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**The Contribution of Western Pedagogy and Knowledge in the Development of Social Work
Education in Nigeria: A coin of two sides**

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Abstract

Historically the development of social work education in most African countries has been strongly influenced by and modeled upon Western knowledge and pedagogy. Social work education has not been the product of a progressive indigenous social transformation but rather that of foreign practices imposed on African societies. This paper, therefore, examines the contribution of western pedagogy and knowledge in the development of social work education in Nigeria. In-depth interviews were used to collect data from 8 purposively selected social work educators and thematically analysed. Findings show that the curriculum that is used in Nigerian social work education is designed in line with European culture and orientation. Also, most textbooks used for social work education in Nigeria are from the Western context and thus, have not been able to aptly address the unique issues, culture and behavioural patterns of Nigeria. Therefore, there is the need for transformation of Nigerian social work education from being Western-centric to being Afro-centric while accommodating the relevance of its Western-centric origin. It is recommended that indigenous knowledge and culture should be incorporated and integrated into social work education in Nigeria to reflect and stimulate services that are culturally and nationally compatible.

Keywords: Western pedagogy, indigenous knowledge, development, social work education Nigeria

The Contribution of Western Pedagogy and knowledge in the Development of Social Work Education in Nigeria: A coin of two sides

Social work and social work education was exported from the Global North, often under the rubric of commitment to the civilization and improvement of the wellbeing of native Africans by the colonizing powers (Chitereka, 2009; Guest, 2004; Hochfeld et al., 2009; Mwansa, 2011). However, American and European models of professional social work and social work education that have been exported to Africa have been critiqued as unable to address the distinctive issues and cultural characteristics of the majority of Africans (Anucha, 2008). An argument that social work models from the Global North are not relevant to social work education in Africa has long troubled the profession (Gray, 2016; Gray et al., 2014; Kreitzer, 2012). Many scholars have critiqued social work models, theories, and concepts imposed on Africa during colonial times as inappropriate and irrelevant to social work and cannot meet the contemporary challenges nor the socio-cultural realities in Africa in the 21st century (Canaveraet al., 2019; Kangethe, 2014; Kreitzer, 2012; Osei-Hwedie, 1993; Spitzer, 2017; Walton & Abo ElNasr, 1988). Hence, there is

a call for indigenous forms of social work, and for social work education to rediscover the value of indigenous knowledge within local communities (Anucha, 2008; Dominelli, 2010; Ibrahima & Mattaini, 2018; Nnama-Okechukwu & MacLaughlin, 2022; Yip, 2012; Zhanghua & Liqun, 2014).

Indigenous social work is a form of social work that seeks effective, culturally appropriate research, education, and practice (Ugiagbe, 2015; Gray & Coates, 2010). This paper makes particular reference to 2 key facets of indigenous/western influences: pedagogy and knowledge. For the purposes of this paper *pedagogy* is the theory and practices used in social work education in Nigeria to impart knowledge and help students learn (Li, 2006), while *knowledge* in contrast is the content of the curriculum and associated theory and literature. Furthermore, we have chosen to use the term ‘western’ to describe the prominent sources of knowledge typically emerging from the USA, Europe, and Australia. We recognize it as an imperfect term and one which could be supplanted by such concepts as the Global North, however it is widely used within the literature and emerged within the responses from the Nigerian academics involved in this study. Indigenization does not have to imply contradiction or a total overhaul and rejection of everything considered Western and non-African, but rather to ensure that the ideology, the theories, practice models, and ethical principles are relevant and align well to the context within which social work is practiced (Gray & Coates, 2008; IFSW, 2015; Twikirize, 2014) . For instance, Burke and Ngonyani (2004) describe how casework is being indigenized in Tanzania to incorporate values like group self-determination with family and community involvement. Group self-determination are the most relevant values for Africa and are often the aim of community work. For instance, in Zambia, cases are handled by village Social Casework and Remedial Services Committees, comprising clergy, physicians, social workers, elders and family members who advise and seek a solution jointly with the client in open discussion (Burke & Ngonyani, 2004). Such committees are local and are able to address problems with reference to customary laws or traditional practices and draw on the African strength of group collective action (Burke & Ngonyani, 2004). These values may be more appropriate in an African culture than more individualistic Western values such as confidentiality and self-determination.

