

ESTABLISHMENT OF OLD PEOPLE'S HOMES AS A POTENTIAL SOLUTION TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ELDERLY IN NIGERIAN SOCIETY

BY

¹Balogun, Olukunle Olagunju, ²Ogundipe, Ololade Gbeminiyi & ³Balogun, Tolulope Adeola

¹Tai Solarin University of Education, Department of Adult and Development Education, College of Specialized and Professional Education.

²Department of Sociological Studies Education, Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State, Nigeria.

³Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu – Ijebu, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Social Studies.

Email: kunlegunju1961@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined establishment of old people's homes as a potential solution to address challenges faced by the elderly in Ogun State, Nigeria. This study employed descriptive survey research design where questionnaire was used to acquire necessary data for the research work. Population comprises all old people in Ijebu Ode metropolise of Ogun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 50 old people from each of the three local governments to make a total of 150 old people in Ijebu Ode metropolise as sample for study. Three (3) research questions were raised and answered in this study. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha and data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools. Findings revealed that, inadequate healthcare delivery system, financial constraints, social isolation and lack of family support are the primary challenges faced by the elderly. Also, lack of social interaction, community engagement, insecurity and peace of mind independence are the expected benefits of establishing old people's homes. Furthermore, the study revealed that, regulatory challenges such as licensing and compliance requirements, Socio-economic factors, such as poverty and unequal access to healthcare services, are the potential barriers associated with the establishment and operation of old people's homes. It was concluded and recommended that advocating for the establishment of old people's homes aligns with the need for innovative, flexible, and culturally sensitive solutions and government should therefore advocate for policy reforms that addresses the unique needs of the elderly in Nigeria.

Keywords: Potential, Solution, Challenges, Elderly, Establishment

Introduction

The global demographic landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, marked by a remarkable increase in the elderly population. This demographic shift brings forth a multitude of challenges for societies worldwide, particularly in providing adequate care and support for their aging citizens. As individuals age, they often encounter a myriad of challenges encompassing physical health limitations, mental health issues, social isolation, financial constraints, and a lack of accessible care options (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2019). In light of these challenges, the establishment of old people's homes emerges as a potential solution to address the multifaceted needs of the elderly population. Old people's homes, also known as nursing homes, retirement communities, or assisted living facilities, offer a range of services tailored to meet the diverse needs of older adults. These services often include medical care, assistance with daily activities, social and recreational programs, and a supportive living environment (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018). While old people's homes have been subject to scrutiny and debate, their role in providing specialized care and support for the elderly cannot be overlooked. Research indicates that well-designed and well-managed old people's homes can significantly enhance the quality of life for older adults, promoting their overall well-being and social integration (Kane & Kane, 2010). According to Okunola (2012), old people's home started with institutions for the care of aged persons in Ibadan, they operated under the auspices of the missionary group. the inmates were mostly females and most of them, by and large senile had been

collected, which indicated they are from the way, rescued from unruly crowds who yelled at them, giving the impression that, they were being rewarded for alleged sins of the past, the sins of being ‘witches and wizards. From the report of Okunola (2012) that, old people’s homes is best promoted at the local level with local communities participating in its management, but pilot projects could be promoted at State and national for the purpose of demonstrating standards.

One primary role of old people's homes is to offer comprehensive medical care and assistance with daily activities for residents who may have complex health needs or physical limitations. This includes access to skilled nursing care, medication management, physical therapy, and other medical services necessary for maintaining optimal health and managing chronic conditions (American Geriatrics Society, 2014). In addition to medical care, old people's homes often provide various support services aimed at enhancing the overall quality of life for residents. These may include assistance with personal care tasks such as bathing, dressing, and grooming, as well as support with household chores and meal preparation. By offering these services, old people's homes help older adults maintain their independence and dignity while ensuring their basic needs are met (National Institute on Aging, 2020). Furthermore, old people's homes serve as social hubs where residents can engage in a variety of social and recreational activities. These facilities often organize group outings, fitness classes, educational seminars, and cultural events to promote social interaction, stimulate cognitive function, and prevent feelings of isolation and loneliness among residents (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2016). Moreover, old people's homes provide a safe and supportive living environment for older adults, offering security features, emergency response systems, and 24-hour staff assistance to ensure the well-being and safety of residents. This sense of security and peace of mind is particularly important for older adults who may be living alone or facing mobility challenges. Overall, old people's homes play a vital role in supporting the needs of the elderly population by offering a range of services designed to promote health, independence, social engagement, and safety (National Institute on Aging, 2020). By providing comprehensive care and a supportive living environment, these facilities contribute to enhancing the overall quality of life for older adults and facilitating successful aging in place.

