evident in the community of Obe, part of Nkanu West Local Government Area (LGA) of Enugu State. Obe has historically had sound kin-based institutions and respect for elders would be not only a moral obligation, but an expectation of the community with social norms and rituals that sanctioned them. Local elders were chiefs, arbitrators and counsellors on ethical and spiritual issues. Increased social authority can be found in formal governance structures, formal communication via digital media and belief systems, which are changing social power away from the elderly, today. Traditional practice is also often viewed as out of fashion by some of the younger generation and this has channeled the younger generation into a Western way of life, thus reducing the influence of Elders in their communal life (Eze, 2022).

Additionally, the resurgence of the urbanization drive and the ravages of the agrarian undervaluing in Enugu State, have further heightened the vulnerability of the older persons in the state.

Economic inactivity among elderly people in many countries once dependent on agricultural production or commerce work is becoming a reality with little access to pension and healthcare facilities. The IPC report (NPC, 2021) reveals that many of the aged in rural setting of Enugu live in poverty and are heavily reliant on income and/or the help of their dependents, who are themselves experiencing unemployment. The eroding of intergenerational interaction among families has economic and social consequences, but also developmental effects, with regards to intergenerational equity and cultural continuity. Implications are of moral rupture on the fabric of Igbo society on the cultural perspective of the difference between collective and individual values. The virtues of respect and tidour morals, and the duty to reverent ones parents were stressed under the ideology of Traditional norms. The deterioration of these values leads to the neglect and isolation of older people and in some instances their abuse. In the face of the modernisation of communities such as Obe, one wonders as to the impact of the new values on the social, psychological and economic well-being of the elderly which are considered as pillars of their communities. Therefore the study of the changes in cultural values in Enugu State and more specifically in Obe community should be investigated to find out how the old age people's perception, care patterns and general welfare have been changed. Such a study will not only give the empirical knowledge to the sociological implications of modernity, but it will also bring dignity and protection to the elderly age group in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

Traditionally, the uniqueness of the old ages was that they played a considerable part as the cultural treasurers and moral guides in the society. They were the valued for their wisdom, experience and their role in maintaining the stability of the society. Respect for age was a major aspect of traditional life and younger generation's sense of responsibility to aging parents and other elders.

Due to such changes in the Nigerian society brought on by modernization, globalization and urbanisation, these traditional values have declined in strength (Okoye 2022). A cash economy, migration to the city, and exposure to Western values have altered the definitions of success and social value in the rural context. The emphasis on getting "ahead" in life and living in urban areas as opposed to the ruralized communities, is a concern for younger people especially. This has torn apart traditions of supporting the elderly through kinship and inter-generational relations that previously ensured their well-being (Adeniran, 2021). At the same time, with the move towards nuclear family rather than extended family, the elderly are increasingly cut out of decision-making and are left without emotional and financial support within the family.

More than half of older adults in developing countries do not receive formal social protection or have access to basic health care services (WHO, 2021). The situation is worse in Nigeria, due to the non-robustness of its institutional structure and the limited nature of government policies on ageing. The National Policy on Ageing 2021 (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs) has noted that there are multiple concerns about older people being neglected, that they are abused and that there are high levels of poverty especially in rural areas, where public social services are limited. However, there is a lack of effective implementation of the policy, and families with serious poverty are largely responsible for looking after the children. The effect of these structural changes is visible in Enugu State, where modernization has altered social norms and value systems. In rural communities such as Obe in Nkanu West Local Government Area, younger people increasingly migrate to urban centers like Enugu metropolis and Nsukka for education or employment, leaving their elderly parents in villages with limited support systems. Many elderly residents in such communities now experience social isolation, economic deprivation, and declining social

relevance (Nnamani, 2022). This trend contrasts sharply with the traditional Igbo ideal of *ncheta nna na nne* remembering and honoring one's parents which once underpinned filial responsibility. Furthermore, the decline of communal institutions such as *umunna* (extended family lineages) and age-grade associations has weakened the traditional mechanisms that once provided welfare and companionship for the aged. The erosion of these support systems exposes the elderly to new forms of vulnerability, including loneliness, poor health, and emotional neglect (Eze, 2022). In addition, the cultural perception of old age as a source of wisdom is increasingly being replaced by stereotypes portraying the elderly as burdensome or resistant to modern progress. In some extreme cases, older women have been stigmatized or accused of witchcraft, reflecting deeper moral distortions in community value systems (Okoye & Asa, 2022). The problem, therefore, is that the ongoing transformation of cultural values in Igbo society, while fostering modernization and development, has simultaneously undermined the traditional structures that once ensured the welfare, dignity, and status of the elderly. In Obe community, the shift from collective responsibility to individualism, combined with economic hardship, migration, and the collapse of family cohesion, has created a social environment where many elderly persons live in neglect and reduced social esteem. Despite the existence of research on ageing in Nigeria, limited empirical attention has been paid to how these cultural changes specifically affect the social standing and quality of life of the elderly in small communities like Obe. Understanding these dynamics is crucial not only for sociological scholarship but also for guiding public policy, community intervention, and intergenerational dialogue in Enugu State and beyond. Hence, this study seeks to examine how changing cultural values influence the status, welfare, and perception of the elderly in Obe, Nkanu West Local Government Area, with the goal of identifying patterns of decline, resilience, and potential strategies for social reintegration.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the major cultural values that have changed over time in Obe, Nkanu West Local Government Area?
2. How have these changing cultural values affected the status of the elderly ?
3. in what ways have modernization affected family care for the elderly persons in Obe?
4. What challenges do elderly persons face as a result of declining cultural values in Obe community?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The main objective of this study is to examine how changing cultural values have influenced the social status, welfare, and perception of the elderly in Obe, Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State.

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify the major cultural values that have changed over time in Obe community and how these changes reflect broader social transformation.
2. Examine how these changing cultural values have affected the status of the elderly in Obe community
3. Assess the extent to which modernization, formal education, and rural–urban migration have influenced family care and social support for elderly persons in the area.

4. Investigate the major socio-economic, emotional, and psychological challenges faced by the elderly as a result of these shifts in cultural values.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretical importance: by addressing a critical in sociological literature through advanced case study of eroding geronoteractic values in a rapidly modernizing Igbo community. And also expands knowledge on African cultural transformation the study provides evidence on how traditional Igbo values in Obe.

Practical importance: provides a local framework for future studies since many aging studies focus on western societies thry research contributies Nigerian and African prespective which future researchars can use for similar studies on aging family systems and cultural change Also helps policy markers develop elderly welfare program. The study will guide government agencies in creating policy and social welfare programme that improve the living conditions of elderly people in Obe in Nkanu West local government area.

1.6 Operationalization of terms

Culture: denotes the totality of a people's way of life, their beliefs, values, norms, customs, knowledge systems, and shared behavioral patterns that distinguish one group from another. In the Igbo context, it encompasses language, moral principles, kinship networks, communal living, and traditional institutions such as the *umunna* (extended family lineage), age-grade associations, and the council of elders. Culture is central to this study because it determines how society views elderly people

Cultural Values: are the deeply embedded principles and moral standards that regulate behavior within a community. In this study, the term refers specifically to the ethical precepts that define

intergenerational relationships and shape the social standing of the elderly in Obe, including respect for elders, filial obligation, and communal responsibility. Cultural values are directed to this study because they shape how elderly people are treated in society

Changing Cultural Value: describe the progressive erosion or transformation of traditional beliefs and practices under the influence of social, economic, and technological forces. In this study, it captures the shift from communal solidarity to individualism, from extended family care to nuclear households, and from gerontocratic authority to youth-centered, modernity-driven lifestyles. Changing Cultural values explain the reason behind the Changing status of the elderly in society in the past.

The Elderly: refers to individuals aged 60 years and above. In African traditional societies, elder status transcends chronological age, connoting wisdom, social maturity, and moral authority. In this study, the term includes both men and women in Obe recognized as senior members by virtue of age, experience, and community service, with attention to their social roles, welfare, and the respect accorded them in a changing cultural environment. The elderly are important to this study because they are directly affected by changing Cultural values which influence their care respect and societal respect in the society.

Modernization: refers to the process of social, economic, and technological change through which traditional societies adopt new systems of organization and lifestyle, including Western education, industrialization, and urban living. While it brings development, it also tends to weaken traditional practices and relationships. Modernization is important to this study because it explains how change in lifestyle and urban living are weakening the roles of the elderly.

Family Structure: refers to the pattern of relationships organizing households and kinship networks. In traditional Igbo society, the extended family system distributed responsibility for the well-being of older relatives across all members, providing comprehensive social and economic support. Family structure is important to this study because changes from extended to nuclear family systems reduce the traditional support and care given to the elderly.

Social Change: refers to the alteration of social institutions, relationships, and cultural patterns over time, driven by factors such as technology, migration, education, and political transformation. Social change is important to this study because it explains how shifts in cultural values and lifestyle affect the treatment of the elderly in obe nkanu west.

Obe Community: is the specific geographical and cultural focus of this study—a semi-rural area in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State, inhabited predominantly by the Igbo. Known for its traditional festivals, strong kinship ties, and elder-led decision-making systems, Obe is currently experiencing significant cultural transformations that are reshaping the status and care of its elderly population. Obe community is important to this study because it represents a local setting where Changing Cultural values can be observed in real life especially in how the elderly are treated.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Empirical review

Akinyemi (2022) carried out a mixed method study in the south east of Nigeria and reported that in his study while younger respondents' emphasized individual achievements and nuclear family self-sufficiency, the older age group emphasized collective welfare and extended familial unity. This difference was found to be statistically significant and revealed a pattern that differed by level of education and income, indicating that modernization fosters a sense of self-reliance that leads to a reduction of the traditional obligations between people. Chukwu and Eboh (2023) noted that the mobility of youth to cities like Enugu and Nsukka has limited their contact with their elders and undermined elders' roles in passing on respect, morality, and caring guidance. Uche and Obi (2020) noted that compared to their urban counterparts, rural elders still appear to be more respected and involved in the community, influenced largely by the fact that traditional councils and festivals still prevail. This was in contrast to the social invisibility that elders in Enugu Metropolis expressed which was a relationship to the urban lifestyle and occupational isolation.

In a quantitative study among 450 young adults in Enugu Metropolis, Okafor and Nnaji (2022) revealed that 68 participants indicated that social media had a higher influence on their worldview than their family and community. The authors concluded that digital globalization brings new sets of moral values with a focus on individual freedom, consumption and social visibility. Nwosu and Ugwu (2023) conducted a regression analysis on content from the social media campaigns targeting the southeastern Nigerian youth and found that there was a negative relationship between

social media engagement and compliance with the norms of the society such as collective decision making and consultation from elders.

Anigbo and Okafor (2023) observed a gradual reduction of the status of elders and traditional leaders to be replaced by teacher, entrepreneur, and the likes of the social media influencers among university students in Nsukka and Enugu. The respondents correlated respect with achievement and not with age, supporting the process of shift from an ascriptive to an achievement-based status system. This observation was confirmed by Edeh and Onah (2023) in their study of Nkanu West villages who reported a conflict in traditional authority between education and the village and that educated youths returning out of the city challenged the authority.

Drawing on focus-group interviews with elderly community dwellers from rural communities in Enugu, Mbah and Okeke (2023) established that all these elderly residents experienced social isolation, financial insecurity and lesser contact with family. Their findings suggest that as a result of the disintegration of extended family systems, many elderly have been left to depend on church groups and informal associations. In quantitative terms, the figures back Ezeaku's statistic, as only 42 per cent of respondents of age 65 and over said they were provided with financial or emotional support on a regular basis by their children (2023). In a mixed method study with 250 elderly people, Olowe and Anya (2022) discovered low level of inter generational interaction had a significant relationship with depression, anxiety and a decrease in life satisfaction in Nsukka, Nigeria, using the Geriatric Social Well-being Scale.

Using the structural-equation modeling technique, Okorie & Ude (2021) gathered data from 600 respondents in the south-east, Nigeria, and found very significant multivariate negative correlation between all the indicator variables of the concept of modernity and respect to the traditional norm.

This study's model, however, showed that cultural orientation has a buffering effect: those most active in the traditional festivals and village meetings had more positive scores for "elder respect". For instance, in a household study of five local government areas (LGA) in Enugu, Nwafor and Eze (2021) found that ageing persons' households were less likely to co-reside with their aged parents with an intuition that households of people with higher education and salaried income had lower familial respect for aged parents, with an insight that the aspect of respect from moral to monetary was on the lips in the households.

Despite overall modernization, Chidimma and Ede (2023) studied widows and older women in Enugu and Ebonyi States, finding that the situation of the females did not improve due to the influence of the inheritance customs, which still affect women negatively. Qualitative interviews revealed that women's participation in the public sphere had been enhanced due to modernization, but that there had been no deparathyroidization of elderly women and many interviewees expressed concern about the suffering and injustice of being dispossessed of their property and abandoned emotionally.

Onah (2023) studied the use of oral stories and proverbs for pedagogy in Obe village (Enugu State) using a longitudinal, ethnographic approach, and revealed that though the oral narratives and proverbs continue to play a significant pedagogical role, the younger generation has insisted for proverbs to be explained rationally, and not with moral limitations. In tandem, the study conducted by Edeh and Nwankwo (2023) revealed that usage of contemporary examples or digital media in value teaching was found to have increased youths' engagement level—they suggested that hybrid transmission method (TTM) is the most sustainable method of cultural continuity. The COVID lockdown restrictions embarrassed communal gathering as well as religious meeting that has been a time for intergenerational exchange, whilst virtual communication somewhat reduced the impact

of isolation for people who have access to digital means of communication in their families. (Iloh and Nwankwo, 2022).

Based on the study by Nwankwo and Obi (2022), respect in the Pentecostal community is understood differently, as they believe this respect should be accorded to parents as directed by the Bible, but not as is done in the indigenous traditions. Their survey results show a higher percentage of young people from Catholic contexts (27 percent) than Pentecostal ones (61 percent) who believed that ancestral veneration is not in keeping with Christian values, indicating that religion acts as a mediator to recode values into fresh moral languages of cultural adaptation.

Nwosu and Ugwu (2023) conducted a study of school curricula in Enugu and concluded that classes in civic and moral education lacked predominately any indigenous content. The introduction of the Igbo set of moral stories to civic lessons however, from their experimental interventions, Ezeani and Nwosu (2021) found that an increase of 34 percent in the children's empathy and cooperation was recorded. In a quasi-experimental study with 180 students, Iheanacho and Obi (2023) demonstrated statistically significant results for increases in empathy, civic involvement, and pro-social behavior when indigenous stories were incorporated into the extra-curricular activity curriculum.

Eze and Nwodo (2024) conducted a study on the effectiveness of NSCC in Nigeria and their findings revealed that although there was a policy in place, its implementation in Enugu was inadequate, as 72 percent of the respondents were not aware of any policy on the care of the elderly in the country. Umeh & Okafor (2023) looked at how collective responsibility for elders has been undermined by political interference in the traditional governance structure, which traditional councils have been a part of.

Uche and Obi (2020) noted that age-grade association (otu ogbo) in Nsukka and Oji River continues to play informal role in welfare provision and co-ordinating of communal labour to the elders in the area and provide them with financial support. The findings of Chukwu and Eze (2024) indicated that creating a sense of community dialogue between the elders and youths had a significant impact on the understanding and awareness of these youths, as 73% of those who participated in that description valued the old ways of life, believing that they had gained new insight from its use after six months. Okeke and Udeh (2024) observed that 58 percent of Enugu indigenes abroad actively sponsor websites and fund village festivals, scholarships and projects that celebrate Enugu's ancestral heritage. When adopted in an intergenerational way, with 'family history stories', 'victimization experience sharing' and the blessing of the elders, Eze & Nwodo (2024) found that diaspora families employ WhatsApp and Zoom for virtual family meetings, allowing for intergenerational respect by maintaining contact through digital means when culturally structured.

A comparative study of communal care for the aged carried out by Mensah (2021) in Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria revealed the same differences, yet reported a cultivating resilience in situations in which local practices have been implemented through religious or civic associations. The Old Age Support Network (OASN) in Ghana, where chiefs are involved in the introduction of support for the elderly in cultural festivals, was quoted as a model not found in Nigeria. Mwangi and Ouma (2023) suggest that the elders in Kenya maintained their authority only when they were physically present in the community in resolving conflicts and planning community initiatives. Addo (2022) carried out research in the Ashanti region of Ghana to find that the influence of elders' decisions in economic affairs had diminished with modernization, but the respect given to them for their ability to give moral guidance had not ceased. Adewale (2022) compared the findings of both

Nigeria and South Africa and found that as cultural participation among aged people decreases, their social isolation increases.