Nigeria as a nation faces numerous challenges in the 21st **Century**, including poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, terminal diseases, lack of access to basic health care, and structural constraints (Anucha, 2008; Igboanusi, 2013, Okafor et al., 2017; Onalu et al., 2021a; Onalu et al., 2021b). These issues call for the revision of social work education and training to

better meet the social realities facing the nation. In an analysis of the curriculum of social work education and training programmes in Nigeria, Odiah (1991) concluded they were framed within a groupwork framework of understanding that can be applied differently to diverse populations and situations. This approach was based primarily on Western theories with little emphasis on courses relevant to the country's realities. Odiah (1991) found that less than 10% of the course materials had local content; for example, the teaching of social administration and policy seldom referred to local social welfare policies but focused on British social policy and administration. Social work education in Nigeria must harness and adapt these resources that exist within communities as a base for enhancing development. For example, Izugbara et al. (2003) provide evidence of the possibilities of drawing from indigenous knowledge to address some unique social problems in Nigeria such as communal conflicts. The authors describe how they relied on indigenous culture, knowledge systems, and values to restore harmonious relations to two warring local communities in Nigeria. They primarily relied on information on the cultural organisation and knowledge structure of the conflicting communities gathered through rapid group and individual interviews with members of the communities. Some of these knowledge systems involve the use of kolanut and the fresh palm frond as key instruments of peace negotiation and conflict resolution in traditional African society (Chimaraoke, 2002). For example, the use of "Ofo" (holy stick) as the symbol of authority, spirituality, truth, peace and justice (Okoli et al., 2020), and "Ogu" a shorter stick, tied with palm leaves representing, innocence, concern and equity (Nnabuogwu, 2022). That such approaches and cultural nuances are unfamiliar to many outside of Africa underlines their importance within it.

Mathias (1995) stressed the need for in-depth research that involves local people and focuses on recording and analyzing indigenous knowledge; and consideration of how indigenous knowledge that is relevant can be accessed and utilized. Mathias suggested several ways that indigenous knowledge could be disseminated to communities such as: providing information on indigenous knowledge success stories to the media; packaging it for policymakers and development planners; developing manuals on different topics relating to indigenous knowledge; presenting case studies that demonstrate the applicability of indigenous knowledge; integration of indigenous knowledge modules into courses; and developing educational materials based on or including indigenous knowledge. Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000), pointed out that social work education that is properly located and contextualized within indigenous African culture, tradition,

and civilization will enable African scholars to contribute original products within the intellectual global village. This highlights the internal and external dissemination and reach of such knowledge.

According to Anucha, (2008), Nigerian social work education programmes, at both the diploma and bachelor levels, need to focus on two pragmatic issues. The first is curriculum review using participatory research methods to identify gaps such as an overemphasis on academic content and minimal practical, culturally relevant, and community-based content. This will enable the social work education sector in Nigeria to train a new generation of professional social workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to address the priorities of Nigeria through prevention and intervention projects that are founded on the principles of long-term social change. The second issue is the establishment of an effective field education office to better support student practicum and fieldwork. Field education is **at** the core of social work training and it is essential in helping students integrate theories learned in the classroom with practice (Sheafor & Jenkins, 1982; Okoye, 2013; Onalu et al., 2020; Onalu & Okoye, 2021c). An effective field education programme will help social work students build a bridge between the academic world and the real world inhabited by the vast majority of Nigerians. Therefore, Indigenous knowledge is an integral part of the culture and history of a local community. There is a need to learn from local communities to enrich the development process of the social work profession. Tapping into the intellectual resources associated with indigenous knowledge is not only cost-effective and **efficient** but is also relevant for sustainable development in social work education in Nigeria. **The following research questions guide the study:**

- **To what extent do western pedagogy and knowledge contribute to the development of social work education in Nigeria?**
- **What is the effect of western pedagogy on social work education in Nigeria?**

It is believed that our findings will provide the information to the international and local debates on the need to indigenize social work education and practice.