The challenges faced by the elderly encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from physical health limitations to social and economic constraints. As individuals age, they are more susceptible to chronic illnesses, disabilities, and cognitive impairments, which can significantly impact their quality of life (Marengoni et al., 2011). Moreover, the prevalence of multi-morbidity among older adults further complicates their healthcare needs, necessitating comprehensive and coordinated care approaches. Social isolation and loneliness are prevalent issues among the elderly population, particularly for those living alone or experiencing loss of social connections due to retirement, mobility limitations, or bereavement (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2018). These factors not only contribute to mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety but also exacerbate physical health conditions and reduce overall well-being. More so, financial constraints pose another significant challenge for many older adults, especially those living on fixed incomes or relying solely on retirement savings. Rising healthcare costs, inadequate pension benefits, and limited access to affordable housing further compound financial insecurity among the elderly (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2014). As a result, many older adults struggle to meet their basic needs and access essential healthcare services. Furthermore, the lack of accessible and affordable care options presents a substantial barrier to aging in place for many older adults. While aging in place is a preferred option for most seniors, limited availability of home-based care services, as well as physical and environmental barriers, often necessitate institutional care such as nursing homes or assisted living facilities. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses healthcare, social support, housing, and economic policies tailored to the unique needs of the elderly population.

However, the establishment and success of Old People's Homes in Nigeria necessitate a supportive policy framework that acknowledges the unique challenges faced by the elderly and fosters an environment conducive to their well-

being. Government policies should aim to incentivize and facilitate the creation of Old People's Homes, recognizing them as integral components of a comprehensive elderly care system. In doing so, policymakers can explore tax incentives, grants, or subsidies for organizations and entities involved in the establishment and operation of these facilities (ILO, 2020). Additionally, policies should address licensing, accreditation, and standards to ensure that Old People's Homes meet the necessary criteria for providing high-quality care. These standards should encompass aspects such as staff training, safety measures, and the overall quality of life offered to residents (Adebusoye et al., 2019). Regular assessments and evaluations can further contribute to the continuous improvement of these facilities, aligning them with evolving best practices in elderly care.

A seamless integration of Old People's Homes with existing healthcare and social welfare programs is essential for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to elderly care. Government initiatives should focus on creating linkages between these facilities and primary healthcare services, ensuring that residents have access to medical professionals and specialized care when needed (Oladapo, 2018). Collaborative efforts between Old People's Homes and social welfare programs can address the financial aspects of elderly care. This may involve exploring funding mechanisms, subsidy programs, or partnerships with private entities to ensure the sustainability of these facilities while maintaining affordability for the elderly and their families. By aligning Old People's Homes with broader government strategies, policymakers can contribute to the creation of a cohesive and effective system for elderly care in Nigeria. Therefore, this study sought to look into how establishment of old people's homes can serve as a potential solution to address challenges faced by the elderly in Ogun State

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this research is to examine the establishment of old people's homes as a potential solution to address challenges faced by the elderly in Ogun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of this research work are to:

- i. Examine the primary challenges faced by the elderly population in Ogun State.
- ii. Examine the advantages and benefits of establishing old people's homes as a solution to address the challenges faced by the elderly in Ogun State
- iii. Examine the potential barriers associated with the establishment and operation of old people's homes in Ogun State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What are the primary challenges faced by the elderly population in Ogun State?
- ii. What are the advantages and benefits of establishing old people's homes as a solution to address the challenges faced by the elderly in Ogun State?
- iii. What are the potential barriers associated with the establishment and operation of old people's homes in Ogun State?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population comprises of all old people Ijebu Ode metropolis of Ogun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 50 old people from each three local government to make a total of 150 old people as sample for study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contained items on the main title of study. The instrument was given to experts for construct and content validation. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the primary challenges faced by the elderly population in Ogun State?