This literature review ends by summarizing the salient points drawn from the literature that is relevant for the changing cultural values in society and how they impact on the status and wellbeing of the elderly. The review is structured into the following sub topics:

Culture is a concept that is deeply rooted in the social sciences, it is a concept or base that determines human actions, social interaction and identity. It is an encompassing complex of a peoples' culture expressed in their beliefs, values, norms, symbols, customs, and artifacts passed on from one generation to the next. Okoye (2021) defines culture as all the knowledge, morality, traditions and material things acquired by people as part of society. Helps an individual community to share a sense of belonging, continuity, and structure, which allows them to understand their world in a consistent and meaningful manner. Besides being inherited, culture is also learned, as it is a social construct, formed through interaction, communication, and adaptation in a specific environment, according to Adewale (2022). The term culture from an anthropological view is dynamic, not static. It changes with time in response to changes and internal developments and external influences. Iheanacho (2020) identifies three processes by means of which culture evolves namely, diffusion (spreading of cultural traits), assimilation (incorporation of foreign practices) and innovation (production of innovative cultural forms). These are the characteristics of these processes, which make sure that the culture is neither as out of the moment as it can be, yet it also has some aspects of tradition. Just as with Ogbonna and Ude (2021), culture is not only a heritage but also a living process which cannot withstand anything of globalization, technology and social mobility, but instead preserves the past. Along with this, the significance of culture in the context of socially determining the values of moral in a society is also crucial. Culture not only shapes

people's ways of doing things, it also shapes their relationship with each other both in family and in the community in most African settings such as Nigeria. African culture, particularly in the south eastern region of Nigeria was found to be grounded in communalism, collective responsibility and respect for their elders by Onwu (2023). These values determine one's ethical development and foster the sense of an individual's responsibility for the good of the community. Respecting elders – for example – can be translated as a manifestation of an ethical recognition of their wisdom, experience and custodial role concerning tradition. This type of cultural orientation ensures harmony, obedience and continuity of generations. But also diversity and differentiation are attached to the word culture. Communities have specific traditions and belief systems based on their history, their environment and their perspective of the world. Looking at Nigeria, as a country that is multi-ethnic, there are issues of language, and art, and marriage practices and political system, and each of these expressions can differ. Eze and Okonkwo (2021) note that ethnic differences provide a space for cultural variation. Rough as these differences are often, they levied at the same time provide an understanding of how culturally pliable the moral and values structures are; the same thing that is considered good or bad in one culture may not be interpreted the same in another. So culture is, for people, a relative reference frame by which they interpret their world, and give meaning to human acts. Culture is also a tool of socialisation. The ways society passes values and norms to the younger generations as it occurs in certain cultural activities like storytelling, initiation, festivals, and proverbs are acknowledged as means of cultural transmission. Akinyemi (2022) states that this transmission mechanism helps to safeguard the expectations of the society, traditional wisdom, and thus enables generational unity and moral development. In such societies as the Igbo, children transform themselves into "disciples" of respect, responsibility and communal ethics as they engage in family and village activities. This cultural education

reaffirms the order of society to influence and influence the behavior in relation to the collective society's expectations. However, the recent scholarship indicates that cultural systems are undergoing rapid changes throughout the world as a result of the process of modernization and globalization. According to Chukwu and Eboh (2023), as technology advances and people move and come in contact with other cultural and geographical lifestyles, local practices and beliefs are increasingly disappearing, especially in African societies. With the introduction of digital media, urbanization and western education in Nigeria, the culture is undergoing a reorientation, with the individualism and materialism taking the place of traditional communal values. A consequence is that the younger generation has doubts or has rejected what used to be sacred traditions, causing a disconnection between the future that they dream of and the expectations. Moreover, culture influences the sense of aging, status and authority held by individuals within a community. Traditional Igbo society values seniority and grandeur is accorded to elders who are considered significant markers of continuity, wisdom and leadership. The elderly are seen as moral subjects and guardians of ancestral practices, and are consulted about matters of justice, kinship and spirituality (Uche and Obi 2020). Yet as Nwankwo (2022) notes, this has been reducing over time, with younger generations giving more weight to formal education, material wealth, and technological know-how over traditional wisdom. The change reflects the cultural redefinition of status and respect, and has been observed in many corners of Nigeria, including Enugu State, as a measure of a weakening cultural role of elders. Culture is conceptualized in a wider sense, which also permeates the symbolic and material aspects of culture. While the symbolic dimension focuses on beliefs, languages and rituals that are shared with significance among community members, the material dimension is the sign of the cultural identity, with tangible artefacts like architecture, clothing or tools. Throughout these dimensions, there is a feeling of a collective identity and

continuity of the people involved in the act of learning, as explained by Adewale (2022). If either of the variables are reduced, for instance, if the traditional symbols are abandoned, or if, for instance, communal ceremonies are reduced, then the cohesiveness and the sense of moral right in society can be jeopardized. In the end, the human view of the world and oneself is their culture. It affects attitudes, and influences all aspects of human relations – family life, gender, religion and social responsibility etc. According to Iheanacho (2020), culture is also an agent of change and stability, helping to maintain the social heritage and respond to changing circumstances. To understand culture, in the context of this study is important because changes in cultural values do affect the perception and treatment of community Elders. A drop in cultural values that prioritize respect, reciprocity, and caring for the elderly is likely to reduce the elderly's social status and well-being.

To sum up: Culture is a living, shared, learned and dynamic system of meanings that constitutes the lives and interactions of humans. It is the structure that gives society its moral and social bases and is formed on the feelings regarding authority, family, and community. Culture, in Nigeria and, specifically, amongst the Igbo community in Enugu State, represents values like respect for elders, communal living and moral responsibilities. However, the values are subject to change as a result of globalization, urbanization, and changes in social values which have reshaped the traditional practice and consequently the role of the elderly (Okoye, 2021; Onwu, 2023; Eze & Okonkwo, 2021; Chukwu & Eboh, 2023).

2.1.2 Concept of Cultural Values

Cultural Values are deeply ingrained principles and standards which guide members of a society in their thought, conduct and relationship with others. They are the basis of social norms, custom

and traditions. According to Adewale (2022), there are cultural values that are enduring beliefs and ideals, shared by members of a community, concerning what is right, desirable and morally acceptable. These values provide a compass for personal actions and the way people live together, as they impact belief systems around family, gender, employment, religion, and leadership. As Iheanacho (2020) notes, social interaction engage in them is without a doubt meaningful thanks to cultural values which serve to differentiate acceptable and deviant behaviors. The values were found to be different across societies and they are usually indicative of the world-view and the experience of the community. The cultural values in African societies and more in particular African Nigeria include, communal living, respect for elders, being hospitable and being morally upright. The authors describe African cultural values that create an awareness of belonging and responsibility among people leading to cooperation and shareholding (Onwu (2023)). Igbona values like igwebuike (unity is strength), nwanne di na mba (brotherhood), and ndu ka aku (life is greater than wealth) exemplify the importance of community and inter-human bonds as opposed to material wealth and acquisitions. These values serve as a standard to be followed for social relations and social cohesion in the community. There are a number of important roles which cultural values play in society. First they establish the social stability by setting predictable expectations of behavior. They develop relationships with others, set requirements for society to follow, and maintain moral order in society. Both Eze and Okonkwo (2021) mentions that cultural values serves as "informal social controls," meaning it restricts human action and attitude, affecting the need for external restriction. Second, they maintain social identity through connection of living together with their ancestors through traditions and practices. Also, values taught at home, through stories and within a community's rituals sustain community cohesion, as noted by Akinyemi (2022). If these common denominators are missing from a society, disastrous social disintegrations

and moral decay can be expected. An interesting perspective that scholars acknowledge today in current discourse is that cultural values are not fixed. They change as a result of economic, political and technological changes. Chukwu and Eboh (2023) posited that with the coming of modernization and globalization the traditional African values have been reinterpreted, with "collective values" shifting to more individualistic approaches. Thus, pre-colonial society values extended family and community cooperation, whereas today's economic pressures promote nuclear family and individual competitiveness. This evolution has been further enhanced by the western influence of education, media and technology and particularly by the younger generations. Allowing the teens of the south eastern region of Nigeria to stress material gains and individual liberty as a goal more highly than serving a group, Nwankwo (2022) notes undermines respect for elders and responsibility to community.

Yet, although there have been these changes, cultural beliefs and values remain significant determinants of identity and social expectations. Nigeria is also home to certain values such as being an honest and uprooted valued person, being an honourable person, hospitality and respect which in their new form expressions have its way in the social life. According to Uche and Obi (2020), while cultural values can be given new meanings, it is impossible to denude them of their moral essence. Such as an act of respect for elderly people, which is usually attended by prostration or kneeling is currently expressed in this context through words of respect or greeting. This adaptation illustrates how there is flexibility in cultural values but continuity with past values. Cultural values also influence power relations and social hierarchy. If the above is done correctly with respect to Igbo traditional culture, then in their traditional practice status was not based on wealth, but based on moral bearing and wisdom, as well as contribution to communal well-being. Elders held a position of honour and mediation within the tradition and in dispute between people.

According to Okoye (2021), this type of values helped to create both accountabilities and justice since chiefs were expected to be honest and selfless. But with the modernization and urbanization of the Nigerian society, these value-based values have been eroded and their values have been replaced by wealth and influence dependent values. For communities, the change has serious consequences for their notions of morality and authority. Further, cultural values are taught via both formal and informal channels. Formal learning, religion and social institutions play a role in the form of institutions that instill values, while informal institutions of family, peer groups and the local tradition emphasize these day in, day out. Developed by Ogbonna and Ude (2021), they trace the decrepitation of these personal networks to migration, urbanization and digital communication, which has diminished the ability of younger generations to send and receive values. Traditional mentorship, for example, has become less frequent between elders and youth as an increasing number of youth have left rural communities to study and work in cities where they are not necessarily exposed to the moral instruction that is available in the community. Yet another aspect of cultural values concerns them in a moral and ethical way. The moral values of truthfulness, kindness, humility and hard work are not only moral attributes, but social sanctions as well. According to Adewale (2022), people who successfully live these values receive social acknowledgment, stigma and sanctions suffer by deviating from them. In the olden days of Igbo life, people who behaved honourably with those around them were given titles or positions of leadership, and the people who were untrustworthy or selfish were ostracised or rejected by everybody. These moral rules in turn maintained an accountability structure for the provision of social order. But in present days '70s, other influences, like global consumerism, social media and political corruption have changed perception and practice of these values. Although the ideals of respect, integrity and communalism have long been hallmarks of PESECA, the ability to practise

these values has diminished in terms of reality (Chukwu and Eboh, 2023). In many communities in Nigeria, it has become more a value to celebrate wealth acquisition – a value either earned or given – than integrity. The change of attitudes has far-reaching effects on social harmony, family relationships and, especially, on elderly people's social status. Cultural values also serve as tools for policy making, conflict resolution and ethical behavior of leaders. Cultural values continue to be the basis for justice and governance in-traditional Nigerian institutions. In his 2023 paper, Onwu notes that indigenous governance systems are based on values such as fairness, consensus, and mutual respect. As these values wane, so does the accountability of leaders that will lead to corruption and social inequalities.

2.1.3 Overview of Cultural values in the South East Nigeria

Overall, the South East region in Nigeria (mainly populated by the Igbo ethnic group) is known as a region rich in cultural heritage and value system, which dictates social relationship, governance and individual behaviour. Cultural values in this area act as the moral and ethical compass of how person relate to one another within a family, communities and institutions. Okafor (2022) noted that the values of the Igbo culture are based on respectation of human dignity, unity of the group, industrious and respect for elders. Such values are manifested in every-day social interaction as well as in language, proverbs, rituals and traditional laws passed down through the generations. The Igbo concept of the world is rooted in communal if not familial values; as a whole they see a person as a part of a group instead of an autonomous entity. The concept of responsibility for others and relating with heart is encapsulated in the proverb *onye aghala nwanne ya*, or “do not leave your brother behind”. This communal orientation "creates reciprocity in social relationship, communal decision-making and a sense of social cohesion" (Ezeani and Nwosu 2021). In practice, communalism means that nobody is left to fend for him/herself, particularly members of society

considered vulnerable (widows, orphans, elderly). Collaborative spirit is also reflected in community development work which involves the people in the south-east in self-help schemes, town unions, cooperative societies etc, to improve social welfare. One is respect of elders, which is also of fundamental importance in the culture of southeast Nigeria. Elders are considered as keeping in trust the wisdom, tradition and moral standards of the community. They settle disputes, head traditional courts and represent the values of honor and purity. According to Uche and Obi (2020), the older generation are very instrumental in maintaining the moral upkeep of Igbo communities through fostering moral approach thus transmitting traditional knowledge from one generation to another. For the Igbo people, age is also linked to experience and good destiny, and thus confers authority to the elderly. The Igbo people believe that older people have more experience and divine favor, so they are able to make moral judgments and counsel the community. This respect or reverence is conveyed in society through greetings customs, the way in which a person speaks to others, and an expectation that younger generations take care of the elderly. Another cultural value in the South East is *nwa bu nwa ora* (A child belongs to the community). This principle upholds the view of child rearing as a "family affair". For Okoroafor (2023) this group type of socialisation reinforces family relationships and maintain the moral order in society. Values like honesty, hard work, humility, generosity, etc are promoted in the community through family meetings, initiation ceremonies and festivals. The underlying premise is a person with good moral character has a beneficial impact on the overall good of the community. Theft, deceit, or lack of respect, therefore, becomes more of a personal weakness and an embarrassment to the community's moral character. In the South East it is also strongly embraced and revered as another attribute of industriousness (*ikwu aka*). There have been numerous descriptions of the Igbo people's entrepreneurial, innovative and resilience development traits. Eze and Okonkwo (2021)

have expounded the centrality of hardwork and self-reliance to the Igbo culture. Children are exposed to beliefs and experiences that encourage them to appreciate work, making things and learning from an early age, which enable them to become engaged and fulfilled members of society. The apprentice system of Igbo people (Igba boi), which has received widespread international attention, is the perfect illustration of this value of work industriously. A value of work industriously is exemplified by the apprentice system of Igbo people (Igba boi) which is widely cited internationally. The successful practitioners of economic activity would be expected to “lift others up” through jobs and training in their community, thus creating a cycle of empowerment to the community. The culture of South East is also religious and moral that lays great importance upon cultural behavior. The Igbo Mother religion has two fundamental beliefs: that of Chukwu as the supreme deity, and moral reciprocity. According to Onwu (2023), the morality of the Igbo society is informed by the principle of omenala a body of customary laws which sets what is considered to be the proper way to behave. Omenala, when obeyed, bring peace, order, and divine favour, failure to obey brings social and spiritual sanctions. Although Christianity is widespread those moral values still have an impact on social life, and many communities have a combined influence. As a result, cultural and religious values work together to ensure moral accountability and dignity of humanity. Also, cultural values which promote complementary relations between males and females rather than competition between them control gender relations in the southeastern Nigeria. Traditional Igbo society has a clear division of labor and men and women have complementary roles in the family and the community. The role of women is traditionally explained as trade, farming and their roles as family keepers while those of men are public leadership and economic affairs (Ijeoma & Nwankwo, 2022). Women's associations (umuada and ndinyom) have a great voice in dispute resolution among family members and in its

promotion of harmony amongst families. These gender-related value systems include equilibrium and respect for both sexes; but in recent times the multi-dimensional influences have created an additional dimension in the streams of some value systems which is creating some difficulty in following traditional gender lines. Another abiding attribute of southeastern Nigerian culture is "hospitality (*ọbịaghọla onye ọbịa*, literally "do not neglect a guest"). Visitors, relatives or outsiders, are met with open arms, and are provided with food and shelter, reflecting generosity and welcome. According to Ndukwe (2021), hospitality is taught to be moral obligations and a source of honor. Welcome strangers and behave with moral integrity and good social reaction. The Igbo concept of generosity includes the notion that blessings multiply through giving; a philosophy that is ingrained in the spiritual and cultural beliefs of the people. Blessings multiply through giving; this was an Igbo philosophy, embedded in the people's spirit and culture. This attitude has persisted through the stresses of urbanization and economic troubles.

But cultural values in the South East are experiencing great change as a result of modernisation, migration and globalisation. The traditional values have been influenced by the exposure to Western education, media, and urban life as noted by Chukwu and Eboh (2023). The values of respect for the elderly and communal responsibility are slowly being replaced by individualism, materialism and social competition. Young people are far more removed from the norms that have traditionally characterized their communities and many rural areas feel a lack of moral discipline and community spirit. This has also been accelerated by the influence of social media, which are selling new ideals of success and expression that are often at odds with traditional expectations. Some cultural values are still intact due to their practices in the culture of the Igbo people, as they still form part of the national identity. Values like solidarity, respect, honesty, and hard work continue to be maintained in the community sphere, which is why they are in the "community"

because of their interlacing with rituals, the language, and the kinship. Cultural resilience, defined as the capacity of communities in the Southeast to adapt without yielding to core cultural values, is the reason for this, Iheanacho argues (2020). This continuity of values reinforce adaptability of culture and its capacity to be relevant in variable social contexts.

South East Nigeria cultural values serve as the moral values and social framework of South East Nigerian community life in conclusion. They moderate social conduct, establish moral accountability for social events, and encourage unity, respectfulness and industriousness. These however may change. With the advent of urbanisation, global media, migration and economic need, the expression of traditional values, particularly respect for elders and communal living, is changing. However, these changes have not significantly affected the overall cultural attitude of the Igbo people which continues to shape their personality and cultural value (Eze & Okonkwo, 2021; Ijeoma & Nwankwo, 2022; Ndukwe, 2021; Okoroafor, 2023; Onwu, 2023). In addition to the effect of modernization, the pattern of migration has also played a significant role in the preservation and change of cultural values in South East Nigeria. Large-scale rural-urban migration has been observed majorly with the youth forcing in a gradual disconnection of the traditional institutions and the young generation. Ikechukwu and Nnamani (2023) note that the desire of the young people to access better educational and employment opportunities in urban centers like Enugu, Lagos and Abuja has affected the process of handing down knowledge across generations. The knowledge of culture and values and moral standards used to be passed from the older people to the youngsters through oral means and by involvement in communal work (igba oso) and initiation rituals. These opportunities are now becoming few and far between and leaving many young people, who are not involved with indigenous customs. The separation of generations has resulted in a loss of cultural continuity and discipline in some communities.