Method

Participants

Eight social work educators from the University of Nigeria - Nsukka, and the University of Calabar were purposively and conveniently selected for the study. The criteria for selection **was** that the person must have been teaching social work for five years or more, and the person **was**

willing to participate in the interview. The rationale behind the use of social work educators **was that** they have significant experience of running and designing programmes in social work, so they **were well** positioned to reflect upon the contributions of western pedagogy in the development of social work education in Nigeria. This reflects good practice in qualitative sampling for research in terms of relevance and representativeness (Robinson, 2013). Although one of the researchers **was** a colleague of the respondents from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, all participant's responses were treated confidentially and there was not incentivisation or requirement to participate in the study.

The research project used semi structured interviews to collect the data. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to elicit richly detailed responses from participants through open-ended questions, as well as allowing participants to express their opinions more freely than structured interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the respondents from the University of Nigeria. Then, for respondents from the University of Calabar, telephone interviews were adopted as the method for data collection as a result of COVID related travel and communication restrictions. The consent of the respondents was obtained before recording commenced. The study was conducted between August to September 2020. The interviews lasted between 30 to 40 minutes and were conducted at the convenience of the respondents. The respondents had the right to withdraw from the conversation anytime they wished and request that their data was removed.

Data analysis

In accordance with phenomenology in qualitative research design, thematic categories were then generated after audio-recorded data were transcribed and analysed (Creswell, 2013). Thematic analysis was used to import the transcribed and translated interviews into Nvivo9 software; it was read while being coded and emerging themes was reviewed by the researchers for consistency and frequency. In forming thematic patterns, major themes included the contribution of western pedagogy to the development of social work education in Nigeria, and the effect of western pedagogy on social work education in Nigeria. These themes emerged from the analysis but were guided by the research questions. These themes will be explored in detail below.

Results

Socio-demographics Characteristics of the Participants

A total of eight social work educators from two universities in Nigeria were sampled for the study. Table 1 presents their Socio-demographic characteristics. Their ages ranged between 30 to 55 years, while their year of service ranges from 6 to 21 years. Note, institution 1 represents University of Nigeria, Nsukka, while institution 2 represents University of Calabar, Nigeria.

Table 1 is here

Theme One: Western Pedagogy and Development of Social Work Education in Nigeria

The impact of Western pedagogy in the development of social work education in Nigeria

Our discussion with the social work educators in both universities was structured around western pedagogy and the development of social work education in Nigeria. Generally, the narratives from all the respondents revealed that western pedagogy and knowledge has contributed significantly to the development of social work education in Nigeria. **Some** of the respondents used for the study noted that over 90% of the social work textbooks being used today within their social work programmes were written by western scholars. Others stated that it would be problematic to remove western education when we talk about the origins of social work in Nigeria, as it is an integral dimension of the development of social work in Nigeria today. For those who believed that western approaches have shaped the delivery of social work education in Nigeria today, the quote below from one of the social work educators captures their view. It is interesting to note an acknowledgement of the ways in which this diverges from local and traditional conceptions of care;

*Traditionally, we have been doing social work practice, but it was not organized because there is no process of doing it other than the informal way of transferring knowledge from family to family, but when you come to formal setting of social work practice, western pedagogy has contributed to a large extent, infact contributed completely because, in the first place, the historical development of social work points to the origin of social work from the West. They have an organized way of helping and of taking care of the less privileged and with that they also divide a way of the knowledge, developed a theory in concept or definition of what they do and these thing are what formed the social work education development in Nigeria (**Respondent, Institution 1**).*

A key theme that emerged was the prevalence of social work textbooks that are written by western scholars, and is typified by the following quotation. The balance between a reliance on and respect for the quality of these textbooks with a recognition of their lack of direct relevance culturally emerges.