Table 1

S/N	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED		Mean (\bar{x})	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent (%)	Freq (N)	Percent (%)		
1.	Access to healthcare	118	78.7	32	21.3	3.09	0.897
2.	Financial constraints	130	86.6	20	13.4	3.31	0.732
3.	Social isolation	125	83.3	25	16.7	3.18	0.786
4.	Lack of family support	127	84.7	23	15.3	3.13	0.748
5.	Inadequate housing	126	84.0	24	16.0	3.27	0.843
Weighted Mean (\bar{x}) = 3.196 and SD = 0.801							

Table 1 above, shows that primary challenges faced by the elderly population in Ogun State, Nigeria as access to healthcare with ($\bar{x} = 3.09$, $SD = 0.897$), financial constraints ($\bar{x} = 3.31$, $SD = 0.732$), social isolation ($\bar{x} = 3.18$, $SD = 0.786$), lack of family support ($\bar{x} = 3.13$, $SD = 0.748$) and inadequate housing ($\bar{x} = 3.27$, $SD = 0.843$). This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high ($\bar{x} = 3.196$, $SD = 0.801$) showing the primary challenges faced by the elderly population in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What are the advantages and benefits of establishing old people's homes as a solution to address the challenges faced by the elderly in Ogun State?

Table 2

S/N	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED		Mean (\bar{x})	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent (%)	Freq (N)	Percent (%)		
1.	Old people's homes provide specialized medical care tailored to the needs of the elderly population.	104	69.3	46	30.7	3.09	0.882
2.	Old people's homes facilitate social interaction and community engagement among residents.	107	71.4	43	28.6	3.01	0.894
3.	Old people's homes provide a sense of security and peace of mind for residents and their families.	120	80.0	30	20.0	3.07	0.887
4.	Old people's homes promote independence and autonomy for older adults while providing necessary support.	114	76.0	36	24.0	3.12	0.955
5.	Old people's homes play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for the elderly population in Ogun State.	107	71.3	43	28.7	3.14	0.956
Weighted Mean (\bar{x}) = 3.086						and SD = 0.915	

Table 2 above, indicated that old people's homes provide specialized medical care tailored to the needs of the elderly population ($\bar{x} = 3.09$, $SD = 0.882$), old people's homes facilitate social interaction and community engagement among residents ($\bar{x} = 3.01$, $SD = 0.894$), old people's homes provide a sense of security and peace of mind for residents and

their families ($\alpha = 3.07$, $SD = 0.887$), old people's homes promote independence and autonomy for older adults while providing necessary support ($\alpha = 3.12$, $SD = 0.955$) and old people's homes play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for the elderly population in Ogun State ($\alpha = 3.14$, $SD = 0.956$). This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high ($\alpha = 3.086$, $SD = 0.915$) showing the advantages and benefits of establishing old people's homes as a solution to address the challenges faced by the elderly in Ogun State.

Research Question 3: What are the potential barriers associated with the establishment and operation of old people's homes in Ogun State?

**Table 3:
Potentials Barriers**

S/N	Items	AGREED		DISAGREED		Mean (α)	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	Regulatory Challenges, such as licensing and compliance requirements, may hinder the establishment of old people's homes in Ogun State	122	81.3	28	18.7	3.15	0.895
2.	Limited financial resources and funding constraints may pose barriers to establishing and maintaining old people's homes in Ogun State.	130	86.6	20	13.4	3.29	0.830
3.	Inadequate infrastructure, including lack of suitable facilities and resources, may impede the establishment and operation of old people's homes in Ogun State.	120	80.0	30	20.0	3.06	0.985
4.	Shortages of skilled healthcare professionals, such as nurses and caregivers, may affect the quality of care provided in old people's homes in Ogun State.	123	82.0	27	18.0	3.11	0.916
5.	Socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and unequal access to healthcare services, may affect the affordability and accessibility of old people's homes in Ogun State.	98	65.3	52	34.7	2.91	1.077
Weighted Mean (α) = 3.104						and	SD = 0.9406