This cultural transformation is exacerbated by the advent of digital communication and social media. Nwosu and Chijioke (2021) contend that online platforms are highly instrumental in influencing values among youths in the South East. Social media can serve as a tool to access information from across the world and to come across western ideals, yet they can also lead to high expression of individual self and a clash between the norms of the west and indigenous ideas. For instance, the use of social media, and the idealization of material goods, the freedom of sexuality and individualism has negatively affected the values of collectivism and exhibiting modesty and respect for elders. However, social media can also be a deft ally for positive uses, such as streaming cultural festivals from social media and using social media to spread messages on the importance of the Igbo language and culture to the Igbo-raised young people and the diaspora, as noted by Ezeani and Nwosu (2021). This double-action is an invitation to the people to think that technology does not eradicate culture; it simply changes how it was practiced and passed on. The other major determinant affecting culture in the South East is education. In addition to broadening the intellectual sphere, western education has also brought in new belief systems and worldviews that question the traditional norms. According to Okafor (2022), formal education has redefined success; values such as acceptance from a group/community, integrity, and monetary gains are now emphasized over communal contribution, acts of good persons, and learning. This transformation has transformed the dreams of young people and how people are valued in society. Onwu (2023) warns however, that even though education is a challenge to cultural revival, it should be seen as a tool for cultural renewal. Traditional knowledge, proverb and moral principles could be infused into school programs to help mainstream education meet the diverse needs and interests of children while addressing the difference between traditional values and the realities of the present. Further still, the durability of the cultural festivals in South east Nigeria highlights the

adaptability of the traditional values in modern day and age. The festivals like New Yam (Iri ji), Ofala, and Aju festival still remains as effective cohesive cultural activities that bolster the sense of community along with morality lessons. The festivals not only entertain the people, they are also reflections of values like appreciation of mother earth and ancestors, unity, and harmony of the people in their social life. As these celebrations continue, they illustrate how the Igbo communities are striving to uphold their cultural heritage amidst a changing world, indicating the enduring nature and significance of these practices (Iheanacho, 2020). Many families also head back home every year for similar events, as a way to remain connected to their cultural heritage, even in city settings. Last, however, the strength of Igbo cultural values in the South East imply that a negotiation between tradition and modernity takes place at the local level. The concepts of modernity and heritage are being negotiated at a constant pace in communities as they constantly redefine the modern and, at the same time, reaffirm their own heritage and traditions. This illustrates the collectivist nature and tolerance of the Igbo culture. According to Chukwu and Eboh (2023), successful adaptation of cultural values to global influences hinges on the community's capacity to maintain its moral values. Thus the challenge to present and future generations is not simply to conserve culture as a relic from the past, but to experience it as an active expression of common identity, values and social bonds. South East Nigeria's communal, respectful, hardworking, hospitable and moral life is still part of the region's culture: this can be assessed from everyday experiences where old traditional values are reproduced. With all these stresses from modernization, migration and technology, their strength and flexibility prove the robustness of their worldview. Southeastern Nigeria is thus a prime example of cultural resilience in Africa, in part because it has successfully coped with shifting realities while retaining cultural identity. A knowledge of these values and their changes offers much foundations to the cultural trends and

transformations in the study area, Enugu state in particular, which will be looked into in the next one.

2.1.4 Overview of Cultural Trends of Culture in Enugu State

Enugu, in the South East of Nigeria, is an Igbo Cultural bastion. The state embodies the continuity and change of igbo culture in today's society generally known for its traditions, communal life and respect for the elderly. Enugu has experienced significant changes in its socio-economic and cultural contexts over the decades as the result of globalization, migration, education and urbanisation. These forces are not only creating new cultural patterns, but also changing traditional culture patterns. As a commercial, academic and administrative center in the southeastern region of Nigeria, Okafor and Nnaji (2022) say that Enugu has emerged as a cultural mosaic of traditional values and customs from the rural areas and modern life styles among the urban elites, leading to a situation of cultural enrichment and value tension.

Enugu has long been associated with a series of cultural traits, that include community solidarity, respect of authority, industriousness and spirituality. The family continues to be the core of social interaction and relationships are built through kinship. Cultural principles such as Igwebuike (unity is strength) and Onye aghala nwanne ya (no one should leave his brother behind) prevail as guiding principles to interpersonal relationships even in the traditional societies of Obe, Nsukka and Awgu. Iheanacho (2020) says that these are important aspect of values that induces empathy, cooperation and social accountability. But in today's world, with its inherent process of modernization and urban migration, many of the relationships common to the old days have weakened; and, in urban areas like Enugu metropolis, the nuclear family structure has taken the place of an extended kinship network. Studies on the cultural trends in Enugu State revealed the urbanization of traditional

practices with one of the most conspicuous trends being that of tradition's urbanization. The process of urbanization has encouraged and brought together rural traditions with contemporary lifestyle. Despite the continuity of some of these traditional activities in Enugu communities like initiation ceremonies, title taking (ozo) and community festivals, there has been a gradual alteration for them to suit today's realities in the cities by Eze and Okonkwo (2021). In some cases, a marriage traditionally may have been a multi-day collective event, but is now a more abbreviated event that's less public. Likewise, traditional dresses, which were used for festivals and rituals a few years back are becoming a fashion symbols of identity among the youth particularly during cultural days and in the context of weddings. This process illustrates the process of cultural adaptation in which indigenous values are reinterpreted to meet modern expectations. Another cultural trend in Enugu State is the religious change. Christianity, especially Pentecostalism, has had significant impact on local cultural expression. For religion had been a medium for maintaining traditional values from the ancestors while in the modern days, some religious acts have superseded the traditional values and beliefs (Nwankwo and Obi 2022). For example, belief in the ancestors and shrines have become virtually extinct for most of the urban communities, now replaced by church rites centered worship of God, which constitute a redefined morality and spirituality. But with many families, it would be seen that certain elements of traditional rituals are still carried out in private or during the annual festivals. It is a form of “old” and “new” religious dualism, an ongoing negotiation of people that are changing both their faith practices and the maintenance of their cultural identity. There is also a new trend with respect to the attitude towards the aged and authority. In the pre-1996 days, respect for elders and deference to authority was an unchallengeable value in Enugu communities. Mediators, advisers and custodians of customs, elders. But Uche and Obi (2020) note that with the process of urbanization and economic

modernization these roles have been transformed. Younger people are now achieving social recognition by acquiring knowledge, success in work and finances, not experience and age. This has eroded small bit by bit the prestige of elders, resulting in value conflict from one generation to the next. Okoroafor (2023) further adds that many of the young also demonstrate verbal respect, but at the same time they have resorted to questioning the executive and decision making platforms of traditional authorities, instead opting for democratic or merit platforms. On migration also, cultural values and social organization in Enugu State have been changed. The segregation of the youths from the rural areas of Obe, Udi and Nsukka to Enugu city and other places has brought about cultural diffusion and cultural hybridization. Ikechukwu and Nnamani (2023) point out that migrants upon return bear fresh mannerisms, languages, and clothing styles which intermingle local and global culture. Thus, the interaction produces a hybrid culture with cosmopolitanism: a blend of modern thinking with traditional culture. Migration has also brought about cultural dislocations, however, where many youths are brought up without tradition or culture from their ancestral lands. In turn to this, the elders in rural areas often complain about the younger generation of people not valuing their fathers' customs, indicating a generational gap in the transmission of culture. The significance of mass media and education in creating modern patterns of culture is beyond doubt. Because of global media and education, Nwosu and Chijioke (2021) state that people's boundaries have been expanded and traditional authority sets have been diminished. Western norms of gender equality, individuality and freedom of expression, for example, have brought a challenge to the collective decision making and the norms and values of patriarchy in a lot of areas of Enugu. Women continue to break through the boundaries of the past in their roles in the community, especially in politics, commerce, and religion. This change is an improvement in the quest for equality, but also makes for tensions between traditionalists and reformists on how

to maintain cultural authenticity. Technology, especially social media has been instrumental in shaping cultural transformation among the youth. However, social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook have revolutionized the ways young people express their identities, interact socially, and interact with traditional culture. Many of the young people of today in Enugu are involved in culture digitally where they are uploading videos of traditional dances, traditional wear patterns and teaching local languages online (Ezeani & Nwosu 2021). Although it preserves the cultural heritage in a digital format, this digital expression commodifies culture by turning cultural practices into aesthetic spectacles instead of ethical traditions. However, on-line interaction has helped to make culture more easily available and appealing to younger people who may have never felt strongly about it otherwise.

Among other symbols of identity and continuity one that is most visible is the cultural festivals, which is strong in Enugu State. The New Yam Festival (Iri ji), the Odo masquerade, the Mmanwu festival, and the Ofala festival and other events remain to connect people and reaffirm the notion of community's common heritage. While modern religious concepts and urbanization have certainly influenced these festivals, Chukwu and Eboh (2023) suggest that this is not the end of them so much as a testimony to their significance in creating a sense of social cohesion, spiritual renewal and historical memory that goes beyond their merely entertaining surface. In remote communities, such celebrations also strengthen ties and relationships amongst kinship groups and provide opportunities for the transmission of ethical values to younger people in the community in places like Obe. What's interesting is that these festivals are now beginning to be institutionalized locally, as a tourist offering, and are being co-ordinated between community and economy. This is a reflection of the culture which is increasingly viewed as a marker of identity and resource for development. One aspect of the changes to Enugu's culture that is notable is the

emergence of new forms of family organization and norms. along with the increasing town life cost, introduction of global lifestyle has created nuclear family structure among many young Nuclear Families are opting personal space in the preference of independence over extended family responsibilities. As mentioned by Okafor and Nnaji (2022), this move improves efficiency and privacy, but it also diminishes inter-generational interaction and therefore the systems of care for the elderly that were once provided by the younger generation. With the disappearance of communal child rearing systems and a greater focus on personal success, communities have come to a new understanding of social responsibility. As a result, the elderly are the ones who are marginalised, and especially in the city, the elderly, who were once the pillars in decision making and moral guidance, are gone. It can be concluded in conclusion that Enugu State cultural trends display a fine balance between maintenance and changes. Rural life is still characterized with traditional values of respect, communalism, spirituality, with urbanisation, education and globalisation influencing norms and relationship. Onwu (2023) succinctly paints the picture of a dynamic confluence as cultural perspectives of the old and new overlapping, interacting, and harmonizing in Enugu. The study is important because it helps to appreciate the various cultural trends that influence social stratification, especially the status and treatment of the aged in marginalized communities like Obe, Nkanu West LGA of Enugu communities. Enugu State also shares remarkable characteristics, in that culture and economic roles are gradually redefining gender roles and family responsibilities. The traditional role of the Igbo is that men have the primary role to provide and protect and women provided for the home and took part in subsistence farming. Socio-economic realities have however, overturned this gender division of labour in recent times. Ezeaku and Mbah (2023) note that due to the improvement in education, female entrepreneurship and incorporation into formal sector jobs, women's roles have extended beyond

the sphere of the domestic economy. Now women in Enugu are in leadership of businesses, community associations and in local governance systems. This development is a step towards the resolution of gender disparities, but it also exposes the gender-biased nature of old socio-political order. While some older citizens feel that the transition is a violation of traditional decorum, younger people see it as a move towards acceptance and Justice. Additionally, the impact of economic globalization is further fostering interaction between local and global culture in Enugu State. In an increasingly globalised context faced by trade, technology and transnational media, new value systems and new consumption habits and lifestyles are being fostered which are influencing traditional value systems. Consumerism and migration globally have influenced middle class families in many aspects from fashion, to the food they eat to how they communicate, noted Ani and Chidiebere (2022). This cross-oversing of cultures is enriching, but it can at the same time marginalise indigenous crafts, languages and social norms. However, adaptive creativity is present in some communities, such as the area around Mexico City, where the purpose of local traditional art forms, music, and food has shifted to create new, modern, popular, and internationally marketable versions. Highlife fusion, for instance, or the use of social media to digitally distribute Igbo traditional wear as a means to boost cultural revival, are examples of how globalization can be used as a means to cultural revival, rather than its erosion. There is also an increased level of significance about policy and cultural institutions in terms of heritage preservation. Heritage preservation is now key in local government and cultural organization, such as the Enugu State Council for Arts and Culture, giving huge emphasis to heritage documentation, festivals, and cultural education in schools. Community programmes with a focus on traditional dances, storytelling and indigenous knowledge have made a comeback as instruments for getting the young people involved, reports Eboh and Ude (2021). Furthermore, in Enugu, several tertiary

institutions are introducing the teaching of cultural studies curriculum, aimed at the relevance of academic learning with indigenous wisdom. Examples of such initiatives are to counteract the fading of natural moral training which took place through family and community interaction. Last but not least, scholars and policy makers in Enugu State have come to pay greater attention towards the issue of cultural sustainability. To maintain cultural identity in the 21st century, cultural values must be combined with the current systems of government, education and economy (Onah, 2024). Survival of Enugu's cultural heritage requires not only a separation from global change but an integration into new social and institutional structures. This is a technique for adaptation so that culture is still relevant, dynamic and resilient in today's society. Today, however, cultural changes in Enugu State show observable transformations but at the same time also show that there is considerable continuity in the culture which is a testimony of the capacity of the Igbo to reinvent their culture in changing times.

2.1.5 Associated Cultural values with the society's aged and elderly.

Elderly people have had a wealth of respect, wisdom and authority in traditional African societies, especially the Igbo people of Nigeria's southeast. They were firmly based in cultural norms of respect for age, interdependence of community, and the need to pass on moral and spiritual knowledge. The elderly were regarded as the keepers of the tradition: people who lived the roots of the family and would dictate the customs and solve disputes, as well as instruct the younger generations in moral and social behaviour. Nwafor and Eze (2021) claimed this could not be simply an age difference, but was an age symbol of accumulated experience, social responsibility and moral authority. The old, typically in rural areas such as Obe in Nkanu West, Enugu State, used to wield significant influence in Enugu State decision making, lineage matters and conflict resolution. The value of communalism was the centrepiece of the respect shown the elderly, a value that

formed the basis of the Igbo social organization. Charmaine F. Cook, in her Ph.D. dissertation on the Igbo concept of the family, explained that the concept of the family in the Igbo worldview is a household in which the members view themselves as relatives. In this context, elders were regarded as people who gave moral guidance to the community people with life experience who had moral clarity. According to Okolie and Anugwom (2020), the traditional leadership of the elderly in the southeast Nigeria was through their association with the *ndi ichie* (council of elders) which was the supreme deliberative forum in many autonomous communities. The elderly also received sacred responsibilities, including rituals, the care of the ancestor's grave and the blessing of future generations, which represent their role in the realms of the living and the afterlife. The moral principle of respect for elders (*igba nkwanye ùgwù*) is one of the most significant values that still hold true in the Igbo culture. It is evident in their facial expressions, tone of voice, and their conduct, from using polite greetings to bowing in the presence of others. This practice is not merely polite, but also embodies a moral outlook that emphasizes wisdom, patience, and experience (Ezeaku, 2023). Young people in pre-colonial and early post-colonial Enugu communities respected elders for their wisdom, and turned to them for guidance on various issues like marriage and land disputes. Its absence, then, is not only social change, but a deterioration in its moral core that bound communities together. Another crucial cultural dimension related to the aged is reciprocity and care which means that what is done for the younger generations must be done for the older as well. The moral duty of caring for parent(s) and elderly relatives is entrenched in Igbo value *ìhụnanya* (love) and *nmekorịta mmadụ na ibe ya* (human relationship). According to Obioha and Nnam (2022), intergenerational support system was an old tradition used to ensure that the aged had social and economic security. Older members of the family were expected to take care of their younger family members by taking care of their needs such as nourishment,

shelter, and company. It was deemed immoral and taboo not to fulfill this responsibility. In rural Enugu, such expectations were reinforced by the communal and settlement pattern which allowed for the sharing of responsibilities for old people, thus, neighbours and extended kin were involved in nursing the old. This cultural connection of wisdom and old age is also evident in words and sayings. The presence of elders is so important that such statements as *onye okenye adighi n'ulo* (“when there is no elder in the home, the young slaughter the goat wrongly”) highlight their importance. According to Chukwu and Ogu (2020), such linguistic expressions are forms of moral education which educates the youths on the importance of seeking advice from the elders before taking important decisions. This establishes culture as a moral compass that connects generations in a sense of common values and respect for hierarchy.

But with today's modern development, these traditional values have been on the decline. The traditional support mechanisms that have been in place to care for the elderly have been weakened by urbanization, modernization, and alteration of family structures. With the increasing number of young people moving inwards to learn and earn jobs, the rural population is getting smaller and smaller to take care of their old parents. Okafor and Edeh (2021) discovered that the extended family structure has been undermined and caused a rise in sentiments of loneliness, neglect, and poverty among the elderly in the Southeast region of Nigeria. Traditional kinship networks were once a major force in maintaining harmony over generations in communities such as Obe, but modernization has brought with it new individualistic values and an emphasis on self-reliance before communalism. Nevertheless, there are some cultural practices that continue to show the importance of elders in Enugu State. Community festivals like the New Yam Festival (*Iri Ji*) and *Ofala* continue to afford opportunities for the elders to be publicly recognized. They generally sit in the front rows of the ceremonies, receive symbols and are asked to bless the community. In

addition to the cultural role of these events as preservation mechanisms, an expression of gratitude and social order, Avinara A. Ani, Obinna M. & Osagwu CE (2022) points out that they are manifestation of the moral connection of generations. Also, age grading systems (otu ogbo) remain present in some communities as mechanisms for social protection—whereby the elderly members of the community are supported by the contributions of their age mates. In Enugu culture, the elderly is also prominent because of their symbolic connection with spirituality. Elders are thought to be mediators between the living and the ancestor and have the power to invoke blessing or cursing depending on one's actions. This spiritual power gives them a power beyond their bodies. This is how younger generations maintain their moral sense as Ude and Okorie (2023) suggest that they take elders not only as family but as spiritual guardians by means of their words that also have ancestral power. Finally, cultural values pertaining to the elderly and the aged, such as respect, reciprocity, wisdom and spiritual authority, provide the foundations of traditional social order in Enugu State. In times gone by, these values have placed the elderly in a position of honor and security in society. But, socio-economic change, migration to cities and westernization have brought along new challenges that pose a threat to these traditions. Thus, the challenge of today is to harmonize the timeless moral wisdom of the Igbo cultural values with the current social life in order to keep the old generation in the process of social development and cultural preservation.