Without western pedagogy, there will be nothing like social work education in Nigeria. Think of it, most of the textbooks we are using to teach our students are written by western scholars. Even when some of us try to write textbooks based on our peculiarities, you find out that most often, they are of low standard and we still fall back to those textbooks written by western scholars (Respondent, Institution 1).

The notion that western pedagogy has had a meaningful impact upon the development of patterns of teaching and curriculum development in Nigeria emerges, which suggests there is an interplay between knowledge and conceptions of social work pedagogy rooted in external sources. Indeed, it is important to note that the respondents themselves will have experienced and assimilated a western influenced curriculum in their previous studies.

Here in Nigeria and African at large, we adopt mainly what the British and Americans are doing, think of the way we planned our curriculum, our pattern of teaching, writing of examinations, and even the fieldwork we practice today are all borrowed from Western education (Respondent, Institution 2).

The contribution of the western pedagogy in social work education in Nigeria is that it simply improves our knowledge, procedure, including the importance of ethics and ethical responsibilities to all and sundry (Respondent, Institution 1).

It is important to note that these views were counterbalanced by an acknowledgement that Nigerians have been practicing social work before the advent of western pedagogy or colonialism but in an informal way. Although it was not organised in a regulated professional framework, in traditional Nigerian society the emphasis was placed on many aspects including child welfare services, disability services, care for older people and community work but the key difference is that it was being practiced in an informal setting such as in family, kinsmen, village and community

(Mbah et al., 2017). The adoption and absorption of western pedagogy and knowledge has led to services becoming formally defined and the opportunity to study social work within higher education has emerged.

Theme two: The Impact of Western Pedagogy and Knowledge on Social Work Education in Nigeria

Absence of indigenous knowledge

All the participants were of the view that that whilst western social work education has contributed significantly to its development in Nigeria, it has also had a detrimental impact on the place, role and maintenance of African culture within this sphere. According to one of the social work educators, “*Western pedagogy has made us see and solve our problems from western perspectives rather than focusing on indigenous practices*” (**Respondent, Institution 2**). The respondents noted that social work curriculum did not capture some indigenous practices such as the role of the extended family system. To them, we have abandoned the extended family system which would have helped social workers to practice especially in the rural areas and form meaningful and respectful relationships with service users. One of the social work educators from **institution 1** said;

Western education has made us focus more on American and British ways of doing things. For instance, we have abandoned the culture of caring for the aged, children, and so on, to adopting the idea of the old people’s home, and orphanages which do not take care of the needs (political, social, psychological, emotional and economic) of those concerned.

Buttressing further on this, another respondent highlighted specific cultural practices that are interwoven with cultural identity and in turn the relevancy of social work interventions;

The “igbaboyi” (apprentice) concept, Calabar Fountain Room (where young girls between the age range of 15 to 25 were being prepared to face challenges in marriage), and other traditional or cultural practices which have helped in empowerment and addressing life challenges were not incorporated in the Nigerian social work curriculum thereby leading

to loss of identity of whom we are and how to address our peculiar issues (Respondent, Institution 2)

Western pedagogy has affected us seriously in the sense that the social work education we have in Nigeria today is more theory-oriented than practical-oriented. There is so much emphasis on social work practices in the western world as if communal living that took care of all individual and social problems before colonialism does not matter again. Even the practical examples we are using have western connotations (Respondent, Institution 2)

There is total reliance on Western literature which had little relevance to the realities of Nigeria and Africa at large. Thus, students are not exposed to indigenous knowledge and practices and could not deal efficiently with local phenomena (Respondent, Institution 1).