Table 3 above, indicated that regulatory Challenges, such as licensing and compliance requirements, may hinder the establishment of old people's homes in Ogun State. ($\alpha = 3.15$, $SD = 0.895$), limited financial resources and funding constraints may pose barriers to establishing and maintaining old people's homes in Ogun State ($\alpha = 3.29$, $SD = 0.830$), inadequate infrastructure, including lack of suitable facilities and resources, may impede the establishment and operation of old people's homes in Ogun State ($\alpha = 3.06$, $SD = 0.985$), shortages of skilled healthcare professionals, such as nurses and caregivers, may affect the quality of care provided in old people's homes in Ogun State ($\alpha = 3.11$, $SD = 0.916$) and socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and unequal access to healthcare services, may affect the affordability and accessibility of old people's homes in Ogun State ($\alpha = 2.91$, $SD = 1.077$). This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high ($\alpha = 3.104$, $SD = 0.9406$) showing the potential barriers associated with the establishment and operation of old people's homes in Ogun State.

Discussion

From table 1 above, research question 1 has a weighted mean of 3.196 which is above the benchmark of 2.50. This shows the primary challenges faced by the elderly population in Ogun State, Nigeria. Therefore, this finding agrees with the findings of Cacioppo and Cacioppo (2014) who stated that the primary challenges faced by the elderly population in society can vary depending on factors such as location, socioeconomic status, and access to healthcare. However, financial constraints pose another significant challenge for many older adults, especially those living on fixed incomes or relying solely on retirement savings. Rising healthcare costs, inadequate pension benefits, and limited access to affordable housing further compound financial insecurity among the elderly.

From table 2 above, research question 2 has a weighted mean of 3.086 which is above the benchmark of 2.50. This indicated the advantages and benefits of establishing old people's homes as a solution to address the challenges faced by the elderly in Ogun State. The above finding is in congruence with the findings of American Geriatrics Society(2014) who revealed that the primary benefits of old people's homes is to offer comprehensive medical care and assistance with daily activities for residents who may have complex health needs or physical limitations. This includes access to skilled nursing care, medication management, physical therapy, and other medical services necessary for maintaining optimal health and managing chronic conditions. In addition to medical care, old people's homes often provide various support services aimed at enhancing the overall quality of life for residents. From table 3 above, research question 3 has a weighted mean of 3.104 which is above the benchmark of 2.50. Thus, this revealed the potential barriers associated with the establishment and operation of old people's homes in Ogun State .Hence, this finding is in resonance with the findings of Ogundele and Ogundele (2019) who is of the opinion that potential barriers associated with the establishment and operation of old people's homes includes regulatory challenges, financial constraints, infrastructure and resources, workforce shortages, stigma and cultural beliefs, community opposition, accessibility and transportation, socioeconomic factors, legal and administrative hurdles, healthcare system challenges etc.

Conclusion

The establishment of Old People's Homes presents a promising solution to the pressing challenges faced by the elderly in Nigerian society. The aging population is growing, and traditional family structures are undergoing changes that affect the ability of families to provide adequate care. The potential roles of Old People's Homes in providing a supportive community, ensuring access to healthcare, and contributing to financial sustainability underscore their significance in the broader context of elderly care. Advocating for the establishment of Old People's Homes aligns with the need for innovative, flexible, and culturally sensitive solutions to address the evolving landscape of elderly care in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that;

1. Government should advocate for policy reforms that address the unique needs of the elderly in Nigeria. They should lobby for the development and implementation of comprehensive elderly care policies at national and local levels.
2. There should be inter-sectoral collaboration among government agencies, non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, and private sectors to create a more unified approach to elderly care.
3. Government should launch community-based education programs to raise awareness about the challenges faced by the elderly.
4. Government should introduce incentives for businesses to adopt elderly-friendly practices, such as accessible facilities and flexible employment opportunities.

5. Government should develop and implement training programs for family caregivers and professional healthcare workers.
6. Government should invest in infrastructure that supports the mobility and accessibility of the elderly, including age-friendly public spaces and transportation. They should ensure that public buildings and facilities adhere to universal design principles.
7. Government should establish community support networks where neighbors and community members actively engage in providing assistance to the elderly.

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