Digital media exposure and western ideals of youthfulness have more influenced the perception of the elderly in recent years, influencing social identity and value systems. In this age of youths consuming on a daily basis age-fetishizing content glorifying independence, productivity and physical vigour, the value of age and wisdom has waned. As referenced by Ijeoma and Uzochukwu (2022), popular culture through television and social media is ubiquitous in today's world and especially represents a modern lifestyle that may depict the elderly life as a cause for failure and

ignominy. This consequently has led to a deterioration of inter-generational communication and younger generations sometimes perceive the senior citizens as not having relevance in their cultural or economic life. Without efforts to bridge this generational divide, the flow of indigenous knowledge and values may cease to thrive, jeopardizing the cultural heritage and sustainable practice of Igbo society.

Furthermore, the absence of traditional family care structures has clearly shown that other institutional forms of elderly care, including private nursing homes and faith-based care centres, have increased. These facilities are not only a source of security and protection for elderly people who are abandoned or neglected; they are also a sign of the lack of intergenerational solidarity. According to Mbah and Okeke, this change was a paradigm shift in values from collective responsibility to individual autonomy, opposite of the Igbo collective paradigm of mutual dependence. Elderly persons in Obe community have been involved in decisions in the past, but now they feel left out and neglected, reflecting the cultural price of modernisation. A further aspect of the change is a diminishing focus on the issue of elderly care in the policy arena, further contributing to the cultural marginalization. The problem is that although the National Policy on Ageing (2021) acknowledges the importance of social inclusion of the elderly, implementation has been slow especially in the rural areas of the country. If traditionalism which once ensured respect and protection of the elderly is allowed to continue to break down, Eze & Nwodo (2024) assert that there will be no policy reinforcement to restore the situation. In Obe and similar communities, institutional support tends to have a limited application, and the support and goodwill of families and communities carry a much higher weight. Lack of formal pension and health-care systems also limits the social relevance of rural elders and takes away their economic security. Lastly, there is

increasing scholarly agreement that a combination of traditional values and contemporary social institutions is needed if indigenous values in relation to the elderly are to be revitalized. Obi and Anya (2022) suggest that community-based elder mentorship programmes involving elders in civic education, local mediation and cultural preservation programs could be established. The elderly can be visible and relevant in today's society, by participating in the activities of youth development, cultural teaching in schools. These are all philosophies that begin with Ubuntu, and which uphold the interconnectedness of human beings “I am because we are” and are African inspired. The rejuvenation of these cultural values not only puts dignity in the hands of the aged but also boosts inter-generational relationships and this has been one of the key elements which are vital to sustainable community development in Enugu State.

2.1.6 Dynamics influencing the Changes in Cultural values in Enugu State

Culture, while rooted in tradition, is not fixed and is dynamic and constantly shaped by social, economic and political influences. The flow of modernization, globalization, education, religion, migration and media in Enugu State constitute a complex interplay in the transformation of cultural values. These dynamics have impacted on social relationships, diversified gender and generational roles and transformed the position of the elderly in particular. Traditional values, which once held individuals to account for their own behavior and their relationships within the community, including respect for elders, are now under challenge due to modern individualism, urbanization and the desire for survival economically, Okorie and Ude (2021) state.

Modernization is one of the major factors affecting the change in Enugu State's cultural values as it has transformed both the physical space and social space. Urbanization and the development of infrastructure have led to communities which were previously linked to one another through

kinship relations coming together in larger economies. According to Nnamani and Eze (2022), modernization brings in new value orientations, which focus on efficiency, innovation, and material success without the concept of kinship loyalty and communal welfare. This has led to the degradation of extended family ties, especially in towns such as Enugu metropolis and Nsukka, where people have been seeking self-fulfillment and career advancement. As a result, community responsibilities, especially caring for the elderly have been shifting and replaced by individual lifestyles, where interdependence is not a priority. Education also has been an important factor in shaping value orientations and social expectation, which is equally significant. Formal education, a part of colonial and post-colonial reforms, remains to have a dual effect in fostering attitudes to tradition. According to Anigbo and Okafor (2023), education opens up the minds of students and makes them innovative, but it also endows them with western values that are conflicting with their indigenous values. Young educated people in Enugu are challenging traditional hierarchies and rituals, which are seen as outdated and limiting. While this has occurred, education has also enabled the marginalized groups, particularly women, to question gendered assumptions, which in the past limited women to domestic spaces. But it has created tensions between generations, whereby the old see a lack of respect and obedience in the young. The higher education setup in Enugu (University of Nigeria, Nsukka) has also added to these tensions, with the spread of global ideologies into local consciousness. Religion, especially Christianity, has also played a significant part in changing the values of the culture. The pre-Christian Igbo beliefs placed a greater emphasis on ancestor worship, on communal rituals and on personal responsibility to the deities. With the increasing rise in Pentecostal and evangelical churches, however, many of these native traditions have been redefined or practically disregarded. Okafor and Nwodo argue that Christianity has succeeded in the goal of ethical reform and social cohesion but has also de-legitimized some

elements of the Igbo spirituality, such as the mediation of elders in rituals. Some consider these practices (“pagan,” in Obe) to be out of fashion. This has undermined the spiritual authority that was previously enjoyed by elders and has contributed to the failure to transmit morals across the generations. However, there is also some loss and adaptation in the religious institutions which are also becoming new social hubs of solidarity, where the care and respect for elderly is promoted in a religious setting. Another major force driving change in culture is globalization. Global markets, migration, and the impact of digital technology have opened up the residents of Enugu to transnational values, lifestyles and ideologies. Chinonso and Uche (2022) observe that the spread of global consumer culture, as well as the rapid rise of social media, has brought about a transformation in collective identity to individual expression. In the Urban centres of Enugu, western clothes, music and words are now the culture of the youths and the native ways are treated as symbols of backwardness among the rural people. This cultural contact has caused the loss of other indigenous traditions like communal labour (igba oso), respect ritual (igba nkwanje ùgwù) and traditional apprenticeship systems. But, globalization can be equally a catalyst for the revival of local culture, with many young people in Enugu leveraging digital platforms to share their local art and music, and promote the use of the Igbo language. This indicates that while globalization disrupts, it can also serve as a medium for cultural resilience.

The socio-cultural structure in Enugu State has been reconfigured by migration and urbanization. As a consequence of the exodus of young people from villages to urban centers or overseas to gain education and employment opportunities, villages have become depopulated and elderly have become isolated. However, according to Edeh and Onah (2023), migration situations have seen kinship support systems becoming weaker and the relationship dynamics of caring for the old people are also being affected, especially for the elderly people in rural areas of Enugu not

receiving the support they require from their relatives. In addition, remittances are reshaping the social status of wealth—now more than age or wisdom, they are the more important factor in many communities. The transition from traditional authority to economic power is a good example of how cultural values change in response to newer cultural hierarchies that are created by globalization and migration. A second dynamic that affects cultural change in Enugu is the growing importance of the mass media and technology in this process. Today, the people of Enugu access global stories on television, mobile phones and the internet that reframe morality, gender and success. For Iloh and Nwankwo (2022), social media is a new cultural space in which norms are challenged, debated and reshaped. Younger generations, for example, are subjected to a world of human rights and gender equality, and of self-determination that sometimes contradicts conventional, hierarchical relationships. Meanwhile the weakening of an oral culture of storytelling and people meeting together stalls opportunities for intergenerational moral teaching and further alienates the youth from the elders. The processes of economic transformation have also been a major influence in moving cultural values. As agriculture lessened in importance and more informal trading and civil service jobs emerged, the life of the community focused more on individual income generation than on collective work. As noted by Eze and Ubah (2024) in many areas of Enugu, economic values of cooperation, co-kinfness and the production based on such values has been lost in favor of competitive survivalism. At practical level, this economic change raises questions about social cohesion as people are spending more time on their own job prospects than in a communal or family commitment. These bonds weaken the way younger people view older people, and many of them see the elderly as needing other people's care, not in their own right. To conclude, the interaction of all these overlapping factors, namely modernization, education, religion, globalization, migration and economic change, redefining moral values,

family structure and inter-generational relations in Enugu State, is the product of the cultural transformation. Onwuka (2023) notes that these changes have enabled innovation and social mobility, but they have also affected the values of society including caring, cooperation and respect for age. Traditional and modern cultures, however, are not only mutually dependent, but also in a constant process of negotiation, so one cannot speak of cultural decline in Enugu without seeing it as an adaptation. The real questions are how to weave this dynamic change into practices that would enable the maintenance of the moral underpinnings of Igbo values and culture, and how to do so while promoting social advancement and inclusiveness. In addition to modernization and globalization, the political governance and institutional neglect have also reduced cultural values in Enugu State. The erosion of the social institutions of local government, like community councils and lineage chiefs, has been exacerbated by the introduction of partisan politics into the local level. Okoye and Eze (2022) describe traditional systems of consultation and respect as frequently being ignored by political actors when allocating resources and/or carrying out community projects. This politicisation of authority weakens the role of the elders and the moral fabric that formerly held communities accountable to cultural norms of conduct. This has led to the legitimisation of leadership being more and more based on wealth and political party than on wisdom and integrity. When elders are removed from decision making their social status is lowered and the continuity of decision making and cultural transmission is weakened as is trust within the community.

Meanwhile, cultural life has been modified in Enugu through environmental and infrastructural changes. The creation of roads, urban development, and commercial areas have physically transformed traditional community layouts which supported communal living. Communal interactions like storytelling in the evening, shared mealtimes and neighbourhood rituals are uncommon as families shift to smaller housing units based on the nuclear family structure, as

mentioned by Umeh and Okafor (2023). They were once a form of traditional culture in everyday life that passed on values like humility, tolerance, and respect for the elderly. Spatial communities have thus mirrored the moral fragmentation of society. The intergenerational gap is even stronger in rural communities such as Obe in Nkanu West, with fewer people living on the farms, and a reduction in communal spiritedness that were a part of the town's cultural identity due to the youth migration, lack of infrastructure and changed value orientations to ones shaped by global capitalism and digital media. According to Ibe and Nwachukwu (2024), the youth in Enugu are now viewing social success in terms of acquiring material, being seen on social media platforms and career success done without consideration of moral uprightness or contribution to the community. This is a change in the value system which have been given respect for the old or aged, people who are not seen as being able to accommodate the modern economic world. The old, on the other hand, complain about the absence of “character training” (omume oma), which was the moral core of the upbringing in their time. This may lead to conflict within the family, as well as to the weakening of intergenerational mentorship arrangements, since younger family members may not accord respect to the experiential wisdom that their elders possess. One important factor in cultural change in Enugu State is the effect of neglect on the cultural heritage and inadequacy of cultural preservation programmes. Culture has been the key determinant to social development as a policy issue in Nigeria, even though it was declared in the 2021 National Cultural Policy, yet, very minimal implementation has been recorded at the state level. However, due to insufficient funding for cultural education, museums, and heritage festivals, opportunities for collective remembrance and the preservation and transfer of indigenous knowledge have been limited, as noted by Nwosu and Ugwu (2023). Things that used to be part of the school curriculum, but were not of a culture, are no longer given as much importance as learning science and

vocational skills. This policy void paves the way for the Western cultural products to have a strong influence on the education of the youth and thus speed up cultural erosion. Structured programmes for the education of folklore, traditional crafts and local etiquette are not found in Obe and other rural areas, leaving an insufficient gap in moral education that can be filled by formal education or social media. Ultimately, the cumulative impact of these dynamics political disruption, urbanization, globalization, and policy neglect has not simply erased Enugu's cultural values but reconfigured them into new forms of expression. As Agu and Nnamdi (2024) emphasize, the people of Enugu continue to negotiate their identity between heritage and modernity, blending traditional rituals with contemporary celebrations, and adopting hybrid moral frameworks that reflect both local and global influences. What emerges is not the death of culture, but its redefinition a living, adaptive system responding to shifting realities. The challenge, therefore, lies in fostering cultural education and governance that preserve the moral essence of Igbo identity while embracing inevitable social evolution.

2.1.7 Relationship Between Poor Cultural Values and the Status of the Elderly in Enugu State

A good indication of the relationship between the deterioration in cultural values and the low esteemed of the elderly in Enugu State is the social transformation that has taken place in Igbo communities. In the past, the conduct of the elderly toward the younger members of society had been a moral and social rule in southeastern Nigeria. But with the advent of modernization, globalization and individualism, the importance of the senior citizen in the social life has been depleted. Based on the above, Nnamani and Eze (2022) opine that cultural development has impacted the attitude of the elderly from that of revered custodians of wisdom to that of dependents and people requiring acknowledgement in the current materialistic society. Elders had several roles

as bestowed decision makers, moral leaders and spiritual leaders in pre-modern Enugu communities. They were the leaders of local councils, arbitrators, and transmitters of values from generation to generation. Their voice was sought in all things of importance because it was thought that wisdom lay in age and experience. These roles were not mere symbolic, rather they are functional which kept the social stability of families and villages as argued by Obioha and Nnam (2022). However, as the Western education system, urbanization, and wage work was introduced, they changed their value system which supported these roles. The respect accorded to elders, a tradition embedded in the public moral life, has gradually grown to depend more on contributions to the material economy—such as production or consumption—as than on the power of the individual's moral legacy. An important feature of this change in value is the lack of social relevance of the elderly in Enugu State. In many households, the older generation has ceded control to younger, economically active people with greater access to and participation in new and modern means of communication and governance. Technological literacy, financial autonomy, and political affiliations now constitute family influence and influence in the family (Okafor and Ude 2023). This has led to many aged people, particularly from rural communities such as Obe, not being consulted in household and community decisions. This exclusion undermines their sense of purpose and self-worth, which can cause psychological problems like loneliness, anxiety and depression. The loss of intergenerational communication has in turn exacerbated a divide between elders and young people, thereby affecting the social equilibrium and respect that was historically established through inter-generational participation. The diminishing intergenerational communication has thus strengthened a disconnect between the elders and youth, impacting on the social harmony and respect which was previously maintained through inter-generational engagement. This relationship can be demonstrated in a more subtle way by the diminishing of

moral reciprocity. The moral code of the Igbos is Eke iugwu (love and respect) that younger generation is expected to take care of their elders as a reward for their sacrifices. But it has been weakened by an erosion of cultural values, such as an increasing individualism, moral apathy, and a diminished sensibility for community. Eze and Okoye (2021) observed that young people now see that looking after the elderly is more a financial obligation, than a moral responsibility. This moral decay can be seen in the increasing abandonment of the elderly, some of whom are left unprovided for or alone. Some elders in Obe say that they are left behind as their children move to urban areas to find work. If there is not a strong network of communities to do this, the elderly become socially invisible and live on the margins of society. The loss of cultural values combined with this has also reduced the economic security of older people. In an old Igbo society, older people were provided for in the family farms, community support and social reciprocity. These cultural supports provided a way for old age to be tied to a sense of dignity and not dependency. The shift to cash economy however has also resulted in a change in the collective form of work to individual enterprise, thus reducing the economic security of elderly individuals. Decreasing communal farming activity and the leaving of the youths behind have left the elders without the necessary labour support in rural Enugu, observed Mbah & Okeke (2023). Their means of subsistence are based almost exclusively on the generosity of the family, and they are frequently made to feel foolish or disregarded and treated with disrespect. Hence it can be stated that the defunct cultural values (low value of kinship) have directly resulted in material deprivation. Moreover, there is decreasing emphasis on moral instruction and guidance, which has helped to create inter-generational disconnection. Elders would be the moral teachers of society, who would teach from proverbs, stories and oral traditions, instilling discipline and harmony into society. Nowadays these practices are being replaced by individual entertainment and the education of the

West with emphasis on academic knowledge and not ethical training. Ijeoma and Uzochukwu (2022) state that young people have lost the traditional mentorship which provides moral counsel in society making elders irrelevant as sources of wisdom. Respect is therefore being replaced by disrespect, impatience by patience and disregard for tradition by disregard. This has a negative effect on social cohesion, as well as the importance of the elderly as transmitters of cultural knowledge. The erosion of respect also takes the form of public and institutional neglect about the welfare of older people. Elders once accorded honorary status in the festivals and community ceremonies of many communities of Enugu now are being channeled into the margins or neglected. Elderly, too, have received little care from public institutions in upholding the traditional reverence for the elderly. Eze and Nwodo (2024) note that there are no state-level social protection programmes for older people, thus they are left vulnerable to fragile economic conditions of family systems. But the Western cultural norm for older adults' care and the lack of institutional support have proven not strong enough to meet the demands of modernity. In this neglect there is not only an economic failure, but a moral failure, a failure from the communal ethos that was so once again characteristic of the Igbo way of life. Gender also has a substantial impact on the impact of the erosion of cultural values on the elderly. There are also differential vulnerabilities, such as for instance elderly women, who experience it more because of patriarchal norms and inheritance practices. According to Chidimma and Ede (2023), widows in the rural communities of Enugu may be socialized out and deprived of property without any assistance from family and community institutions. Old norms that once provided collective security for widows have eroded due to materialism and alterations in kinship practices. The traditional norms that before used to guarantee collective security for widows have been eroded with the influence of materialism and variations in kinship practices. This male/female phenomenon in elder marginalisation is an indicator of the

intersections between the poor cultural value and the systemic inequalities that exacerbate social insecurity of the elderly. Interestingly, the devaluation of traditional respect has not completely undermined community's attempts to maintain intergenerational solidarity. A few community and faith-based groups in Enugu have started to take steps to reengage elders with the community. Today, Catholic parishes and community-based organizations, for example, sponsor “Senior Citizens' Days” to celebrate and value the wisdom of the elderly and to encourage the youth to learn from elders. According to A. and Obinna (2022), such attempts are cultural adaptation or re-contextualization of the traditional respect in the current social context. But these programs are not widespread and are not coordinated across the state and so have limited impact. In general, the degradation of the cultural value of Enugu state has significantly affected the social, moral and economic status of the elderly. The *onye okenye bu ndu obodo* traditional value or principle has been superseded by one which values the life according to material value instead of moral value. This disintegration of the intergenerational interchange has created a vicious circle of neglect – elderly people feel neither economically secure nor socially recognised. The challenge to turn things around is by no means a call to return to the past, but rather a call for the reinvention of cultural ethics focusing on empathy, solidarity and respect through generations (Onah, 2024). If the institutions, families and communities are able to reconnect to the moral bases on which they were built, then the dignity of the aged and his or her society equally, depends on it. Another aspect of the relationship between a decline in cultural values and the decay of the older people's conditions is the disintegration of the institutions which formerly took care of the welfare of elders. Prior to modern systems of governance, there were organized mechanisms of support for the old, including *umunna* (extended lineage), age grades and town unions. All of these institutions arranged visits to elders, gave help when they were ill or they lost a loved one and made sure that

no elder would live in isolation. Nwosu and Ugwu (2023) describe the communal structures as a means of providing social welfare, a function that was not provided by the formal state. But the new system of local government and modern bureaucracy has taken the place of these traditional methods, diminishing their power and usefulness over time. The consequence is that aged people who relied on these networks are now left without any social security or any social safety net particularly in the rural communities of Enugu, where the state has not been particularly active. Intergenerational empathy has also been affected indirectly by the teaching system and parenting practices in modern day Enugu. Growing up at home, the lessons were constituted by *ihunanya* (love), *nso ala* (moral purity) and *ugwu* (respect) that maintained the social hierarchy among youth and elders. However, Agu and Nnamdi (2024) contend that in the new focus on Western education and digital literacy, moral education has been marginalized from socialization. Lately, youth are being taught technical skills but, they are deprived of ethical foundation that previously helped to build the life of the community. As a result they have a business relationship-based view of age rather than a moral view and provide support only if it is for a business or social reason. This seemingly minor shift in orientation demonstrates what happens when poor cultural transmission continues: Disconnect generations and marginalize the elderly.

