EDUCATION AS A CATALYST: ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF ADVOCACY COMMUNICATION ON PREVENTING ELDER ABUSE IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract
Elder abuse poses a significant challenge in Nigeria, particularly as the population of individuals aged 65 and above is expanding at a faster rate compared to other age groups. Despite Nigeria's strong emphasis on family values, many young people today struggle to provide support and care for the elderly. These senior citizens have made substantial contributions to society during their working years but find themselves dependent on government social assistance due to their inability to work and care for themselves adequately. Unfortunately, the government's legislation and initiatives to address the needs of the aging population remain insufficient. The study focuses on exploring the educational impact of advocacy communication in eradicating elder abuse, specifically in South-West Nigeria. It aims to understand how advocacy efforts can contribute to raising awareness, promoting education, and implementing preventive measures against elder abuse within the region. The study underscores the crucial role of education through advocacy communication in combating elder abuse. It highlights the need for the South-West Nigerian government to prioritize the safety and well-being of all citizens, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or age, through educational initiatives that address elder abuse. The study recommends identifying the complexities associated with existing approaches, acknowledging the inadequacies of current legal and policy measures, and fostering coordinated interagency efforts to effectively prevent the proliferation of elder abuse issues in Nigeria. By incorporating these educational insights, including awareness campaigns, training programs, and community engagement, South-West Nigeria can establish a comprehensive framework to combat elder abuse and promote a society that values and protects its elderly population.

Keywords: Advocacy, communication, education, elder abuse

1 INTRODUCTION
Elder abuse occurs when someone intentionally or unintentionally acts or fails to act, causing distress or harm to a senior citizen within a setting that requires trust (Phelan, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2022a) agrees with this definition, highlighting the multifaceted nature of abuse. It encompasses various elements such as the specifics of the abuse, the identities of the abuser and victim, the dynamics of their relationship, the presence of pain, the motivations behind the abuse, and the settings in which it occurs (Hall et al., 2022).

The increasing population of older individuals is a growing concern in contemporary societies, particularly in
Nigeria, which demands the implementation of advocacy communication strategies to protect their rights. The United Nations predicts that by 2050, the percentage of people aged 60 or older in the global population will rise from the current 21.1% (Brownell et al., 2021), representing approximately 841 million individuals. This demographic shift underscores the urgent need to address elder abuse and highlights the educational significance of advocacy communication in protecting the rights and well-being of older adults.

Elder abuse leads to numerous adverse outcomes, including death, injury, illness, decreased productivity, increased risk of hospitalization, hunger, and deprivation of basic human freedoms and respect (Hernandez-Tejada et al., 2020; Honarvar et al., 2020). These outcomes undermine the principles of social work and advocacy communication, which revolve around valuing and protecting the rights of individuals, promoting fair treatment, and recognizing cultural diversity (Bows & Penhale, 2018; Cox, 2020). Consequently, it is the responsibility of social workers to safeguard the rights of the elderly and ensure they are not subjected to injustice or violations of their human dignity by disseminating intentional messages through strategic media channels. WHO (2022b) emphasizes the urgent need for national governments and health and social care professionals to address the escalating problem of elder abuse, which poses a severe threat to public health and human rights.

Recognizing that the problem of elder abuse within a community can be closely linked to issues surrounding inequality of power and lack of knowledge, it becomes crucial to address both through the implementation of educational advocacy campaigns as a development communication approach. Educational advocacy campaigns go beyond using media platforms solely for lobbying policy changes; they provide a theoretical basis that simplifies and enhances the effectiveness of advocacy practices (Cox, 2020). In the context of elder abuse, advocacy communication can play a crucial role in raising awareness, mobilizing support, and influencing attitudes and behaviours towards the protection of the rights of older individuals.

The educational significance of advocacy communication in eradicating elder abuse is evident when considering the multifaceted nature of the problem and the human rights perspective that underlies it. Blundell et al. (2020) assert that recognizing the interests, rights, and needs of older individuals necessitates adopting a human rights perspective that values freedom, independence, and dignity. By understanding and promoting the rights and dignity of older persons in this way, advocacy communication can challenge societal norms, educate communities, and bring about meaningful social change. Moreover, as the population of older adults continues to increase, the need for aggressive policies, collaboration between agencies and attention to address the challenges they face becomes more apparent (Akapansung et al., 2021; WHO, 2022b). Advocacy communication can serve as a powerful tool to address these challenges, protect the rights of the elderly, and prevent injustices and violations of their human dignity.