Stressing further on the effects of western ideas on social work education in Nigeria, some participants were of the view that it brought about more complex problems that require the the intervention of social work services to address. In other words, there **was** a suggestion of a causal link between the drift from **tradition**al conceptions of care and support with the emergence of a range of social issues. One of the participants stated thus;

Western pedagogy and civilization did not just affect our traditional family/kinship system, it also fostered social problems such as burglary, drug and alcohol abuse, robbery, material accumulation, sex-work/prostitution, truancy in schools, poor parenting, single parenting, divorce, white-collar crimes and so on. Looking at what is happening in Nigeria today, I used to ask myself, should we return to the pre-colonial era (Respondent, Institution 1)

Theme three: Need for Transformation of Social Work Education from Being Western-centric to Being Afro-centric

Need to inculcate local context into social work practice and education in Nigeria

A dominant view among the social work educators was that there is the need to transform social work education from being Western-centric to Afrocentric. They stated that we cannot apply

western culture in our unique environment as it differs sharply from African lifestyles. One of the social work educators highlighted both the linguistic and cultural elements that this might involve.;

*It will be wonderfully amazing if we will structure social work education to reflect in our local environment. There is nothing wrong in using our local language to impact student social workers, there is nothing wrong with using the curriculum that exposes student social workers to the challenges that are common to the African society (**Respondent, Institution 1**).*

A social work educator from **institution 2** highlighted the need for social work to focus on social issues that are relevant and present in Nigeria and may not be captured by a western-centric approach and would benefit from the generation of meaningful indigenous practice examples;

There is a need for transformation of Nigerian social work education from being Western-centric to being Afrocentric, I am not saying that we should not study International Social Work but for us to deal with Nigerian problems like poverty, marginalization, corruption, and so on, we need to have different ways of practicing social work, there is the need to localize social work education in Nigeria.

*It is important to note that some aspect of Western-centric social work education that does not address some traditional issues in Africa be modified so that we can include our principles, we can include our ideology based on our experiences, we should be able to bring up theories that explain our day to day experiences and also develop models that help solve our problems as Africa. While trying to do this, we should ensure that the Western-centric background which social work has, does not go in extension (**Respondent, Institution 2**)*

Another respondent builds on this by highlighting fundamental values issues that make cultural priorities and givens in the Global North less relevant or applicable in contemporary Nigeria:

The Afrocentric approach is highly necessary when it comes to social work education in Africa. In social work practice, culture is a big influence, for instance, let us use the issue of sexuality in the west.but here in Africa, the Afrocentric of it requires to consider

the norms. So, there is the need to move from Western-centric to Afrocentric. We should start to take into consideration our cultural institutions, our pattern of behaviour which is different (Respondent, Institution 1).

These issues are complex and sensitive as they highlight significantly differing cultural norms which are implicit within western ligature and pedagogy. Social work in Nigeria is committed to globally held social work values such as self-determination, but this needs to be taught and practiced within the prevailing cultural and religious context. To ignore these differences, however complex, is to impose a less relevant and assumptive knowledge and practice base that drives a wedge between practice realities and teaching.

Discussion

The study investigated the contribution of Western pedagogy and knowledge in the development of social work education in Nigeria. The findings revealed that western pedagogy and knowledge to a large extent has contributed to the development of social work education in Nigeria. The respondents noted that western pedagogy and knowledge has a central role in shaping contemporary conceptions of social work in Nigeria today. Social work education in Nigeria and African countries at large are based on the western professional practice models(Osei-Hwedie et al., 2006). Mbah et al. (2017) noted that since the advent of western social work education, **there has been a shift** from traditional and kinship ways of caring for children and older people to establishing institutional group settings (i.e.residential homes for older adults) for therapeutic purposes. Other scholars like Eke and Mamah (1997), Eze et al. (2000), Irele (2011), Kaseke (2001) and Okoye (2014) have emphasized the contribution of western pedagogy in the development of social work education in Nigeria. Also, Abdalati (1984) has noted that western pedagogy brought a system of social work practice that guarantees adequate security and support for those in need in a more structured and predictable fashion.

The findings further revealed that the way Nigerian social work educators planned their curriculum, their pattern of teaching, writing of exams and the fieldwork they practice today are significantly informed by western literature and practices. The social work educators adopted the western ideas and used it as a guideline that shaped their educational system. The way in which social work is thought about and practiced in Nigeria has given rise to tensions and difficulties in terms of the relevancy and appropriateness of the social work role in Nigeria.