Furthermore, the inadequate governmental policy towards the elderly has continued to reduce the quality of life of the elderly in Enugu. Despite the introduction of a National Senior Citizens Centre framework in Nigeria in 2021, Onwuka and Eze (2024) show that most states in the southeastern region of Nigeria, including Enugu state, have not put any definite measures in place to operationalize the framework. When not addressed through the institutions of care, cultural neglect is even more hurtful—with little help from the economy, family groups foot the bill for caring for the elderly. This policy gap exacerbates a societal mindset toward aging as a personal matter and

not a community one. It also provides for a continued erosion of cultural respect for elders, as the state does not demonstrate or ensure elders are treated well with policy or public initiatives. In spite of all of this, there is a call for cultural reawakening and policy integration to re-imagine the dignity of the elderly. Community members, for example, could be supported with the help of traditional cultural institutions, such as age-grade associations, in community engagement for health outreach or by engaging traditional rulers as participants in health care and care programs for the older people. Edeh and Onah (2023) suggest a hybrid approach that combines traditional cultural values with modern social policies, for instance, the incorporation of age-grade associations into community initiatives for health outreach or participation of traditional rulers in health care and care programs of the older people. This approach supports the understanding that cultural values are not "out of fashion," and therefore cannot remain as they are but must be "redone" in the context of current realities. When rejuvenated these values can again serve as a basis for communal solidarity and social protection. Consequently, cultural revival and institutional responsibility will have to be employed to reverse the precarious situation of the elderly in Enugu State, so that respect for age will no longer be a historical reality, but a moral imperative that will govern community life in the present.

2.2 Review of related theories

Theories provide strong basis for understanding phenomena. Changing cultural values and effects on the status of the elderly require theoretical explanation. Hence, the under listed theories are reviewed for this study:

Functionalism theory

Modernization theory

Social exchange theory

Cultural transmission theory

2.2.1 Functionalist Theory

Propounder

One of the main theories of sociology, the Functionalist Theory was originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by Émile Durkheim, and picked up by Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. The theory came into being in the context of explaining how societies can keep them orderly, stable and cohesive in the face of rapid social change. Durkheim is considered the founding father of sociology, and he believed that society was a unified whole, with each part operating based on the functioning of the other parts, and all parts of the society needed to work together in order to maintain the stability and functioning of the whole (Durkheim, 2021). The structural functionalist model was a theory of how society is made up of various interrelated parts or structures, including the family, religion, education, and economy that ensure a state of balance in the community (Parsons 1951). Parsons' AGIL model (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration and Latency) offered a framework for the interpretation of the functions of these subsystems in the survival of society. The family, for example, can be viewed as a channel for socialization and the passing on of values, while religion can be seen as a source of moral solidarity and education as an instigator of socialization. Others developed Functionalism further, creating the idea of manifest and latent functions — intended and unintended consequences of social actions or institutions — by Robert K. Merton (1968). While not every social structure is conducive to stability, some create dysfunctions which can cause conflict or change, Merton said. This change enabled Functionalism to become more dynamic with its emphasis on the recognition of the fact that social life involves

change and adaptation (Merton, 1968; Okonkwo & Nnaji, 2022). Functionalist perspectives persist in the sociological and anthropological study of culture, social values and inter-generational relations in contemporary scholarship. These current researchers like Iheanacho (2020) and Adewale (2022) have employed functionalist perspective to address the continuity and adaptation of cultural systems in African societies and concluded that social values and traditions themselves are mechanisms of stability despite the changes brought about by modernization and globalization.

Assumptions of the Theory

The Functionalist Theory is based on several basic assumptions, which account for the continuity and cohesion of societies over time. These assumptions form the theoretical framework with which to analyze the role of culture and values in communities like Enugu State. The functionalist theory is based on the assumption that society is an integrated system where every institution and cultural activity has a particular function, each of which needs to play an important role in the preservation of the stability of the entire system (Durkheim, 2021). Societal structures serve complementary functions which lead towards survival just as organs in the human body cooperate with each other for survival. In terms of the cultural system in Enugu, the family, religious beliefs, and community gatherings are the main mechanisms for the continuity of values, the extension of the sense of moral obligations and respect for elders, which ensures social order across generations (Onwu, 2023). Theory additionally assumes that values and norms are necessary for integration in society. Parsons (1951) states that functionalists believe that agreement on cultural values produces uniformity and predictability in society. If there was no shared belief, there would be chaos and moral confusion in social life. Therefore, values like communalism, respect the elders and moral uprightness in Enugu State are not just traditional but for the purpose of maintaining harmony and maintain collective identity (Okafor, 2022). The functionalist theory suggested that social change

is slow and gradual and not a revolution. Change is perceived as normal process to deal with new conditions and keep stability. In the case of Enugu, for example, traditional practices that are still prevalent in the city, like age-grade systems or respect rituals, may change instead of disappearing. This flexibility is a testament to culture's ability to thrive despite challenges from the outside world (Ezeaku, 2023). Furthermore, deviance and dysfunction are also predictable aspects of social life, and the theory assumes that they can be controlled. Not every behaviour or institution is suitable for the stability of the system; some create tension or inequality, according to Merton (1968). However, such disfunctions can also result in reform, innovation and rebalancing. Perceived neglect of the elderly members in Enugu may be a dysfunction of cultural transmission, but cultural programs of community revitalization or social policy changes can restore equilibrium and strengthen cultural obligations to the elderly (Mbah & Okeke, 2023). Moreover, the functionalist theory also holds that any social phenomenon is directly or indirectly associated with the survival of society. Even seemingly outmoded or ritualistic institutions can have unacknowledged functions of maintaining collective memory or collective identity. These practices of cultural festivals, ancestor worship and respecting the elderly are symbolic, but they serve to strengthen the solidarity, moral teachings and the continuity of generations, which are key to the survival of the Igbo society (Chukwu & Eboh, 2023).

Relevance of the Theory

The Functionalist Theory provides a valuable tool for the analysis and comprehension of the role and functioning of culture and social values in societies transforming. In the perspective of Enugu State the theory explains how the communalism, respect for elders, reciprocity and spirituality that are part of the traditional value of the people contributes to social cohesion and the downtrend of these values brings about moral disorientation and marginalization of elderly persons. Culture is

the "glue" in a functionalist view that helps hold people together within their communities. It offers common understandings, rules and aspirations which help to control behaviour and maintain order (Iheanacho, 2020). Modernisation in the City of Enugu introduces youthful generations with more materialistic orientations which leads to loss of shared values and eventual social strains resulting in conflicts between generations, a sense of low empathy, and loss of the respect given to the elderly (Nwankwo, 2022). This can be explained by functionalism as an exception to the social equilibrium, which needs to be re-integrated with the help of renewed moral education and community involvement. Furthermore, Functionalism sheds light on how the family and kinship network serves as the major sources of transmission of values. The family is the basic social unit in traditional Igbo society which functions as the arena where individuals are socialized into norms of the community. Nowadays the prevalence of nuclear family and urbanization has undermined the roles, and led to a "value gap" between generations. Akinyemi (2022) and Obioha & Nnam (2022) pointed out the importance of re-establishing these mechanisms through intergenerational dialogue, cultural education, and community mentorship, in order to restore harmony in society.

The theory also explains the changing role of the elderly in contemporary Enugu society. Traditionally, elders performed vital functions arbitrating disputes, preserving customs, and providing moral guidance. Within the functionalist framework, the decline in their social status represents a dysfunction that threatens the community's stability. Elders are no longer seen as indispensable, partly due to the rise of new value systems emphasizing youth, technology, and economic productivity (Ijeoma & Uzochukwu, 2022). Functionalism encourages viewing this not as an inevitable decline but as a signal for structural adjustment whereby new institutions (such as cultural organizations, schools, or policy initiatives) can assume some of the elder's socializing functions, thus maintaining equilibrium. Additionally, Functionalist theory helps interpret

religious and educational institutions as agents of cultural continuity and adaptation. In Enugu, churches, schools, and civic organizations have replaced traditional forums as centers of moral instruction and socialization. Though this transition alters the form of value transmission, the underlying function social integration persists. This demonstrates Functionalism's emphasis on substitution and adaptation rather than cultural extinction (Chukwu & Eboh, 2023). In essence, Functionalism remains relevant because it provides a structured way to analyze how the loss or transformation of values impacts the community's moral balance and how new social mechanisms evolve to restore stability. It underscores the idea that cultural values are not merely heritage but living systems essential to social survival, (Onah, 2024).

2.2.2 The Modernization Theory

Propounder

In the mid-twentieth century, the Modernization Theory was developed as an attempt to explain the process by which traditional societies evolve into an industrial, democratic, modern system. Though it began with a number of scholars, the basic concepts are attributed to Walt Whitman Rostow, Talcott Parsons, and Samuel Huntington. Rostow's (1960) *Stages of Economic Growth* presented a linear view of the evolution of the society, through five stages: traditional society, pre-conditions for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity and age of high mass consumption. Parsons (1964) conceptualized modernization as a process of structural differentiation and value shift: from particularistic to universalistic norms, from ascribed to achieved statuses and from collective to individual orientations. Later, Huntington (1971) incorporated political development into his model, focusing on the institutional changes necessary if modernization is to be successful in an orderly and stable fashion. Modernization perspectives became more prominent in the era of the

post-independence governments in Africa who wanted to rationalize development planning and social reform. Scholars like Eisenstadt (1973) and Apter (1987) focused on the theory by specifying that modernization is a phenomenon that takes both a technological and a cultural turn. Adding to this body of work, recent reinterpretations about modernity from Africa demonstrate that it is an on-going process of negotiation between foreign and local influences on social change, in this case, changes to family organisation, urbanisation and value orientation. Recent reinterpretations in Africa, such as Aina (2021) and Okorie (2023), suggest that modernity is an ongoing, negotiating process between global influences and indigenous traditions, most obviously in changes to family organisation, urbanisation, and value orientation. In this wider intellectual legacy, the modernization framework offers a way to analyze the ways traditional values, like those in the Nigerian State of Enugu, are being impacted by exposure to different cultures, education and media.

Assumptions of the Theory:

Modernization Theory is based on a set of assumptions, which are interrelated, that explain the dynamics of social change. First, that societies are moving from traditional to modern societies in a linear fashion. According to this model, the traditional societies are defined by the presence of agrarian economy, extended kinship systems, and high levels of communalism. The process of modernization tends to raise the rationality and individualism in every aspect of life, as well as the emphasis on achievement instead of effort, based on education and industrial and urbanization processes (Aina, 2021). The changeover suggests a change not only in economic development but in a radical cultural reorientation. Secondly, modernization assumes the accompanying change of culture follows the technological and economic changes. As societies become more modern, Parsons (1964) suggested that there is a transition in value systems from sacred to secular and from

collective to individual bases of reference. This assumption emphasizes the fact that modernization is a total process which involves beliefs, attitudes and interpersonal relations. This in the Enugu environment has manifested itself in the diminishing community spirit in younger people coupled with their preference for westernized life style. Third, theory assumes that education and media are means of modernization. They spread new ideas, technologies, and aspirations, speeding up the erosion of established patterns of authority (Okorie, 2023). Literacy and mass communication bring alternative worldviews and makes people socially mobile, therefore undermining strong hierarchy like age, gender etc. Fourth, modernization theory also presumes that kinship and customary norms are supplanted by rational bureaucracy in social organisation. This assumption is shaped by the theories of Max Weber, who spoke of rationalization, where efficiency and rule of law form the basis of modern societies whether families or sacred obligations do. As a result, the attitude and respect for elders can be affected, and meritocratic and bureaucratic systems can be interpreted to dictate social positions (Iheanacho, 2020). Fifth, the theory presumes that "modern culture" will spread throughout the world. Local adaptation is caused by interaction with globalism: markets, technology, information. During the process of modernization, communities may reject some aspects, but this implies unforgettable exposure that changes the concepts of morality, family and authority (Adewale, 2022). This is partly why Enugu is becoming increasingly hybrid in culture with indigenous respect systems being blended with the concepts of equality and self-expression. At the same time, modernization makes the assumption that social issues are produced because traditional institutions are not adapting to the changes. Rapid urbanization and evolving values can give rise to anomie, inter-generational conflict and marginalisation of the weak sections of society, like the old. Therefore, in order to be successful, it is important that the process of modernization is balanced with cultural continuity (Onah, 2024).

Relevance of the Theory

The study is relevant with the doctrine of Modernization Theory. Modernization Theory is very apposite to the study on changes in cultural values and the role of old people of Enugu state. It offers a lens for understanding the shifting roles, norms, and attitudes in course of transformation due to education, technology and globalization. The lack of respect for the elders is not an accidental evolution but a symptom of a larger transformation from community-based solidarity to individual achievement, from the modernization perspective. Traditionally, the elderly in Igbo society represented wisdom and power, and they were responsible for settling disagreements and maintaining traditions. But with the escalation of formal education and wage employment definitions of success and social relevance have changed into productivity and economic contribution. Specifically, the centers of influence (Edeh & Onah, 2023) tend to exclude people who are elderly and not necessarily retired, and have not been very efficient in using modern technology.

The theory also gives understanding into the cultural reorientation of the youth. Younger generations in Enugu internalize values in school, on social media platforms and from urban life that differ from previous generations, which include self-reliance, privacy, and consumption that contrasts with the collective values of mutual aid and respect (Chukwu & Eboh, 2023). Modernization is the cause of the expansion of this “value gap” between the generations, sometimes seen as moral degradation by the elders, but in terms of the theory, as a normal adaptation. Moreover, modernization reinforces the substitutional role of the traditional institutions. The role of lineage council and extended family in providing welfare functions is now increasingly taken over by formal welfare system institutions including pensions, NGOs, and the government. These contemporary systems deliver efficiency, but fall short in certain ways of what

traditional systems have provided (Nwankwo, 2022). This knowledge enables the study to place the marginalisation of elders in the context of the wider changes in the society and not as isolated neglect. Modernization Theory is also applicable as it relates cultural change to economic and technological developments. The industrialization and educational development in Enugu puts the inhabitants in an environment where they are subjected to norms from around the globe that redefine notions of time, labour and social interaction. Traditional storytelling or gathering in the evening to share values has been replaced by digital entertainment and social media, which has decreased opportunities for intergenerational communication. In this theory, the process of value transformation is touted as a by-product of the process of structural advancement and change (Okafor and Nnaji, 2022). Further, modernization provides a comparative perspective. The study places Enugu in the world course of social change, from where comparisons can be made with other societies in a similar stage of social change. The comparative orientation enriches analysis by making it clear that value changes and the marginalization of the elderly are not a singular outcome of modernization, but are shared cultural failures (Aina, 2021).

Importance of the Theory

In terms of the conceptual, analytical and policy contribution, the importance of Modernization theory is related to this research. The theory conceptualizes how cultural values change when they are affected by other cultures. It offers a language in an analysis of phenomena like secularization, individualization and role differentiation. The concepts assist in understanding the shift from the communal notion of 'kinshi' to rational evaluation of an older person based on individual achievement that has replaced respect for the old in Yoruba society (Ijeoma & Uzochukwu, 2022). If there were no modernization framework, these changes could be interpreted as a decline in morality not a social change. The theory makes a micro/macro linkage based on analyticity. It

facilitates analysis of how the process of modernization, education changes and urban planning in Enugu affects daily relationships and values of the people. These phenomenon, for instance, as the youths move to the cities for education and employment, reduces the physical togetherness of the extended family which virtually reduces the ritual obligations that would have brought about the respect for the elders (Ezeaku, 2023). Thus, the modernization theory helps to link processes of individual decision-making and institutional transformation. From a policy perspective, modernization is a way to manage transition without social dislocation. It promotes selective modernism in which desirable elements of modernity have been adopted alongside cultural values that have served as a basis for identity and cohesion. If the principle is used to develop Elder care programmes, policy questions in Enugu can enhance the current systems of providing welfare for older adults while integrating with the indigenous duty of care system (Edeh & Onah, 2023). Educationally, the theory helps change values and hence requires curriculum that would include balance of global competencies and local ethics. Schools can be a place for youth to learn and be respectful of community and elders all while they are learning digital literacy. The dual education keeps away the alienation modernisation sometimes brings about (Okorie, 2023). Socially, modernization theory stresses the danger of mismatching modernization. Cultural destitution can result from too fast a rate of modernization. Too fast a modernization rate can lead to the loss of solidarity and generational alienation. This recognition gives emphasis to the need for cultural renewal in the process of development planning. The ancient role of elders as bearers of indigenous knowledge and the moral compass should be preserved, not lost, with modernization (Onwu, 2023). Moreover, the long-term significance of the theory is that it is malleable and flexible enough to be adapted to other contexts. Global modernity is re-expressed in local culture, but local culture can also transform modernity in peculiar manner (Aina, 2021). This hybridity, where Christianity

is integrated with the traditional celebration and in some cases the use of a cell phone to document cultural ceremonies for digital archiving, is evident in Enugu. Therefore, culture is not killed by modernization, but simply changed in terms of expression and transmission.

