

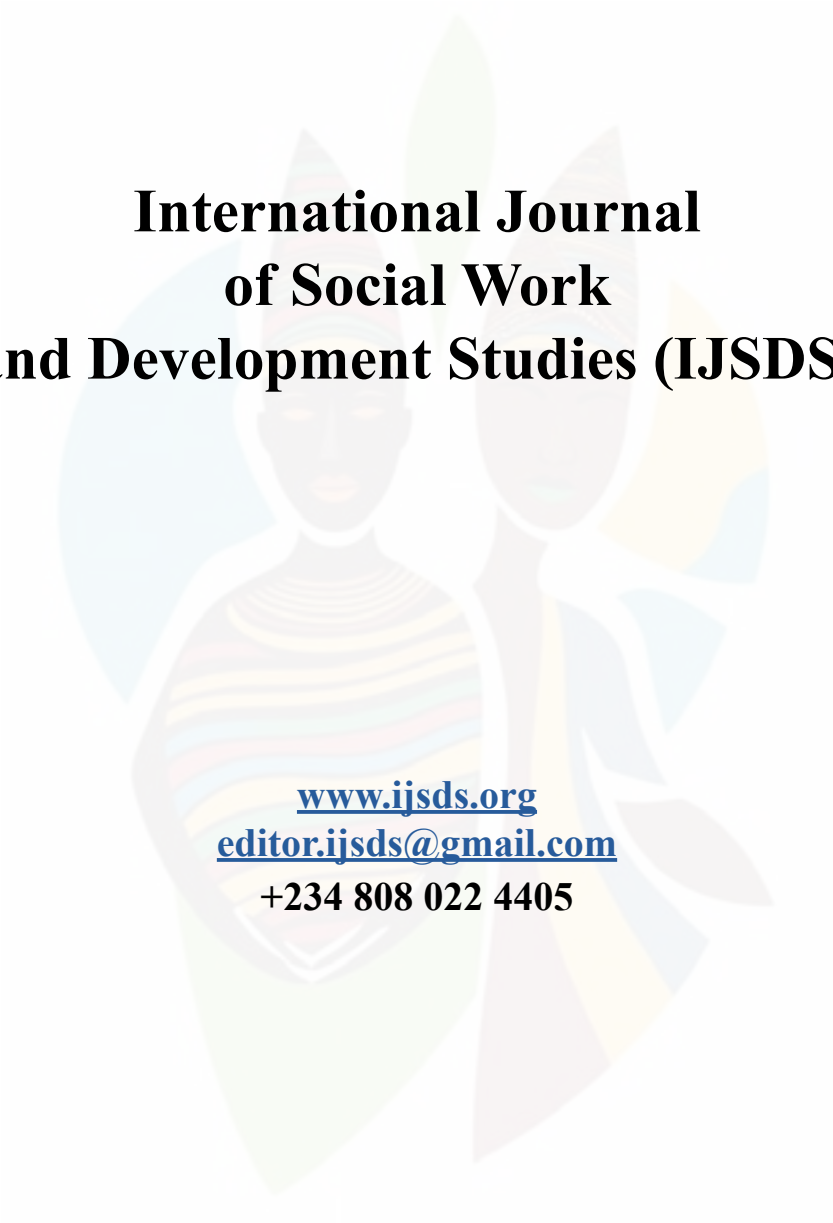
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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY
EMOHUA CAMPUS, P.M.B 5080, PORT HARCOURT
RIVERS STATE NIGERIA



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www.ijsds.org
editor.ijsds@gmail.com
+234 808 022 4405

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**SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING
MENTAL HEALTH REHABILITATION
IN IBADAN, OYO STATE**

Gerald Uchechukwu Ejekaru; Jane Roli Adebuseyi, PhD

Department of Behavioural Sciences
Lead City University
Ibadan, Oyo State.

Corresponding Author: ejekaru.gerald@pgstudent.lcu.edu.ng

+2348065929888, +2348033266754

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of sociocultural factors on mental health rehabilitation outcomes in Ibadan, Nigeria, focusing on the roles of negative cultural beliefs, family support, and social stigma. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 41 medical professionals including doctors, nurses, psychologists, medical social workers, and occupational therapists at the State Hospital, Adeoyo. Regression analyses were employed to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed that negative sociocultural beliefs, such as supernatural attributions of mental illness, did not significantly predict rehabilitation outcomes ($R^2 = .040$, $p = .192$). Conversely, family support showed a statistically significant positive influence on recovery outcomes ($R^2 = .080$, $p = .045$), highlighting the critical role of familial involvement in mental health recovery. Social stigma, though prevalent, was not found to significantly predict delayed or discontinued rehabilitation participation ($R^2 = .032$, $p = .287$). These results suggest that while traditional beliefs and stigma remain part of the sociocultural landscape, they may be moderated by factors such as education, exposure to modern care, and institutional support. The study recommends incorporating family-based interventions into mental health rehabilitation programs and calls for further research into additional mediating variables. A culturally grounded, family-centred approach is essential for improving rehabilitation outcomes in Nigeria.