By leveraging the power of advocacy communication, social workers and advocates can not only shed light on the detrimental consequences of elder abuse but also empower communities with knowledge and resources to prevent and respond to such abuse. These educational advocacy campaigns can foster a sense of collective responsibility and engage community members in actively promoting the well-being and dignity of older individuals. Additionally, through targeted messaging and strategic media channels, advocacy communication can challenge societal norms and attitudes that perpetuate elder abuse, ultimately working towards a more inclusive and just society for all generations.

In light of this overview, this paper is driven by the pressing need to tackle elder abuse and recognize the educational significance of advocacy communication. Its main objective is to assess the societal repercussions of elder abuse in South-west Nigeria, highlighting the role of advocacy communication as a vital educational tool and development communication technique. The study will delve into the theoretical foundations that underpin this research, drawing upon previous empirical studies and literature reviews. By doing so, it aims to offer valuable insights to guide educative advocacy efforts in the region, ultimately contributing to the prevention and eradication of elder abuse.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory, developed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes that individuals' behaviors are influenced by what they observe, imitate and model in others, which then serves as a guide for their own actions in the future (Adekoya et al., 2019). When applied to advocacy communication in the context of preventing elder abuse, this theory reveals its significant role in promoting education, raising awareness, and influencing behaviour change. Advocacy communication encompasses diverse forms of dialogue, actively promoting specific perspectives or agendas. Its utilization represents a remarkable stride in the ongoing
efforts to educate individuals and communities about the importance of avoiding elder abuse (Akers & Jennings, 2015). Through this approach, awareness is heightened, and advocacy communication inspires individuals to embrace preventive behaviors against elder abuse (Telzer et al., 2018).

Moreover, advocacy communication plays a crucial role in educating communities, enhancing awareness, and empowering individuals to identify signs of abuse, intervene, and seek assistance. Furthermore, it challenges ageism and prejudice, fostering positive attitudes towards the elderly and nurturing a culture of respect and care. By integrating the principles of this theory, advocacy communication becomes a potent educational tool for preventing elder abuse and cultivating a more inclusive society.

2.2 Agenda-setting Theory

Agenda-setting theory, as proposed by McCombs (2004), offers insights into the influence and mechanisms of advocacy efforts. This theory explains how campaigns aimed at raising awareness about issues like elder abuse can effectively bring these concerns to the forefront of policy discussions. The power of a persuasive message lies in its ability to shape how the target audience perceives the significance of events (Sereno & Mortensen, 1970). According to this theory, advocates can influence individuals’ thoughts and discussions about elder abuse by determining what should be highlighted and discussed (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). McCombs and Shaw, who developed the theory, argue that advocacy plays a crucial role in setting the agenda and establishing a link between communication and the public's prioritized list of concerns. By strategically framing and emphasizing the importance of elder abuse, advocates can shape the public discourse and policy agenda to address this critical issue.

2.3 Critical Theory

Critical theory offers a valuable framework for analyzing power dynamics, social inequalities, and structures of oppression in relation to abuse (Adekoya et al., 2019). Advocacy communication, rooted in critical theory, serves as a powerful tool for challenging power imbalances, raising awareness, and advocating for policy changes and social justice. Through media campaigns, community engagement, and collaboration with stakeholders, advocacy communication can shed light on the underlying causes of elder abuse, such as ageism, gender inequality, economic disparities, and cultural norms. Seiler (2018) emphasizes that such access to information allows individuals to comprehend the ways they could be oppressed and empowers them to take necessary actions when faced with repressive forces. Thus, by amplifying marginalized voices, and highlighting the experiences of elderly individuals affected by abuse, advocacy communication can foster a critical understanding of the complexities surrounding elder abuse in South-West Nigeria. Moreover, it can facilitate dialogue, mobilize communities, and promote collective action to demand policy reforms that address the structural factors contributing to elder abuse, ultimately striving for a more equitable and just society for the elderly population.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Elder abuse in South-West Nigeria: Prevalence, Patterns and Implications

Elder abuse encompasses a range of harmful behaviours, including physical, psychological, sexual, economic, or social harm, as defined by the National Council on Aging (NCOA, 2021). WHO (2022a) further emphasizes that elder abuse may manifest as sexual, financial, and neglect, and can be perpetrated by both community (such as family members) and institutional caregivers. Providing additional clarity, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2021) specifies that elder abuse involves purposeful actions or omissions that result in harm or pose a potential risk of harm to the elderly.