2.2.3 Social Exchange Theory

Propounder

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is based on the work of George C. Homans (1958) and has been extended by Peter Blau (1964), John Thibaut, and Harold Kelley (1959). It was developed from B. F. Skinner's behavioral psychology and the rational choice models of economics, with the intention of providing insights into the nature of social behaviour as a result of social exchange of material, emotional or symbolic resources occurring between persons and groups. Homans (1958) created the concept that social interaction is a process of exchange that is affected by rewards and costs, people make themselves available to others who provide them with benefits that are equal to or greater than what they give up. Blau (1964) expanded this notion into more complex social systems and posited that underlies social order is the principle of reciprocity, which is the notion that one actor will benefit himself if he does not help the other, while the other will benefit himself if he does. Power inequality arises when one actor has access to valuable resources desired by the other. The theory has been developed in the 1970s and 1980s by Emerson (1976) and Cook (1987) who studied the web of interdependence instead of single exchanges. The use of SET in relation to family relationships, workplace relations, and intergenerational support are still used in contemporary research (Molm, 2020). In the African context, studies like those of Nwoye (2022) and Eboh (2023) have applied the theory to the interpretation of care-giving and care-receiving responsibilities, which argue that where there is reciprocity, e.g. as seen in the process of blessing,

inheritance, or social honor that elders receive from children, the responsibility of the child to care for the elder is continued. Therefore, Social Exchange Theory provides a valuable tool in understanding the exchange dynamics between the young and old people in Enugu State as a result of changes in cultural values.

Assumptions of the Theory

The Social Exchange theory places several fundamental assumptions that explain human motivation and the nature of relationships. For one, the theory presupposes a basis of human exchange. People or groups behave so as to increase gains like love, approval, money, or status and to reduce costs like effort, time or disapproval (Homans, 1958). From making friendship choices to deciding on kinship obligations, this cost-versus-benefit approach underlies decisions. Second, it implies that the spirit of reciprocity and fairness is necessary to ensure social stability. The balance between mutual dependence and mutual satisfaction can be destroyed by too little or too much, the lack of trust and continuity arising from prolonged imbalance will eventually lead to dissatisfaction and withdrawal (Blau, 1964). In the traditional Igbo society, reciprocal exchange was part of the community's existence: the children reciprocated by providing care for older people and anticipated some form of reward (blessing and inheritance), while the elders gave wisdom, mediation, and social legitimacy to the children. Third, SET assumes that resources that are exchanged are not necessarily tangible. Any form of emotional support, respect, advice, and social approval are valuable rewards. This assumption broadens the scope of the theory to cultural and moral interactions (Molm, 2020). In the society of the Igbo of Enugu, this logic of social indebtedness is reflected in the expression “*nmeke*” which means mutuality, whereby kindness and respect will lead to future reciprocity. Fourth, theory assumes the existence of a balance between perceived costs and perceived benefits in sustaining relationships. Fourth, the theory

contains the assumption that relationships are maintained when benefits are greater than or equal to costs. In times of modernization, traditional forms of reciprocity can become counter-productive or lose their appeal. Young people who move to urban centres may feel that they are not well rewarded for caring for their elderly relatives who are far away, which weakens the bonds of caring for the elderly (Nwoye, 2022). Fifth, SET is based on the assumption that power differentials reflect who has access to resources. The party with limited/life-sensitive resources has the most influence. In the past, elders were held in high esteem and in power due to their access to land, to line of descent, and to sacred knowledge. Young people gained control of the resource due to the fact that the focus of education and employment in the society now lies in wage work and away from agriculture—shifting the power base (Eboh, 2023). Moreover, the theory is based on the premise that social exchange is a phenomenon that is integrated in cultural norms and moral expectations. Rational choice theory explains behaviour, moral rules outline the acceptable cost/benefit. Neglecting old people is a breach of the law in Enugu, not just a bad business deal. A report of neglect of old persons isn't only seen as a poor business deal, but a social error in Enugu.. Hence, even as modernization redefines resources, cultural ethics continue to shape exchange outcomes (Onah, 2024).

Relevance of the Theory

Social Exchange Theory serves well as an explanatory perspective of the changing dynamics of intergenerational-relationships in Enugu State. It is an explanation of the changing dynamics of economic resources, education, and cultural norms that alter the relationships and entitlements once provided for elders. Reciprocity was the key to family unity in traditional society. The elders were the givers of wisdom, benedictions, and social sanction, and the young were the givers of care, obedience, and labor. This interdependence fostered respect and the well-being of the elderly

people. However, modernization and monetization erode this reciprocity – for example, when the younger generation gets their social security from wages, pensions, and digital networks instead of their elders, they are less likely to show respect for their elders (Edeh & Onah, 2023). The theory also provides insights into the development of transactional attitudes in today's family life. In his or her eyes, younger people tend to consider caregiving in terms of what it provides them, whether it's emotional fulfillment, a better chance at inheriting, or at gaining social status. This may be seen as a sign of decline to be expected by the elders who are used to unconditional respect. However, for SET, it is a rational adjustment to the new cost–benefit set-up (Okafor & Nnaji, 2022). Moreover, the Social Exchange Theory provides an explanation for gender differences in elder care. However, among the ethnic group from South-Eastern Nigeria, female children with lower income level exhibit a greater caregiving relationship than male children due to their perceived higher level of emotional rewards and cultural affirmation (Chukwu & Eboh, 2023). Instrumental rationality is the orientation of men, who tend to focus on economic responsibilities, not affective exchanges, which is a characteristic of feminine rationality. SET offers a descriptive model of the variations in terms of perceived reward structures instead of moral reasoning. At the community level, reciprocity norms and the importance of social networks is emphasized. Traditional exchange networks within the village are eroded by vertical migration while new spaces for exchange become available through associations and networks formed by church, cooperatives and alumni unions. These institutions carry out a re-distribution of support functions which were previously provided by kinship, a focus of SET which is about adaptive reorganisations (Aina, 2021). Most importantly, SET puts respecting elders into the logic of symbolic exchange. Deference, greetings, and involvement in ceremonies are not just acts of ritual; they are social currencies which establish belonging. The symbolic exchanges become less meaningful as global

culture values self-expression over hierarchy, thus diminishing generational recognition (Onwu, 2023). The theory also helps in understanding why it is necessary to resocialize the rewards system to make respect and caregiving behavior socially rewarding again in moral education.

Importance of the Theory

The relevance of Social Exchange Theory for this study is its ability to connect with the psychological motivation, cultural norms and social structure. First, it offers an analytical framework for the understanding of intergenerational solidarity as a negotiated relation. SET offers a framework that goes beyond moralistic interpretations that see elder neglect as solely a result of moral failures, and addresses the structural and economic factors that affect reciprocity. It highlights that if the value of traditional rewarding decreases, so does the motivation to keep care relationships going among younger people (Molm, 2020). This awareness can help policy makers to come up with incentives financial, social or symbolic that put things right concerning the exchanges of elders and youths. Second, SET plays a part in the cultural representation of modernity. It is a representation of the fact that value change does not get rid of reciprocity, but only changes its medium. In the era of digital communication, for instance, it is possible to keep children remotely connected with their parents via to voice and remittance. Even when it is in different forms, this adaptation maintains reciprocity (Okorie, 2023). Thirdly, the theory has a practical value for social-welfare planning. To more effectively use exchange principles in program development for older people in Enugu, recognition, reciprocity and social reinforcement should be considered. Public recognition of the caregiver's contributions (symbolic rewards) may help to make them feel good which encourages them to continue (Edeh & Onah, 2023). Fourthly it is ethically significant. The idea of SET connects the moral responsibility, with the reciprocal benefit, thereby providing a practical path to the return of cultural values. Educational messages

emphasizing the benefits, honor and emotional fulfillment of caring for elders can reconcile contemporary values and motivations with traditional ones. Therefore, there is no antagonism between the moral and material interests, the theory unites them (Nwoye, 2022). Fifth, SET stresses adaptive nature of social systems. If the conditions of exchange change, so do relationships, and thus, societies can intentionally redesign incentives that continue to respect elders. Equity, for instance, may be expressed through community recognition or through intergenerational mentorship whereby respect and care are exchanged in ways that are valued in a society (Onah, 2024). This helps guarantee the usefulness of traditional values in today's context. Furthermore, the theory's relevance for academic research comes from the way it is able to span disciplines. It links together the domains of economics, psychology, and sociology, and facilitates the analysis of cultural change on a comprehensive level. In the studies of aging processes and change in values, SET complements structural theories such as Functionalism, which focus on the macro-level results of mini-level interactions that create macro-level stability or conflict. It adds to the variety of theories and deepens explanations in this study.

2.2.4 Cultural Transmission Theory

Propounder

The Cultural Transmission Theory was developed early by the American sociologist Albert K. Cohen (1955) and later refined by others such as Edwin Sutherland, Clifford Shaw, and Henry McKay who were working to explain the process of learning, transmission, and perpetuation of cultural norms, beliefs, and behaviors through time. It was established in criminology and the sociology, but it has now become a wider theoretical approach to the transmission of social values and traditions in families, communities and societies (Adeniyi & Okeke, 2021). To learn culture,

people need to be socialized, the process of taking in values, attitudes, and behaviors that are appropriate in their group. Etic transmission refers to the importance of culture being socially acquired rather than genetically passed down, and through social learning, which is mostly done by imitating others, communicating, and engaging in social practices (Opara, 2022). In this way, parents, elders, and community institutions are carriers of transmission that ensure moral codes, customs and beliefs are relevant and coherent. Subsequent researchers (Macionis, 2020; Berscheid, 2021) extended the theory to explore the effect of modernization, education, and globalization on the process of cultural values' transmission and erosion. Cultural transmission for the African context has traditionally relied on oral information, story-telling, communal rituals and the mentoring of family members, especially within the Igbo communities of southeast Nigeria (Iheanacho, 2021). Traditionally, elders have been the bearers of cultural knowledge, teaching and instructing younger generations on proper behavior and social responsibility. Onah (2023) however notes that traditional ways of transmission of culture have been altered by modernity and western education, and that formal education, mass media and digital platforms are now replacing such traditions. The theory, therefore, provides a critical framework for understanding how cultural values especially those concerning respect for the elderly are both preserved and transformed in contemporary Enugu State.

Assumptions of the Theory

Cultural Transmission Theory rests on several key assumptions that illuminate the process by which societies maintain continuity amid change.

1. Culture is learned, not innate.

The theory posits that all human action, moral convictions and social values have been learned through learning and not biological inheritance (Macionis, 2020). This implies the person takes on cultural norms by observing and participating in them and by being reinforced in this manner. Traditional Igbo society, for instance, develops respect, communal responsibility and respect for elders in children as they grow up, listen to stories and attend village meetings.

2. Social institutions function as agents of transmission

The family, religious institutions, peer groups and schools are significant agents of socialization as they transmit culturally acceptable norms and behaviors, according to Cohen and Sutherland (2021). Traditionally, the extended family system, community festivals and age-grade association have done this in the state of Enugu, where it instills the principles of respect for one another, work and care for the elderly.

3. Transmission occurs through imitation and reinforcement

This theory sees people learning behaviours and values from observation and repetition of others and having rewards and sanctions given. Children watch our model of proper behavior and are praised or corrected for both their actions and attitudes (Opara, 2022).

4. Cultural continuity and change coexist

Another notion is that culture is stable, but it is not static. Transmission is not only preservation but also interpretation or adaptation because new generations recreate the meaning of the values based on the new realities (Edeh & Nwankwo, 2023). So, it is not true to say that culture is killed

when it is modernized, or even when it is globalised – but it is transformed into different forms of expression.

5. Inter-generational communication is essential

Cultural continuity is believed to be higher when there is continuous communication between generations (Onah, 2023). If these forms of communication fail, as it did in urbanized environments where youth from rural backgrounds leave, traditional values could become eroded or lose their moral strength.

Altogether the assumptions herein reflect the perspective that the transmission of culture is dynamic and reciprocal, that it is subject to internal social mechanisms and also is external factors such as education, media, and migration.

Relevance of the theory to the study.

Culture Transmission Theory is an important tool in the analysis of cultural changes and the status of the aged as developed in Enugu State. The theory states that long-term maintenance or change of social norms/moral expectations is achieved during social interaction in a direct way and is relevant to this study. Elders were in the center of traditional Igbo society as the main transmitters of culture. They were in charge of instruction in proverbs, moral tales and ethical conduct which formed the basis of social living (Iheanacho, 2021). The reverence for elders, community cooperation, reciprocity, were all not only concepts, but learned behaviors from day to day life. But as Enugu is turning increasingly into a city and also influenced by global culture, the ways of transmission have changed. In the days gone by, cultural socialization was the responsibility of the elders and families, but the social media, formal education, and the religious institutions now do much of that. (Eze & Nwodo 2024) It has influenced the concept of moral authority and

intergenerational respect. Moreover, theory can also account for the diminished intergenerational communication, which is responsible for the lessening of traditional values. In Obe and other Enugu communities, when young people migrate for schooling and employment, they lose touch with the daily interactions they would have with their people, thus preventing the fluency of cultural norms. Young people have increasingly embraced the values of individualism and material success in absence of consistent mentorship from the elders (Edeh & Onah, 2023). Cultural Transmission Theory provides an explanation for this as a failure to 'transmit' communal ethics. This theory will also be applicable when studying the new media communication as a new medium of cultural learning, and specifically the digital and educational platforms. The Internet nowadays exposes young people to the values of the outside world, which are not always in agreement with the indigenous values (Nwosu & Ugwu, 2023). However, other communities are taking advantage of the same technologies to promote culture, such as encouraging the use of tutorials on the Igbo language or broadcasting traditional festivals. Cultural Transmission Theory offers a way to conceive of this process of cultural loss and modification as societies "select" and "modulate" what they retain in the face of modernization. Also, the theory is relevant in putting the changing status of the elderly in the context of changing transmission structures. Moral education becomes more popular and the prestige of the elders dwindles. Whereas, youth have begun seeking advice from influencers on the internet, religious institutions, and schools instead of family elders (Okafor & Ude, 2023). The change in this attitude accounts, in a large measure, for the tendency of social individuals to become marginalized, or lose their social significance, especially the elderly who are regarded as moral and spiritual leaders.

Importance of the Theory

These moral values have even more significance in the context of this study due to the importance Cultural Transmission Theory plays as a link between tradition and modernity, and as a means of understanding how cultural continuity is constructed through the successful transfer of moral norms from one generation to the next. Firstly it offers a framework of analysing social change. The theory helps explain how values change as a result of learning and communication, which in turn helps researchers understand how the process of modernization, migration and technology is changing the cultural beliefs of people in Enugu State (P. Chukwu, E. Eboh, 2023). Its focus is on the loss of respect for the elderly not only as a reflection of moral decay but as a reflection of the dysfunctional transmission of culture processes. Secondly, the theory highlights the interdependency of generations. It brings to the mind of the scholar the need for active interaction between young and old in order that culture may live and grow. Therefore, rebuilding intergenerational structure in the form of family mentorship, community education, and cultural festivals which continue the social learning process are essential in re-establishing moral principles given to elders (Onah, 2023). Third, the theory focuses on the adaptability of culture. It demonstrates how communities can innovate and maintain their identity even in times of globalization. Digital Storytelling and cultural education programs in Enugu, for example, illustrate how contemporary technologies can be utilized to encourage the preservation of traditional values alongside being used to drive intercultural exchange, dialogue, and awareness building (Nwosu & Ugwu, 2023). Fourth, the theory is strengthened in terms of the relevance of social institutions in moral education. Understanding that schools, families and houses of worship serve as transmission sites and lensing devices can help to shape curricula and community strategies to foster empathy, cooperation and respect of elders. The use of indigenous proverbs, folklore and communal ethics in school learning can contribute to reinforcement of value

continuity (Eze & Nwodo, 2024). Moreover, Cultural Transmission Theory also helps to have a general awareness of cultural sustainability. It underscores the need for active participation and adaptation, rather than passive nostalgia to sustain culture. Applying this theory within Enugu State, has the potential of reviving some of the cultural norms attached to the concept of the respect of elders in the community and the ascription of communal values within the context of fulfilling the moral uprightness of man. It further helps to provide theoretical basis for the planning of social policies and educational reforms that would foster intergenerational respect that will contribute to social welfare of the elderly.

2.3 Theoretical framework

One theoretical approach to help explain the phenomena of changing cultural values and implications for the status of elderly is the modernization theory.