Some of the participants stated that the influence of western social work education has made Nigerian academics focus more on non-indigenous forms of practice and interventions. They gave an example of how Nigerians have abandoned the extended family/kinship system and have replaced it with western conceptions of society. They were of the view that so much emphasis was placed on social work practices in the western world that the strengths of indigenous practices such as communal/familial living and care have been overlooked and, in some cases, lost. The suggestion being that this in turn feeds into structural and societal changes which may exacerbate social issues and make the solutions more complex. Bar-On (1999) argues that, having been westernized, African academics have been deflected away from indigenous thinking or contributions, and thus uncritically perpetuate what they acquire from the west. Before the advent of colonialism, there were customary arrangements and institutional provisions for organizing, mobilizing, administering, and coordinating various forms of assistance to those in need among the various ethnic communities. (Okoye, 2013).

Afrocentric social work education is defined as a 'a method of social work practice based on traditional African philosophical assumptions that are used to explain and to solve human and social problems' (Schiele, 1997, p. 805). Chimaraoke (2002) provides a vivid example of how he and his research team with the aid of indigenous knowledge systems and values, were able to settle conflict between two warring communities in Abia state of Nigeria, using kolanut and fresh palm frond. According to him, once one community gives these to another, the receiving community is under an obligation to accept them and also to return a similar gift. In a war situation, the kolanuts are shared among the elders while the palm frond will be conspicuously displayed at the boundary of the warring communities. He stated that they were able to persuade the elderly men of community A to present the traditional gift of kolanuts and one fresh palm frond to community B and vice-versa. On the same day, the two palm fronds were put on display. Immediately this happened, all arms were laid down. The cessation of hostilities created the chance for the two communities to meet face to face and talk to each other. The contention of this paper is that such traditional knowledge of culture must be incorporated at the heart of social work education as the foundations of engagement at a community and individual level rely upon it.

Unfortunately, social work educators in Nigeria have struggled to integrate some of these indigenous knowledges like local conflict resolution process into social work education. In addition to the the fact that Nigerian social work educators placed more emphasis on western

pedagogy and knowledge, Nigeria is a multicultural society, with 350 different ethnic groups, thus integrating indigenous knowledge into social work education is challenging because one has to put each of these cultural practices and even different languages and dialects into consideration. Approaches to conflict resolution often vary among different ethnic groups and cultures, and some of the indigenous conflict resolution strategies can be said to be somewhat dangerous. For instance, Okoli et al. (2020) stated that anyone interacting with “Ofo” understands that they must tell the truth, for if they lie or betray the “Ofo”, they would face death. In this local conflict resolution process in South Eastern Nigeria, once the offender swears an oath using the “Ofo” the person is likely to die. Such practices are difficult to integrate into a professional framework and are underpinned by belief systems and customs that are not held by all. It is an awareness of such practices that is key. The possible lack of application can form a barrier to its inclusion in social work curriculum (Onalu et al., 2019).

However, the participants were of the view that Nigerian social work educators should start putting into consideration our cultural institutions, our pattern of behaviour which is different from western thinking while teaching the students. Anucha (2008) stated that social work education and practice need to develop new methods of teaching which differ from those used in Western countries and reflect the realities and challenges facing social development in the country. Okoye (2014) noted that the introduction of indigenous issues into the curriculum is one step in helping a school of social work address local issues and realities, and freeing its curriculum from dependence on literature produced in a different context. Also, curriculum materials that aim to create learning outcomes that allow for complete integration of contextualized African world views and cultural practices into global social work discourses should be embraced (Ross, 2008). The participants further stated that there may be merit in using local languages to teach the student social workers. This is in line with the belief of Earle (2008) who noted that students should be taught to understand the nuances and communication patterns of Africans, including the preponderance of idioms and proverbs. When student social workers gained knowledge of these communication patterns, it will enable them to be adept at probing when clients do not communicate directly regarding a problem. If we consider the undoubted relevance of seminal social work communication texts such as Lishman (2009) to a UK context, then it is reasonable to argue that a text that is similarly nuanced and focused on the complexities of communication in Nigeria and Africa more broadly is an important gap to be filled.