Several studies conducted in South-west Nigeria have shed light on the prevalence of elder abuse in the region. Olasupo et al. (2020) conducted research in Osun State and found that minimal social support increases the vulnerability of elderly individuals to elder abuse, while also revealing gender differences associated with the experience of elder abuse. Similarly, a study by Adeleke et al. (2017) in Oyo State highlighted the adverse impact of low social and economic status on the health and well-being of the elderly, leading to depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms due to feelings of rejection.

Onigbogi (2015) conducted a study in Lagos State, which indicated a general prevalence of elder abuse at 22.8% over a one-year period. The study further revealed that financial elder abuse was more prevalent in urban areas, likely due to the presence of financial dependents in old age. In contrast, psychological abuse was more common in rural areas, primarily due to a lack of financial resources leading to poor health status among the elderly. Additionally, elderly individuals who experienced physical abuse in urban areas had limited social support from friends and overall reduced social support compared to non-victims. In rural
settings, elder neglect was associated with decreased family support and disconnection from their children.

In Ado-Ekiti, Ola and Oluleke (2012) found neglect and abandonment to be the most common forms of abuse experienced by the elderly. Their study also revealed a positive correlation between age and the level of abuse, indicating that older individuals face a higher risk. Health status was another significant factor influencing the type of abuse experienced, with healthier individuals experiencing less abuse and vice versa. A study conducted by Cadmus et al. (2011) in Oyo State compared urban and rural regions, highlighting the dominance of various forms of elder abuse. Social abuse, physical abuse, financial abuse, and emotional abuse were all more prevalent in urban areas, while sexual abuse occurred exclusively in urban regions.

Overall, these studies provide compelling evidence of the existence and varying patterns of elder abuse in South-west Nigeria, emphasizing the importance of addressing this issue and implementing measures to protect and support the elderly population.

3.2 Elder Abuse: Exploring Cultural Significance, Support Systems and the Role of Education

Adelakun and Obue (2020) emphasize the cultural significance attached to respecting the elderly in Nigeria. They are not only seen as the custodians of traditions but also valuable sources of wisdom and support (Gilson et al., 2018). Despite this, elder abuse occurs when these individuals in need of care and protection are neglected, lacking access to essential services such as healthcare, mental health support, and basic necessities (Olasupo & Odunjo-Saka, 2021). The well-being of older individuals in Nigeria is greatly influenced by the support they receive from their communities and the state (Mbam et al., 2022). Unfortunately, psycho-social support for the elderly is limited in this developing country, leaving many vulnerable to poverty, exploitation, and abandonment (Olasupo & Odunjo-Saka, 2021). Unlike countries like Brazil, South Africa, and India, Nigeria lacks comprehensive non-contributory social pension systems and sufficient social support programs for the elderly (Collins et al., 2020). Only a few states in South-West Nigeria, such as Ekiti and Osun, have implemented programs to assist the elderly beyond the support they receive from their own families (Gilson et al., 2018; Murray & Musselwhite, 2019).

Despite the recognition of the importance of older individuals in society and the advocacy by scholars like Ojifinni and Uchendu (2022) and international organizations such as the United Nations (Yon et al., 2019), there are various factors that hinder the provision of adequate care for the elderly. Family dynamics play a crucial role in this regard, as studies show that retirees in Lagos state, especially those without surviving children, are more vulnerable to neglect and deprivation (Olasupo & Odunjo-Saka, 2021). The employment status of adult children also significantly influences their ability to provide care for their elderly parents, with unemployment and other challenges hindering their fulfilment of filial obligations (Balogun & Iduemre, 2020). Balogun and Iduemre (2020) argue that a combination of official government aid, family assistance, and informal support is necessary to ensure the well-being of the aging population.