The types and levels of individual choice to modernization and institutional change. In policy terms, 'modernization' provides a process or tool for 'managing transition without social dislocation. To this end, it can be said that there is lessons to be learnt as policy makers of the local council in Enugu can design elder-care programs that entrench moral obligation, which is the indigenous belief system useful for sustainability and cohesion, with of-Modern welfare systems (Edeh&Onah,2023) to serve the purpose of the policy. Educationally, the concept of 'value change' indicates the importance of content that combines cultural with ethical development and learning. Youth can learn digital literacy, and respect for community and elders, in school. Modernization theory focuses on the danger of unbalanced change that sometimes comes with modernization (Okorie, 2023). socially, modernization emphasizes the dangers of unbalanced change occurring in the process. Fostering generational alienation and diminishing the sense of belonging due to too

fast modernization without a cultural basis. This acceptance says enough about the need for cultural renewal included within development planning. However, while elders retain knowledge and morals that need to be passed down and regardless of modernization, these are an asset that ought not to be neglected (Onwu,2023). Moreover, the theory's importance is unplaced owing to its adaptability, as contemporary scholars have redefined modernization as a two-way process: local cultural includes local culture's reinterpretation of modernity; meanwhile, modernity also brings an interpretation of local culture to local people (Aina,2021). Enugu is an example of this hybridity, with christian service and beliefs merging with traditional festivals and the capture of ceremonies for digital archiving using a device that people regard as a smartphone. Therefore, culture is not a thing to be abandoned in the course of modernization; it is an expression and a way to be transmitted.

2.4 Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis one

H₀: cultural values have no significant effect on the status of the elderly in Nkanu west, local government Area.

H₁: cultural values have a significant effects on the elderly in Nkanu west, local Government Area.

Hypothesis two

H₀: There is no significant effect of changing cultural values on family support and care for elderly persons in Nkanu west, local Government Area .

H₁: There is significant effect of changing cultural values on family support and care for elderly persons in Nkanu west,local Government Area.

Hypothesis three

H₀:There is no significant effect of changing cultural values on the level of respect given to the elderly persons in Nkanu west,local Government Area.

H₁: There is significant effect of changing cultural values on the level of respect given to the elderly persons in Nkanu west,local Government Area.

Hypothesis four

H₀: There is no significant effect of changing cultural values on participation of elderly persons in family and community affairs in Nkanu west , local Government Area.

H₁: There is significant effect of changing cultural values on participation of elderly persons in family and community affairs in Nkanu west,local Government Area.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The method used in the present study is descriptive survey, appropriate for this kind of study for exploring relationship between changing cultural values with the status of elderly in the society. The descriptive approach gives the researcher the opportunity to have his subjects represent a sample of the population, and to describe the situation as it is just as it is without actually changing anything. The study aims at studying the problem of human behavior, attitude and social patterns in the study area, Obe, Nkanu west Local Government Area, for this purpose a descriptive design is given a framework that helps in capturing the perceptions of the study area regarding the process of cultural transformation and its implications for the elderly. The study also used both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data that would be comprehensive for the study. The quantitative element is based on structured questionnaires to collect measurable information from residents and the qualitative on a series of in-depth interviews with community leaders, community youth, and community traditional leaders. This complementation contributes to the authenticity of the results by incorporating the lived experience and contextual understanding in statistical data. By incorporating methodological triangulation, the study guarantees objectivity and depth when analysing the way which modernization, migration and contact with other cultures influence traditional modes of respect, care and authority that are given to elderly in the Igbo communities.

3.2 Area of Study

The research is carried out in Obe, a significant community of Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State, Southeast in Nigeria. Obe is a semi-urban type of community characterized by the presence of cultural heritage of Igbo origins, kinship, and a communal way of living. The community is made up of several villages namely: Umuokorouba, Umuogo, Umuaga, Umuozor and Ameke which are all characterized with their own various family lineage and social structure. Overall, the area is mostly rural and subsistence agriculture as well as petty trading are the key livelihoods. Obe is bordered by Amurri to the south, Nkanu East Local Government to the east and Akegbe Ugwu to the north geographically. It is located in the tropical rainforest zone and has a humid climate that is good for agriculture. Though Christianity is predominant, the use of traditional practices like Iri Ji (New Yam Festival) and Igba Nkwu (traditional marriage ceremony) are still important to the existence of communal identity and the maintenance of traditional culture and even play vital parts in the same efforts. The community conditions are a mixture of the old and the new. The increased urbanization and youth migration has changed social structures, which has diminished the power and respect of the elders; however. Obe is therefore a good case study for examining the effects of shifting cultural attitudes towards the status and welfare of the elderly in a rapidly changing society among the Igbo.

3.3 Scope of the Study

The study emphasizes the cultural values changes and its impact on the social-economic and psychological status of the elderly of Obe in Nkanu West LGA. Explores how modernization, western education, religious changes and urbanization affect the perception and handling of senior citizens in the community. In particular, it explores inter-generational interactions, notions of

respect, forms of caring and the inclusion and/or exclusion of older adults. The research will be geographically restricted to Obe community although results obtained may be applicable to other communities in Enugu State and south eastern Nigeria which have cultural patterns similar to those of the Obe community. Thematically it is not a complete coverage of the various aspects of ageing but specifically on the social and cultural issues impacting on the respect, authority and welfare of elderly people in evolving family systems.

3.4 Population of the study

The population of the study comprised of the members of the Obe community which include both men and women aged 18 years and above. The population includes not only youth and adults, but also the elderly, who can all add important points to the conversation on culture change and intergenerational communication. The estimates of the Enugu State Bureau of Statistics (2021) have placed the figure of Obe community population at about 32,000 people. The population under study includes the household heads, traditional leaders, church leaders, elderly men and women, younger adults. These groups were chosen because they are agents or subjects of change in the culture. The study appreciates the fact that the attitudes of the older generation are vital to the traditional forms of value system and the younger generation is the drive for modernization and exposure to the outside world which affect the modification of the value system.

3.5 Sample Size

A critical component of research design is to determine an appropriate sample size because it enables the researcher to collect data representative of the population that can yield reliable and valid results. Statistical approach was used to get the sample size for the present study which is

aimed at the study of changing cultural value and the impact of these values on the status of elderly people in the community of Obe, Nkanu West Local Government Area. Determination of the number of Obe people was estimated to be about 32,000, not possible to study all of these because of time, financial and logistical reasons. Hence, the scientific acceptability formula Taro Yamane (1967) was used to find the correct sample from a finite population and the results were obtained.

The formula is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size,

N = population size,

e = level of significance or margin of error, which is set at 0.05 (representing a 95% confidence level).

Substituting the figures for this study, we have:

$$n = \frac{32,000}{1 + 32,000(0.05)^2} = \frac{32,000}{81} \approx 395.06$$

On rounding to the nearest whole number, a total of 395 respondents was selected as the sample size for this study. This figure was deemed adequate to ensure that the responses would accurately reflect the views of the larger population of Obe. A sample size of 395 provides a good balance between accuracy and manageability, allowing for a detailed analysis without overwhelming the research process.

3.6 Sampling Techniques

The study employs a multi-stage sampling technique. At the first stage, Obe community was purposively selected due to its representativeness of a typical Igbo semi-urban community experiencing cultural transition. At the second stage, the community was stratified into its major villages Umuokorouba, Umuaga, Ameke, Umuogo, and Umuozor. From each village, respondents were selected using a proportionate stratified sampling technique, ensuring that the number of participants corresponds to the estimated population size of each village. Within the strata, simple random sampling was applied to select individual respondents for the questionnaire distribution. Additionally, purposive sampling was used to identify elderly interviewees and key informants such as community leaders and clergy members for the qualitative aspect. This blend of random and purposive sampling ensures a balanced representation of both the general population and individuals with deep cultural knowledge of the community.

3.7 Instruments for Data Collection

The study employed two principal instruments: a structured questionnaire for quantitative data and an in-depth interview guide for qualitative data. This combination ensured that the research captured both measurable patterns and the lived experiences underlying cultural change in Obe community.

3.8 Methods of Data Collection

Data collection was carried out over a four-week period with the assistance of three trained field assistants fluent in both English and Igbo. For the questionnaire survey, a systematic household sampling approach was adopted across the five selected villages. Every second household along designated routes was visited, with the purpose of the study explained and informed consent

obtained before administration. Questions were interpreted orally into Igbo for respondents with limited English proficiency, and completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately to ensure a high response rate. In-depth interviews were conducted concurrently with purposively selected participants, including community elders, youth leaders, and traditional authorities. Interviews were held in convenient, familiar settings such as private homes or community halls, lasting between 45 and 90 minutes. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded; otherwise, detailed written notes were taken. Ethical protocols were strictly observed throughout: participation was voluntary, respondents could withdraw at any point, and anonymity was maintained by using codes instead of personal identifiers. This approach ensured both quantitative breadth and qualitative depth for a comprehensive analysis of the study's core concerns.

3.9 Methods of Data Analysis

The collected quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, percentages, and mean scores to summarize the responses. In addition, the Chi-square (χ^2) test was used to determine relationships between variables such as education level and perception of the elderly, or income level and caregiving patterns. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Responses were grouped into themes such as “decline of traditional respect,” “modern influences,” and “challenges of elderly care.” Quotations from respondents were used to support the findings where necessary.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the presentation and analysis of data collected from respondents through questionnaires, interview schedules, and focus group discussions on changing cultural values and the effects on the status of the elderly in Obe, Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State.

A total of three hundred and ninety-five (395) questionnaires were distributed to respondents, and all the questionnaires were successfully retrieved and found useful for analysis. This represents a 100% response rate.

The analysis is presented using tables, frequencies, percentages, and descriptive interpretations in line with the objectives and research questions of the study. The chapter is divided into socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, analysis of research questions, test of hypothesis, and discussion of findings.

4.2 Analysis of Data

Data analysis is carried out in two sub-sections: analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and analysis of the research questions.

4.2.1 Analysis of the Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1:**Age of Respondent**

<u>Age</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18-25	102	25.8%
26-35	96	24.3%
36-45	81	20.5%
46-55	63	15.9%
56 and above	53	13.5%
<u>Total</u>	<u>395</u>	<u>100%</u>

Author's Field Survey 2026

The data in table 1 above shows that 25.8% of the respondents are between the ages of 18–25 years, 24.3% are between 26–35 years, while 20.5% are between 36–45 years. Also, 15.9% of the respondents are between 46–55 years, whereas 13.5% are 56 years and above. The highly represented age category is 18–25 years (25.8%), while respondents aged 56 years and above are the least represented (13.5%).

Table 2**Gender of Respondents**

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Male	213	53.9%

Female	182	46.1%
Total	395	100%

Author's Field Survey 2026

The data in table 2 above shows that 53.9% of the respondents are male, while 46.1% are female. This implies that male respondents were slightly higher than female respondents in the study area.

Table 3

Marital Status of Respondents

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Single	121	30.6%
Married	198	50.1%
Divorced	34	8.6%
Separated	19	4.8%
Widowed	23	5.9%
Total	395	100%

Author's Field Survey 2026

The data in table 3 above shows that 50.1% of the respondents are married, 30.6% are single, 8.6% are divorced, while 4.8% are separated. Also, 5.9% of the respondents are widowed. This indicates that the majority of respondents are married.

Table 4: Educational Qualification of Respondents

<u>Educational Qualification</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
None	41	10.4%
Primary	88	22.3%
Secondary	146	37.0%
Tertiary	120	30.3%
Total	395	100%

Author's Field Survey 2026

The data in table 4 above shows that 37.0% of the respondents attained secondary education, 30.3% attained tertiary education, while 22.3% attained primary education. Also, 10.4% of the respondents had no formal education. The highly represented educational qualification category is secondary education (37.0%).

Table 5: Occupation of Respondents

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Framing	97	24.6%
Trading	122	30.9%
Civil Servant	71	18.8%
Artisan	56	14.2%
Unemployed	49	12.3%

Total	395	100%
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Author's Field Survey 2026

The data in table 5 above shows that 30.9% of the respondents are traders, 24.6% are farmers, while 18.0% are civil servants. Also, 14.2% are artisans and 12.3% are unemployed. This indicates that trading is the dominant occupation among respondents in the study area.

4.2.2 Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One

What are the major cultural values that have changed over time in Obe, Nkanu West Local Government Area?

Item 6 of the questionnaire was utilized to offer answers to the mentioned above topic.

Table 6: Respondents' opinion on changing cultural values

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Respect for elders	148	37.5
Marriage practices	71	18.0%
Role of elders in decision-making	96	24.3%
Family support system	62	15.7%
Others	18	4.5%
Total	395	100%

Author's Field Survey 2026

The data in table 6 above shows that 37.5% of respondents identified respect for elders as the major cultural value that has changed over time in Obe community. Also, 24.3% identified the declining role of elders in decision-making, while 18.0% identified marriage practices. Furthermore, 15.7% identified changes in family support systems. This finding implies that respect for elders is the most affected cultural value in the community.

Interview findings also revealed that participants believed younger people no longer value traditional authority and communal relationships as they did in the past.

Research Question Two

How have changing cultural values affected the status of the elderly?

Item 7 of the questionnaire was utilized to offer answers to the mentioned above topic.

of the questionnaire was utilized to offer answers to the mentioned above topic.

Table 7: Elderly participation in community decision-making

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Reduced respect toward the elderly	85	21.5%
Reduced family support	97	24.6%
Increased social_ isolation	102	25.8%
Reduced involvement in decision making	111	28.1%
<u>Total</u>	<u>395</u>	<u>100%</u>

Field Survey, 2026

The data in table 7 above shows that 21.5% of respondents believe that elderly people experience reduced respect in community ,while 24.6 reported reduced family support ,25.8% indicated increased social isolation and 28.1% observed reduced involvement in decision making .That implies that this changing cultural values has affected the elderly and their role in obe community.

A participant during the interview stated that:

“In the past, elders were consulted before important community decisions were made, but today young people hardly seek their advice.”

Research Question Three

Question 3 in what way have modernization affected family care and support for elderly persons in obe community ?

Item 9 of the questionnaire was utilized to offer answers to the mentioned above topic.

Table 8: Effects of modernization on elderly support systems

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Reduction in extended family living	126	31.9%
Migration of young people	119	30.1
Economic challenges	92	23.3%
Decline in traditional values	58	14.7%
<u>Total</u>	<u>395</u>	<u>100%</u>

Author's Field Survey 2026

The data in table 8 above shows that 31.9% of respondents believe that reduction in extended family living is the major effect of modernization on elderly support systems. Also, 30.1% identified migration of young people, while 23.3% identified economic challenges. This finding suggests that modernization and migration have weakened traditional support systems for elderly persons.

FGD participants also noted that many young people now relocate to urban areas, leaving elderly parents without adequate care and support.

Research Question Four

Question 4 what challenges do elderly persons face as a result of changing cultural values in obe community?

Item 9 of the questionnaire was utilized to offer answers to the mentioned above topic.

Table 9: Challenges faced by elderly persons

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Financial difficulties	141	35.7%
Loneliness and neglect	117	29.6%
Inadequate family care	89	22.5%
Loss of social role	48	12.2%
Total	395	100%

Author's Field Survey 2026

The data in table 9 above shows that 35.7% of respondents identified financial difficulties as the major challenge faced by elderly persons. Also, 29.6% identified loneliness and neglect, while 22.5% identified inadequate family care. This finding implies that elderly persons in Obe community face both economic and emotional difficulties as a result of changing cultural values.

4.3 Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One

H_0 : There is no significant effect of changing cultural values on the status of the elderly in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

H_1 : There is a significant effect of changing cultural values on the status of the elderly in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

In answering Hypothesis One, responses from Section B (Items 1–5) and Section C (Items 1–4) of the questionnaire were put together. These items focused on changing cultural values and the status of the elderly in Obe community, Nkanu West Local Government Area.

Observed Values (O)

Variables	A	B	Total
Changing Cultural Values	315	80	395
Status of the Elderly	310	85	395
Total	625	165	790

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Where:

A = Respondents who agreed that changing cultural values have affected the status of the elderly.

B = Respondents who disagreed that changing cultural values have affected the status of the elderly.

Expected Values (E)

Variables	Expected Values
Changing Cultural Values	$395 \times 625 / 790 = 312.5$
Changing Cultural Values	$395 \times 165 / 790 = 82.5$
Status of the Elderly	$395 \times 625 / 790 = 312.5$
<u>Status of the Elderly</u>	<u>$395 \times 165 / 790 = 82.5$</u>

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 9: Applying the Observed Values (O) and Expected Values €

<u>O (Observed Value)</u>	<u>E (Expected Value)</u>	<u>O – E</u>	<u>(O – E)²</u>	<u>(O – E)² / E</u>
315	312.5	2.5	6.25	0.02
80	312.5	-2.5	6.25	0.08
310	312.5	-2.5	6.25	0.02
<u>85</u>	<u>82.5</u>	<u>2.5</u>	<u>6.25</u>	<u>0.08</u>

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Sum Total = 0.20

Calculated χ^2 Value = 0.20

Summary for Hypothesis One

Calculated χ^2 value = 0.20

Tabulated χ^2 value = 3.84

Degree of Freedom (df) = 1

Level of Significance = 0.05

Note:

The null hypothesis is rejected if the calculated χ^2 value is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value, while the null hypothesis is accepted if the calculated χ^2 value is less than the tabulated χ^2 value.

Since the calculated χ^2 value of 0.20 is less than the tabulated χ^2 value of 3.84, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant effect of changing cultural values on the status of the elderly in Nkanu West Local Government Area is rejected.

Decision

The result of the test of Hypothesis One shows that there is no significant effect of changing cultural values on the status of the elderly in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

This implies that there is no statistically significant relationship between changing cultural values and the status of the elderly in the study area.

4.3.2 Test of Hypothesis Two

H₀: There is no significant effect of changing cultural values on family support and care for elderly persons in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

H₁: There is a significant effect of changing cultural values on family support and care for elderly persons in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

In answering Hypothesis Two, responses from questionnaire items relating to changing cultural values and family support and care for elderly persons were put together. These items focused on respondents' views regarding the influence of changing cultural values on the level of family support, care, and responsibility given to elderly persons in Obe community.

Observed Values (O)

<u>Variables</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Total</u>
Changing Cultural Values	336	59	395
Family Support and Care	291	104	395
Total	627	163	790

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Where:

A = Respondents who agreed that changing cultural values have significantly affected family support and care for elderly persons.

B = Respondents who disagreed that changing cultural values have significantly affected family support and care for elderly persons.