Keywords: Sociocultural factors, Mental health rehabilitation, Cultural beliefs, Social stigma, Family support, Rehabilitation outcomes

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Mental health remains an increasingly significant concern globally, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where mental health disorders often go unrecognized and untreated. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), one in eight people live with a mental health condition, yet more than 75% of affected individuals in LMICs receive no treatment. In Nigeria, mental health challenges are widespread, affecting people across all socioeconomic strata. Despite the increasing recognition of mental health issues, service provision remains grossly inadequate due to structural, economic, and sociocultural barriers (Carbonell et al., 2020; WHO, 2022). Mental health rehabilitation is a critical aspect of recovery for individuals with psychiatric conditions, involving not only clinical care but also the restoration of functional abilities and social reintegration (Craig, 2019). However, the process of rehabilitation is often complicated by sociocultural dynamics that shape community perceptions, health-seeking behaviour, and the overall support available to individuals living with mental illness. In African settings, including Nigeria, these sociocultural factors comprising traditional beliefs, religious practices, community norms, and family systems are especially influential in determining how mental illness is understood and addressed (Atilola, 2016; Ojagbemi, & Gureje, 2021).

Ibadan, Nigeria's capital, is home to several major mental health institutions, including the University College Hospital and the Aro Satellite Clinic. However, many individuals with mental health conditions do not seek formal care or disengage prematurely from rehabilitation. This is due to the sociocultural context of Ibadan, where traditional Yoruba cosmology often attributes mental illness to spiritual causes, leading to stigma and marginalization. Religious institutions also significantly shape health behavior in Ibadan, with faith-based support serving as a source of emotional and communal strength but also serving

as a barrier when religious leaders discourage psychiatric interventions in favor of spiritual deliverance. Moreover, mental illness is frequently regarded as a moral or spiritual failing, further entrenching stigma and leading to rejection or isolation of those affected. In many communities, the concept of mental illness itself is poorly understood, and people often conflate neurological disorders, substance abuse, and psychiatric illness under a single stigmatizing label "madness" (Lawal et al., 2024).

Mental health services in urban Nigerian centers like Ibadan are underutilized and rehabilitation outcomes are inconsistent due to a lack of understanding about sociocultural factors affecting patient engagement, health professionals' attitudes, and the roles of families and communities, which could hinder the success of mental health interventions.

The study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H1: Negative sociocultural beliefs significantly hinder the rehabilitation of individuals with mental illness in Ibadan.
- H2: Social stigma is a significant predictor of delayed or discontinued participation in mental health rehabilitation.

By focusing on the sociocultural determinants of mental health rehabilitation in Ibadan, this study will contribute to the development of more effective, culturally grounded mental health policies and rehabilitation models. The findings are expected to inform the practices of mental health professionals, guide family involvement strategies, and influence public education campaigns aimed at reducing stigma. Ultimately, the study aims to bridge the gap between biomedical care and sociocultural realities in mental health delivery.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Understanding Mental Health Rehabilitation

Mental health rehabilitation refers to a comprehensive set of services and interventions designed to assist individuals recovering from mental illnesses in achieving optimal functioning, social integration, and an improved quality of life (Dalton-Locke et al., 2021). These services go beyond mere symptom control and medication adherence; they focus on equipping individuals with the skills, support, and confidence needed to live independently and participate meaningfully in society. Core elements of mental health rehabilitation include clinical therapies such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), psychosocial support, psychoeducation, skills training, vocational rehabilitation, peer support, and structured community reintegration (Corrigan et al., 2008; Van Der Meer & Wunderink, 2019). Globally, mental health rehabilitation is increasingly recognized as a vital component of the continuum of mental health care, particularly in the recovery-oriented models that emphasize patient empowerment and long-term stability (Davidson et al., 2005). In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), however, mental health rehabilitation remains under-prioritized due to limited resources, poor policy implementation, and pervasive stigma (Chimara et al., 2022). Despite the growing global emphasis on community-based care, many LMICs still rely heavily on institutionalized psychiatric care, which often neglects the social and functional recovery of patients after discharge.