Moreover, the impact of social isolation indicators on the life satisfaction of the elderly in Oyo State has been highlighted by Van Den Brule et al. (2019). Factors such as participation in community activities and communication with loved ones significantly influence the well-being of the elderly. These findings underscore the importance of friendship, community engagement, and a sense of meaning in the lives of older adults (Fakoya et al., 2020). As societal changes and financial constraints make it increasingly challenging to maintain the traditional extended family structure, these factors become even more crucial for the elderly population. Research has consistently shown that the majority of older adults do not wish to live alone, with those living with their nuclear families being the most common arrangement (Akosile et al., 2018; Eledo et al., 2020; Van Den Brule et al., 2019). In Ibadan, Nigeria, it has been observed that most older individuals reside with their families, aligning with the findings of Eledo et al. (2020). However, this contradicts the findings of Wang et al. (2022), who reported that half of the surveyed individuals felt neglected by their own relatives.

In conclusion, addressing elder abuse in South-west Nigeria necessitates the development of comprehensive support systems, social policies, and community engagement that prioritize the elderly. It is vital to recognize and overcome the challenges posed by family dynamics and social isolation in order to provide adequate care for the elderly and promote their overall well-being. Education plays a crucial role in raising awareness about these issues, fostering a sense of empathy and responsibility among individuals, and empowering communities to actively participate in creating a supportive and inclusive environment for the elderly. By integrating education initiatives that highlight the importance of elder care and advocate for their rights, we can work towards a society that values and protects its older citizens, thus improving their quality of life.
3.3 Educational and Advocacy Communication Approaches to Prevent Elder Abuse in South-West Nigeria

Addressing elder abuse requires effective educational and advocacy communication approaches that can raise awareness, educate communities, and mobilize stakeholders in South-West Nigeria. These approaches include media awareness campaigns, social media engagement, community outreach programs, collaborations with local stakeholders, and training initiatives for professionals like social workers and healthcare providers, to prevent elder abuse and promote a culture of respect and protection for the elderly population.

3.3.1 Media awareness campaigns

Media awareness campaigns play a vital role in raising public awareness about abuse in general (Adekoya et al., 2019). By utilizing various media channels, such as television, radio, newspapers, and online platforms, these campaigns can disseminate information, share stories, and highlight the consequences of elder abuse. Indigenous language adaptation is crucial to ensuring effective communication and engaging the target audience in South-West Nigeria. Oyesomi et al. (2017) highlight the significance of recognizing and incorporating indigenous languages in communication processes. Indigenous languages are essential for effective communication because they are intimately connected to the culture, identity, and unique perspectives of a particular community. By embracing indigenous languages, societies can ensure that all members have equal opportunities to access and participate in communication channels.

3.3.2 Social media engagement

The utilization of social media platforms presents unique opportunities for advocacy communication in the prevention of elder abuse. Engaging with social media enables a broader reach, interactive communication, and the ability to deliver targeted messaging. Social media campaigns can effectively employ hashtags to raise awareness, share stories and information about elder abuse, and facilitate the dissemination of valuable resources (Pillemer et al., 2016; Yon et al., 2017). In addition, involving social media influencers and celebrities who genuinely care about elder abuse prevention can significantly enhance the impact of advocacy campaigns. These influencers can engage with online communities, share educational content, initiate discussions, and provide accessible resources to increase awareness, challenge misconceptions, and encourage behaviour change among diverse audiences in South-West Nigeria. Their involvement brings credibility and amplifies the reach of the campaigns, leveraging their influence to foster a collective commitment to preventing elder abuse.

3.3.3 Community outreach and stakeholder collaboration

Community outreach programs play a pivotal role in the prevention of elder abuse by actively engaging with local communities in South-West Nigeria. These programs encompass various activities such as workshops, seminars, and educational sessions conducted in collaboration with community leaders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and government agencies (Sweileh, 2021). Through partnerships, resource sharing, and coordinated efforts, these collaborations amplify the effectiveness of advocacy communication initiatives. By fostering multi-sectoral collaborations, outreach programs facilitate improved policy development, enhanced service provision, and a more coordinated response to elder abuse in South-West Nigeria. Regular stakeholder meetings, knowledge-sharing platforms, and joint campaigns create a collective and inclusive approach towards preventing elder abuse. This collaborative approach ensures that the programs are culturally relevant, sustainable, and sensitive to the specific needs and dynamics of the local communities.