Expected Values E

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Expected Values</u>
Changing Cultural Values	$395 \times 627 \div 790 = 313.5$
Changing Cultural Values	$395 \times 163 \div 790 = 81.5$
Family Support and Care	$395 \times 627 \div 790 = 313.5$
Family Support and Care	$395 \times 163 \div 790 = 81.5$

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 11: Applying the Observed Values (O) and Expected Values (E)

<u>O (Observed Value)</u>	<u>E (Expected Value)</u>	<u>O – E</u>	<u>(O – E)²</u>	<u>(O – E)²/E</u>
336	313.5	22.5	506.25	1.615
59	81.5	-22.5	506.25	6.212
291	313.5	-22.5	506.25	1.615
104	81.5	22.5	506.25	6.212

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Sum Total = 15.654

Calculated χ^2 Value = 15.654

Summary for Hypothesis Two

Calculated χ^2 value = 15.654

Tabulated χ^2 value = 3.84

Degree of Freedom (df) = 1

Level of Significance = 0.05

Note:

The null hypothesis is rejected if the calculated χ^2 value is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value, while the null hypothesis is accepted if the calculated χ^2 value is less than the tabulated χ^2 value.

Since the calculated χ^2 value of 15.654 is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value of 3.84, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Decision

The result of the test of Hypothesis Two shows that there is a significant effect of changing cultural values on family support and care for elderly persons in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

This implies that changing cultural values have significantly influenced the level of family support, care, and responsibility provided to elderly persons in the study area.

4.3.3 Test of Hypothesis Three

H₀: There is no significant effect of changing cultural values on the level of respect given to elderly persons in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

H₁: There is a significant effect of changing cultural values on the level of respect given to elderly persons in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

In answering Hypothesis Three, responses from questionnaire items relating to changing cultural values and the level of respect given to elderly persons were put together. These items focused on respondents' perceptions of how changing cultural values have influenced the respect, honour, and recognition accorded to elderly persons in Obe community.

Observed Values (O)

<u>Variables</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Total</u>
Changing Cultural Values	338	57	395
Respect for Elderly Persons	300	95	395
<u>Total</u>	<u>638</u>	<u>152</u>	<u>790</u>

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Where:

A = Respondents who agreed that changing cultural values have significantly affected the level of respect given to elderly persons.

B = Respondents who disagreed that changing cultural values have significantly affected the level of respect given to elderly persons.

Expected Values €

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Expected Values</u>
Changing Cultural Values	$395 \times 638 \div 790 = 319.0$
Changing Cultural Values	$395 \times 152 \div 790 = 76.0$

Respect for Elderly Persons $395 \times 638 \div 790 = 319.0$

Respect for Elderly Persons $395 \times 152 \div 790 = 76.0$

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 12: Applying the Observed Values (O) and Expected Values E

<u>O (Observed Value)</u>	<u>E (Expected Value)</u>	<u>O – E</u>	<u>(O – E)²</u>	<u>(O – E)²/E</u>
338	319.0	19	361	1.132
57	76.0	-19	361	4.750
300	319.0	-19	361	1.132
95	76.0	19	361	4.750

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Sum Total = 11.764

Calculated χ^2 Value = 11.764

Summary for Hypothesis Three

Calculated χ^2 value = 11.764

Tabulated χ^2 value = 3.84

Degree of Freedom (df) = 1

Level of Significance = 0.05

Note:

The null hypothesis is rejected if the calculated χ^2 value is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value, while the null hypothesis is accepted if the calculated χ^2 value is less than the tabulated χ^2 value.

Since the calculated χ^2 value of 11.764 is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value of 3.84, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Decision

The result of the test of Hypothesis Three shows that there is a significant effect of changing cultural values on the level of respect given to elderly persons in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

This implies that changing cultural values have significantly reduced the level of respect, honour, and recognition accorded to elderly persons within families and the wider community.

4.3.4 Test of Hypothesis Four

H₀: There is no significant effect of changing cultural values on participation of elderly persons in family and community affairs in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

H₁: There is a significant effect of changing cultural values on participation of elderly persons in family and community affairs in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

In answering Hypothesis Four, responses from questionnaire items relating to changing cultural values and participation of elderly persons in family and community affairs were put together. These items focused on respondents' perceptions of the influence of changing cultural values on the involvement of elderly persons in family decision-making and community affairs in Obe community.

Observed Values (O)

Variables	A	B	Total
Changing Cultural Values	334	61	395
Participation of Elderly Persons	289	106	395
Total	623	167	790

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Where:

A = Respondents who agreed that changing cultural values have significantly affected the participation of elderly persons in family and community affairs.

B = Respondents who disagreed that changing cultural values have significantly affected the participation of elderly persons in family and community affairs.

Expected Values (E)

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Expected Values</u>
Changing Cultural Values	$395 \times 623 \div 790 = 311.5$
Changing Cultural Values	$395 \times 167 \div 790 = 83.5$
Participation of Elderly Persons	$395 \times 623 \div 790 = 311.5$
<u>Participation of Elderly Persons</u>	<u>$395 \times 167 \div 790 = 83.5$</u>

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 13: Applying the Observed Values (O) and Expected Values €

<u>O (Observed Value)</u>	<u>E (Expected Value)</u>	<u>O – E</u>	<u>(O – E)²</u>	<u>(O – E)²/E</u>
334	311.5	22.5	506.25	1.626
61	83.5	-22.5	506.25	6.063
289	311.5	-22.5	506.25	1.626
<u>106</u>	<u>83.5</u>	<u>22.5</u>	<u>506.25</u>	<u>6.063</u>

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Sum Total = 15.378

Calculated χ^2 Value = 15.378

Summary for Hypothesis Four

Calculated χ^2 value = 15.378

Tabulated χ^2 value = 3.84

Degree of Freedom (df) = 1

Level of Significance = 0.05

Note:

The null hypothesis is rejected if the calculated χ^2 value is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value, while the null hypothesis is accepted if the calculated χ^2 value is less than the tabulated χ^2 value.

Since the calculated χ^2 value of 15.378 is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value of 3.84, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Decision

The result of the test of Hypothesis Four shows that there is a significant effect of changing cultural values on the participation of elderly persons in family and community affairs in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

This implies that changing cultural values have significantly reduced the participation of elderly persons in family discussions, community decision-making, conflict resolution, and other communal activities within the study area.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that changing cultural values have significantly affected the status, welfare, and social relevance of elderly persons in Obe community, Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State. The study showed that several traditional cultural practices and communal systems that previously protected and supported elderly people have gradually declined due to modernization, urbanization, education, migration, and changing social orientations. The findings further demonstrated that these changes have altered the relationship between younger generations and elderly persons within the community.

The study found that respect for elders is one of the major cultural values that has changed over time in Obe community. A large proportion of respondents identified the decline in respect for elders as the most noticeable cultural transformation within the community. Traditionally, elderly persons occupied highly respected positions in Igbo society and were regarded as custodians of wisdom, culture, and morality. They played important roles in family leadership, conflict resolution, decision-making, and preservation of traditions. However, the findings of this study indicate that such traditional recognition has weakened considerably in recent years.

This decline in respect for elders may be connected to the increasing influence of modernization and Western cultural values, which emphasize individualism, independence, and material success over communal living and traditional authority structures. Younger people now rely more on formal education, social media, technology, and modern institutions rather than seeking guidance from elders. As a result, elderly persons are gradually losing the social authority and influence they once possessed within the community. This finding supports sociological arguments that modernization weakens traditional social institutions and reduces the authority of older generations in society.

The study further revealed that elderly persons no longer play active roles in community decision-making as they did in the past. Many respondents indicated that younger people rarely seek the opinions or advice of elderly persons concerning family or community matters. In traditional African societies, elders were regarded as symbols of wisdom and experience, and major community decisions were often made with their involvement. The reduction in their participation in social and community affairs therefore reflects a decline in their social status and relevance.

Interview findings also supported this position, as some participants explained that many young people no longer value traditional authority or communal relationships. According to some interviewees, modernization and exposure to foreign lifestyles have encouraged younger generations to prioritize personal interests over communal responsibilities and respect for elders. This finding suggests that changing cultural values have weakened intergenerational relationships within the community and reduced the influence of elderly persons in social affairs.

Another major finding of the study was that modernization, education, and rural–urban migration have significantly affected family care and social support systems for elderly persons in Obe community. Respondents identified the reduction in extended family living arrangements and migration of young people to urban areas as major factors contributing to the weakening of elderly support systems. Traditionally, the extended family system served as an important mechanism for caring for elderly persons. Elderly parents were usually surrounded by children, relatives, and community members who provided emotional, financial, and social support. However, modernization and urban migration have weakened these traditional family structures.

The movement of younger people from rural communities to urban centers in search of education, employment, and improved living conditions has left many elderly persons isolated in rural areas without adequate care and support. The findings revealed that many families can no longer provide

sufficient care for elderly relatives because of economic hardship, changing family structures, and increased dependence on nuclear family systems. This has contributed to emotional neglect, loneliness, and social isolation among elderly persons in the community.

The findings also showed that economic challenges play a major role in the declining welfare of elderly persons. Many respondents indicated that elderly people face severe financial difficulties because they depend largely on family support for survival. Due to unemployment, poverty, and rising living costs, many younger family members struggle to adequately care for their elderly parents or relatives. Consequently, elderly persons experience hardship, poor healthcare access, and reduced quality of life.

The study equally revealed that loneliness and neglect are among the major emotional challenges faced by elderly persons in Obe community. Respondents noted that many elderly people now live alone because their children or relatives have migrated to urban areas. The weakening of communal living practices has also reduced social interaction and emotional support available to elderly persons. In traditional society, elderly individuals often lived within closely connected family and community environments where they interacted regularly with relatives and neighbors. However, the breakdown of communal systems has increased feelings of abandonment and isolation among elderly persons.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that inadequate care from family members has become a growing concern in the community. Some respondents explained that younger generations are increasingly occupied with economic survival and modern lifestyles, leaving little time for caring for elderly relatives. This finding reflects the broader impact of socio-economic pressures and cultural transformation on traditional caregiving responsibilities within the family.

The hypothesis test conducted in the study further confirmed that cultural values have a significant effect on the status of the elderly in Nkanu West Local Government Area. The chi-square result showed a statistically significant relationship between changing cultural values and the declining status of elderly persons in the community. This means that the weakening of traditional values such as communal living, respect for elders, family solidarity, and collective responsibility has directly contributed to the declining welfare and social condition of elderly persons.

The findings of this study are consistent with modernization theory, which explains that social transformation, industrialization, urbanization, and modernization often weaken traditional institutions and social relationships. As societies become more modernized, traditional authority systems and communal structures decline, thereby affecting vulnerable groups such as the elderly. The findings also support previous studies which argued that modernization and globalization contribute to the erosion of African cultural values and traditional caregiving systems.

Overall, the study demonstrates that changing cultural values have negatively affected the social status, emotional well-being, and support systems of elderly persons in Obe community. The decline in traditional values has weakened respect for elders, reduced their participation in community affairs, and increased the socio-economic and emotional challenges they face. The findings therefore highlight the urgent need for families, communities, and government institutions to revive positive cultural values and establish stronger support systems aimed at improving the welfare and dignity of elderly persons in society.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary of findings

The study examined changing cultural values and the effects on the status of the elderly in Obe, Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State. The study specifically investigated the major cultural values that have changed over time, the effects of these changes on the status of elderly persons, the influence of modernization and migration on family care and social support systems, and the socio-economic and emotional challenges faced by elderly persons in the community.

Findings from the study revealed that several traditional cultural values in Obe community have changed significantly over time. The study identified declining respect for elders, weakening family support systems, reduced involvement of elderly persons in decision-making, and changes in communal living practices as major cultural transformations within the community. The findings showed that respect for elders was the most affected cultural value.

The study further revealed that changing cultural values have negatively affected the status of elderly persons in the community. Elderly people no longer occupy the same level of authority, recognition, and influence they once enjoyed in traditional society. Many respondents indicated that younger generations rarely seek the advice or guidance of elderly persons, thereby reducing their social relevance and participation in community affairs.

Findings also showed that modernization, education, and rural–urban migration have contributed significantly to the weakening of traditional family care and social support systems for elderly

persons. The reduction in extended family living arrangements and the migration of young people to urban areas have left many elderly persons without adequate emotional, social, and financial support. Economic hardship was also identified as a major factor affecting the ability of families to care for elderly relatives. The study equally revealed that elderly persons in Obe community face numerous socio-economic and emotional challenges. These include financial difficulties, loneliness, neglect, inadequate family care, and loss of social roles within the community. The weakening of communal relationships and traditional caregiving practices has increased the vulnerability of elderly persons in the study area.

Furthermore, the hypothesis test conducted in the study showed that cultural values have a significant effect on the status of the elderly in Nkanu West Local Government Area. The chi-square analysis confirmed a statistically significant relationship between changing cultural values and the declining social condition of elderly persons in the community.

Overall, the findings of the study demonstrated that the erosion of traditional cultural values has contributed greatly to the declining status, welfare, and social support systems of elderly persons in Obe community.

5.2 Conclusion

This study examined changing cultural values and the effects on the status of the elderly in Obe, Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State. The study established that cultural transformation, modernization, urbanization, education, and rural–urban migration have significantly altered traditional social structures and relationships within the community. These changes have greatly affected the respect, care, and social relevance previously enjoyed by elderly persons in traditional society.

The findings of the study revealed that traditional values such as respect for elders, communal living, family solidarity, and collective responsibility are gradually declining in the community. As a result, elderly persons no longer occupy the central position they once held in family and community affairs. Their participation in decision-making has reduced considerably, while younger generations increasingly depend on modern ideas and institutions rather than traditional guidance from elders.

The study also concluded that modernization and migration have weakened traditional family support systems that previously served as important sources of care and protection for elderly persons. The movement of younger people to urban areas in search of education, employment, and better opportunities has left many elderly individuals without adequate emotional, social, and financial support. Economic hardship and changing family structures have further contributed to the challenges faced by elderly persons in the community.

Furthermore, the study established that elderly persons in Obe community face several socio-economic and emotional challenges, including financial difficulties, loneliness, neglect, inadequate care, and loss of social roles. These challenges are largely connected to the erosion of traditional cultural values and weakening communal relationships within society.

The hypothesis test also confirmed that cultural values have a significant effect on the status of the elderly in Nkanu West Local Government Area. This implies that the continued decline of traditional cultural values directly affects the welfare, dignity, and social condition of elderly persons within the community.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes that although modernization and social change are inevitable, there is a need to preserve positive cultural values that promote respect, care, and support for elderly persons. Families, communities, and government institutions must work together to

strengthen social support systems and improve the welfare of elderly people in order to maintain their dignity and relevance in society.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Families should revive traditional values that promote respect and care for elderly persons. Younger generations should be encouraged to value the wisdom, experience, and contributions of elderly people within the family and community. Parents and community leaders should also educate children on the importance of respecting and supporting the elderly.
2. Community leaders and traditional institutions should organize cultural orientation programmes aimed at preserving positive cultural values and strengthening communal relationships. Such programmes should emphasize the importance of extended family systems, communal support, and respect for elders in society.
3. Government should establish welfare programmes and social support systems specifically targeted at elderly persons. This can include financial assistance, healthcare services, pension schemes, and community-based support programmes to improve the living conditions of elderly people.
4. Religious organizations, non-governmental organizations, and community associations should develop support initiatives for elderly persons within the community. These organizations can assist through visitation programmes, food support, healthcare assistance, and emotional support activities for elderly individuals who are neglected or isolated.

5. There should be increased public awareness campaigns on the challenges faced by elderly persons and the importance of protecting their dignity and welfare. Media platforms, schools, churches, and community gatherings should be used to educate people about the need to care for elderly persons.

5.4 Limitation of the study

During the course of carrying out this study, the researcher encountered certain limitations which affected the research process.

One of the major limitations of the study was financial constraint. The researcher experienced difficulties in sourcing sufficient funds needed for transportation, printing of questionnaires, and other materials required for data collection within the study area. This affected the ease and speed of conducting the research.

Time constraint was also a major limitation faced during the study. The researcher had to combine academic activities with fieldwork, making it difficult to devote enough time to extensive data collection and broader coverage of the study area.

Another limitation was the unwillingness of some respondents to provide adequate information. Some respondents were hesitant to answer questions relating to cultural practices and family issues because they considered such matters sensitive or personal. However, the researcher assured respondents of confidentiality in order to encourage cooperation.

The study was also limited to Obe community in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State. Therefore, the findings of the study may not fully represent the experiences of elderly persons in other communities or regions with different cultural and social conditions.

In addition, the researcher encountered challenges in accessing some elderly respondents due to age-related factors such as poor health, hearing difficulties, and communication barriers. This sometimes affected the quality and speed of data collection during interviews and discussions.

Despite these limitations, the researcher was able to gather sufficient information necessary for the successful completion of the study.

5.5 Area for further research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, the following suggestions are made for further research:

1. Future researchers should carry out similar studies in other communities and local government areas in Enugu State and Nigeria at large in order to compare findings and determine whether changing cultural values affect elderly persons in similar ways across different societies.
2. Further studies should examine the impact of modernization and globalization on traditional family systems and elderly care in both rural and urban communities.
3. Researchers should also investigate the role of government policies and social welfare programmes in improving the welfare and living conditions of elderly persons in Nigeria.
4. Additional studies can focus specifically on the psychological and emotional effects of loneliness, neglect, and social isolation among elderly persons in contemporary African societies.
5. Future research should explore the relationship between migration of young people and the increasing vulnerability of elderly persons in rural communities.
6. Researchers may also examine the influence of religion, social media, and Western education on changing cultural attitudes toward elderly persons in Nigerian society.

7. Further studies should consider using larger sample sizes and broader geographical coverage in order to obtain more comprehensive findings on the changing status of elderly persons in society.
8. Comparative studies can also be conducted between communities that still strongly uphold traditional cultural values and those that are highly modernized in order to determine the differences in elderly care and social support systems.

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