In conclusion, findings from the study highlight the need for transformation of Nigerian social work education from being Western-centric to Afrocentric. Nigerian social work educators should advocate for the review of the curriculum and introduction of indigenous issues into the curriculum. This is one step in helping schools of social work address local issues and realities and at the same time, free their curriculum from dependence on literature produced in a different context (Okoye, 2014). One way of encouraging Afrocentricism is to facilitate students receiving a learning experience enriched by exposure to local content and understandings. To achieve this, social work educators need to organize lectures and assessment that encouraged students to reflect and broaden their appreciation of their identity by developing critical thinking and learning skills applicable to local communities (Osei-Hwedie et al., 2006). Also, social work education should ensure that answering all cultural, economic, political, and social questions related to social practice and theory occurs from an African perspective. Instead of prioritizing and centering European thought, writers, authors, research, and ways of thinking, African thought should be positioned at the centre with other perspectives offering a broader theoretical landscape. African perspectives should be foregrounded while others should be moved to the periphery and used to support African and indigenous knowledge systems.

The following list is intended to provide signposts for social work educators seeking to address the balance of indigenous and other sources of knowledge that inform their curricula. Some of these are potentially ‘quick wins’ which can be enacted at an institutional level, whilst others require time and resources to develop new approaches to knowledge development and pedagogy that can push back against a relatively one sided tide in recent decades.

- Incorporation of local language and communication patterns to teaching and practice
- Foregrounding existing indigenous knowledge and literature in reading lists and curriculum
- Identifying the positive contribution of western knowledge and approaches and the limitations therein.
- Publication of African social work research and writing in international publications to locate this knowledge alongside and as valuable as other sources of social work knowledge.
- Seek feedback from students, social work agencies and service users to contribute to the development of indigenous and culturally relevant social work programmes and practices.

- Engage globally in debates around the complex synergies and differences culturally which impact upon the nature and relevance of sources of knowledge and approaches to social work education.

The study was not devoid of limitations. The limited sample size **was** restricted to just two universities, therefore, the researchers encourages similar studies to other universities offering social work in Nigeria. The fact that student social workers were not captured does not allow for reflections on the experience from a learner's perspective first hand. Thus, subsequent studies should capture student social workers and even social work practitioners in the sampling frame. Further studies should consider exploring western pedagogy and its' effects on the development of social work education in Nigeria: Such findings will provide more insight into concerns that will amplify calls for the indigenization of social work education and practice in Nigeria. **Academic papers such as this, and those referenced within the text provide evidence of the expansion of African focussed social work education research and these are the foundations required for the changes proposed above.** Despite these limitations, findings from the study remain relevant to social workers and policymakers, all of whom are concertedly making efforts to indigenize social work in Nigeria. There are also messages within this study which highlight the opportunities for the transportability of knowledge across the global social work community, whilst also underlining that such permeability of geographical and cultural boundaries is not unproblematic. The core purpose of social work may be shared, and the dissemination of knowledge internationally has much of merit, however the distinct socio-cultural nuances across the globe suggest that a balance must be struck with indigenous knowledge and context.

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Table 1: *Socio-demographic characteristics of participants (N=8)*

| SN | Gender | Educational status | Institution of teaching |
|----|--------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Male | Ph.D | University of Nigeria |
| 2 | Male | Ph.D | University of Calabar |
| 3 | Female | M.Sc | University of Nigeria |
| 4 | Female | Ph.D | University of Nigeria |
| 5 | Female | M.Sc | University of Calabar |
| 6 | Male | Ph.D | University of Nigeria |
| 7 | Female | Ph.D | University of Calabar |
| 8 | Female | M.Ec | University of Calabar |