3.3.4 Training initiatives for professionals

Training initiatives targeting professionals, such as social workers and healthcare providers, play a crucial role in improving their knowledge, skills, and awareness of elder abuse prevention. These comprehensive training programs cover a range of essential areas, including identification and reporting protocols, cultural sensitivity, ethical considerations, and intervention strategies. By participating in ongoing professional development opportunities and capacity-building workshops, professionals ensure they are equipped to effectively respond to elder abuse cases, provide support to victims, and advocate for policy changes to protect the elderly. Through these training initiatives, professionals actively engage in enhancing their capabilities and staying up-to-date with the latest research and best practices in elder abuse prevention, allowing them to better serve the needs of older adults and contribute to the overall well-being of the community.
In conclusion, effective education and advocacy communication approaches are essential in preventing elder abuse in South-West Nigeria. Media awareness campaigns, social media engagement, community outreach programs, collaborations with local stakeholders, and training initiatives for professionals play a significant role in raising awareness, challenging societal norms, empowering communities, and promoting policy changes. Integrating these approaches can enhance the effectiveness of elder abuse prevention efforts, ensuring the well-being and protection of the elderly population in South-West Nigeria. Additionally, regular evaluation and adaptation of these strategies based on local context and feedback are essential for their continued success.

3.4 Stakeholder Engagement in Preventing Elder Abuse

Stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in preventing elder abuse by harnessing the collective efforts of various stakeholders. This literature review discusses the importance of engaging different stakeholders, including media practitioners, government agencies, NGOs, healthcare providers, law enforcement, community leaders, the elderly themselves, and the general public in preventing elder abuse. It explores the unique contributions and strategies of each stakeholder group to effectively address and prevent elder abuse, ensuring the well-being and protection of the elderly population.

3.4.1 Media practitioners

Media practitioners play a significant role in preventing elder abuse through their ability to shape public opinion and disseminate information. In advocacy communication efforts, media practitioners can contribute to raising awareness, changing attitudes, and influencing behavior related to elder abuse. Through news articles, documentaries, radio and television programs, and social media platforms, they can highlight the issue, share stories of elder abuse, and educate the public on prevention strategies. Media practitioners can collaborate with the government, NGOs, law enforcement agencies etc. to develop impactful campaigns that engage the public and promote understanding and empathy towards the elderly. By amplifying the voices of victims, showcasing successful interventions, and providing resources for reporting and support, media practitioners can contribute to a broader societal response to elder abuse. It is crucial to recognize that media practitioners have the capacity to raise awareness and educate the public about elder abuse without necessarily relying on direct involvement from victims. Their role primarily revolves around fulfilling their social responsibility of providing information and promoting education.

3.4.2 Government Agencies

Government agencies have a significant role in preventing elder abuse through policy development, legislation, and enforcement. They can establish regulatory frameworks and guidelines that protect the rights and safety of the elderly (Aakhus & Bzdak, 2015). Government agencies can allocate resources for elder abuse prevention programs, support research initiatives, and collaborate with other stakeholders to raise awareness. By engaging with government agencies, advocacy communication efforts can shape policies, advocate for stronger legal protections, and ensure the effective implementation of preventive measures.

3.4.3 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs are instrumental in preventing elder abuse by providing direct services, raising awareness, and advocating for policy changes. They often offer support to victims of abuse, including counselling, legal aid, and shelter services. NGOs can collaborate with other stakeholders to implement community-based prevention programs, conduct training for professionals and community members, and promote awareness campaigns (Bourne, 2016). Engaging with NGOs strengthens the collective effort to prevent elder abuse, as they bring specialized knowledge, expertise, and community trust.

3.4.4 Health Care Providers

Healthcare providers, including physicians, nurses, social workers, and caregivers, are vital stakeholders in preventing elder abuse. They play a key role in early identification, intervention, and support for elderly individuals at risk of or experiencing abuse (Aakhus & Bzdak, 2015). This is because they receive specialized training on recognizing signs of abuse, reporting protocols, and providing appropriate care to the elderly. Collaboration with advocacy communication efforts allows healthcare providers to disseminate information, educate patients and their families, and establish referral networks for victims of elder abuse.

3.4.5 Law Enforcement agencies

Law enforcement agencies have a critical responsibility in preventing elder abuse through investigation, prosecution, and enforcing protective orders. They can collaborate with other stakeholders to develop
protocols and training programs that enhance their ability to identify and respond to elder abuse cases effectively. Law enforcement agencies can participate in awareness campaigns, engage with community leaders, and build trust with elderly individuals to encourage reporting and discourage perpetrators.

3.4.6 Community Leaders

Community leaders, encompassing religious leaders, elders, and influential figures, play a distinctive and vital role in preventing elder abuse within their communities. These leaders possess the ability to disseminate awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by the elderly (Browning et al., 2020). Through their influence, they can promote active community engagement, raise awareness about elder abuse, and challenge detrimental cultural norms or practices that perpetuate mistreatment. By collaborating with advocacy communication efforts, community leaders can endorse prevention initiatives, organize community events, and incorporate messages addressing elder abuse prevention into their teachings or sermons. The involvement of community leaders fosters a collective sense of responsibility and mobilizes community members to take action in preventing elder abuse.

3.4.7 The Elderly

Engaging the elderly themselves is essential for the effective prevention of elder abuse. Empowering them to voice their concerns, share their experiences, and participate in prevention efforts ensures that solutions are tailored to their needs. Advocacy communication can provide platforms for the elderly to share their stories, advocate for their rights, and contribute to awareness campaigns. Involving the elderly in program planning, decision-making processes, and community activities fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment, leading to more effective prevention strategies.

3.4.8 General public

Preventing elder abuse necessitates a collaborative effort involving all sectors of society, including the general public. While the general public may not possess formal roles like other stakeholders, their engagement and support are pivotal in fostering a society that prioritizes the well-being and protection of its elderly population. The general public can play an active role in raising awareness by utilizing various platforms such as social media, interpersonal gatherings, or educational walks to disseminate information and initiate conversations. By promoting attitudinal and behavioural changes within their own circles, they can create a ripple effect of positive change. Additionally, the general public can encourage the reporting of suspected cases, facilitate the implementation of interventions, and advocate for policies that safeguard the rights and safety of the elderly. Their collective action and advocacy contribute to the overall prevention of elder abuse and the creation of a more inclusive and protective society.

4 BARRIERS TO EDUCATIONAL AND ADVOCACY COMMUNICATION IN PREVENTING ELDER ABUSE

Effective advocacy communication is crucial in preventing elder abuse, but numerous barriers and challenges can impede its success. These barriers include but are not limited to cultural norms, lack of resources, media airtime, silence of elder abuse victims, limited access to education, and societal attitudes towards the elderly. Understanding and addressing these barriers are essential for developing strategies that promote effective communication and create a safer environment for the elderly.

4.1.1 Cultural norms

Barriers to combating elder abuse can be significantly influenced by cultural norms (Fraga Dominguez et al., 2021). Traditional beliefs, such as adherence to age-based hierarchies and respect for authority, can discourage open discussions about abuse within families and communities. This cultural reluctance to address the issue contributes to a culture of silence, making it difficult to report incidents of elder abuse. Moreover, negative societal attitudes towards the elderly, including ageism and marginalization, can further impede advocacy communication efforts. These attitudes perpetuate a lack of empathy, undervalue the experiences and contributions of older individuals, and hinder the implementation of protective measures. To address these barriers, it is essential to challenge stereotypes, promote intergenerational dialogue and collaboration, and foster a culture that respects, includes, and appreciates the elderly. By actively working to transform cultural norms, advocacy communication can play a crucial role in combating elder abuse and promoting a society that values and safeguards its older population.

4.1.2 Lack of resources

Lack of resources is an additional obstacle to the prevention of elder abuse (Adelakun & Obue, 2020; Myhre
et al., 2020). Shortage of resources, including funding, personnel, and infrastructure, can limit the reach and impact of advocacy communication initiatives. Inadequate financial support may hinder the development and implementation of comprehensive educational programs and awareness campaigns. Insufficiently trained personnel, such as social workers and community educators, can limit the capacity to effectively engage with diverse populations. Addressing these resource gaps requires mobilizing government support, forging partnerships with NGOs, and securing sustainable funding to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of advocacy communication efforts.

4.1.3 Media airtime

Disseminating advocacy messages on elder abuse faces obstacles due to limited media airtime and competing priorities. Media outlets often have constrained space or time to address this issue amidst other topics they perceive as more urgent or significant (Myhre et al., 2020). Moreover, commercial interests or biases in media coverage may sideline elder abuse prevention efforts. To overcome these challenges, strategic collaboration with media organizations, building relationships with journalists, and leveraging alternative platforms like social media become crucial. These approaches allow for the amplification of advocacy messages and reach broader audiences, ensuring that elder abuse prevention efforts receive the attention they deserve.

4.1.4 Silence of elder abuse victims

Effective advocacy communication efforts can be hindered by the silence of elder abuse victims (Muhammad et al., 2021). Many victims may feel reluctant to disclose their experiences due to fear, shame, or concerns about potential repercussions. In some cases, individuals may be unaware that they are being abused, making it challenging to convey the urgency of preventative measures and the gravity of the problem to the relevant stakeholders (Bows & Penhale, 2018; Hulko et al., 2019). Overcoming this barrier requires creating safe spaces where victims feel empowered to share their stories, seek support, and break the cycle of silence. Ensuring confidentiality, providing counseling services, and establishing trusted reporting mechanisms can help encourage victims to come forward and participate in advocacy efforts. For example, the Lagos State Domestic Violence Response Team has proven impactful victims who have shared their experiences. Similarly, establishing a dedicated division or team specifically focused on supporting elderly individuals would greatly contribute to addressing elder abuse and providing the necessary assistance to those in need. By emulating successful models such as the Lagos State Domestic Violence Response Team, a specialized division for the elderly can offer tailored support and services, creating a positive and empowering environment for elder abuse victims.

4.1.5 Limited access to education

Limited access to education, particularly among marginalized populations, can hinder the effectiveness of advocacy communication in preventing elder abuse. Illiteracy, low educational attainment, and language barriers may impede the comprehension and dissemination of information. Overcoming this barrier involves developing culturally sensitive educational materials, utilizing visual and audio formats, and employing community-based approaches that consider the diverse educational backgrounds and needs of the target audience.

5 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that elder abuse reveals that is a prevalent issue in South-West Nigeria with varying patterns in different states. The study further concludes that cultural significance, limited support systems, family dynamics, and social isolation as key factors impacting the well-being of the elderly. To combat elder abuse effectively, comprehensive support systems, social policies, as well as stakeholder and community engagement that prioritize the elderly need to be developed. Furthermore, education plays a crucial role in raising awareness and empowering communities to create a supportive and inclusive environment for the elderly, ultimately improving their quality of life.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussions of this paper, several recommendations can be proposed to address elder abuse and promote the well-being of the elderly in South-West Nigeria. Firstly, it is essential to emphasize the continued efforts of education through advocacy communication in preventing elder abuse and fostering a culture of respect, care, and protection for the elderly. This can be achieved through targeted media campaigns, workshops, and community outreach programs that educate the general public, community leaders, and stakeholders about the prevalence and consequences of elder abuse. By raising awareness
about this issue, individuals can be encouraged to take action, report suspected cases of abuse, and support preventive measures.

In addition, collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders are crucial in effectively addressing elder abuse. Government agencies, NGOs, healthcare providers, law enforcement, and community leaders should work together to develop comprehensive strategies and interventions. This collaboration can involve sharing resources, expertise, and best practices to ensure a holistic approach to preventing elder abuse and providing support to victims. Engaging the elderly themselves in decision-making processes and involving them as active participants in the development and implementation of programs can also contribute to their empowerment and well-being.

In conclusion, to prevent elder abuse and promote the well-being of the elderly in South-West Nigeria, it is essential to continue educating through advocacy communication, collaboration, and overcoming barriers. By implementing these recommendations, South-West Nigeria can strive towards a society that values and protects its older population, ensuring their dignity, safety, and overall quality of life.

REFERENCE LIST