In Nigeria, mental health services face serious challenges such as poor infrastructure, lack of staff, limited funding, and weak integration into primary healthcare. Efforts have been made to improve mental health policies, like the Mental Health Bill passed in 2023, but implementation is still difficult, especially in rural areas. In Ibadan, rehabilitation mainly occurs in hospitals and focuses on crisis care, leaving commu-

nity support and vocational programs lacking. This leads to difficulties in social reintegration and high relapse rates, highlighting the need for better community-based rehabilitation models.

2.2 Socio-Cultural Factors and Mental Health

Sociocultural factors encompass a wide range of beliefs, values, norms, practices, and institutional structures that collectively shape human behaviour and societal functioning. These sociocultural factors play a profound role in determining how mental illness is understood, experienced, and managed within different cultural contexts (Adebayo et al., 2024). In mental health rehabilitation, sociocultural elements influence not only the interpretation and meaning attached to mental disorders but also the pathways to care, treatment choices, community responses, and overall recovery trajectories. In Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State and one of Nigeria's largest and most culturally rich cities, sociocultural influences are deeply rooted in Yoruba traditions and a religiously pluralistic environment that includes Christianity, Islam, and indigenous faiths. Cultural perceptions of mental illness in this setting often diverge significantly from biomedical understandings. Common attributions of mental illness include spiritual attacks, witchcraft, ancestral retribution, or divine punishment (Gureje et al., 2015; Subu et al., 2022). These interpretations frequently lead families and individuals to seek help from traditional healers, spiritual leaders, or religious institutions before or instead of presenting at formal healthcare facilities.

This cultural context significantly affects mental health rehabilitation. Using non-biomedical services may delay treatment and worsen stigma when biomedical help seems inadequate. Combining biomedical and traditional healing can lead to fragmented care, affecting trust in professionals and rehabilitation results. Societal stigma in Ibadan contributes to discrimination and limits opportunities for those with

mental illness. Gender roles and religious beliefs also impact access to care, especially for women. Family dynamics play a crucial role in emotional support and reintegration. Effective rehabilitation must consider and respect local cultural practices to improve outcomes.

2.3 Rehabilitation and Stigma

Stigma remains one of the most pervasive and formidable barriers to effective mental health rehabilitation, both globally and within the Nigerian context. It manifests in various forms, including public stigma, self-stigma, and institutional stigma, each significantly impeding individuals' access to care, quality of treatment, and prospects for social reintegration (Efion, Abuo, & Akpan, 2020). In Nigeria, individuals diagnosed with mental illness often face widespread societal discrimination, stereotyping, and exclusion. Mental illness is frequently perceived as a mark of spiritual weakness, madness, or a curse, which fosters fear and misunderstanding in the general population (Adewuya & Makanjuola, 2008). As a result, those labelled as mentally ill may be subjected to job discrimination, denied housing opportunities, or even rejected by their own families. These experiences of exclusion and devaluation severely undermine the goals of mental health rehabilitation, which aim to restore the individual's functionality, independence, and social roles. Importantly, stigma also contributes to delayed help-seeking behaviour, as many individuals and families choose to conceal symptoms to avoid being labelled or ostracized. This delay reduces the chances of early intervention and recovery, allowing conditions to worsen untreated (Gureje et al., 2015). Goffman's (1963) theory of "spoiled identity" is especially relevant in understanding the internal psychological effects of stigma. According to Goffman, individuals who are socially stigmatized internalize these negative societal judgments, leading to diminished self-worth, shame, and hopelessness. In the context of mental illness, self-stigma can lead to reduced

motivation for rehabilitation, withdrawal from social life, and no adherence to treatment (Abdisa et al., 2020). Consequently, stigma is not only a social barrier but also a clinical obstacle that must be addressed through public education, policy reform, and community-based anti-stigma interventions to improve mental health rehabilitation outcomes in Nigeria.

3.0 THEORETICAL REVIEW

The Health Belief Model provides a useful framework for understanding how individuals make decisions about engaging in health-related behaviours, including mental health treatment and rehabilitation. The model posits that individuals are more likely to take health action if they believe they are susceptible to a condition, perceive it as severe, believe in the benefits of action, and feel capable of overcoming barriers (Rosenstock et al., 1988). In Ibadan, perceived susceptibility and severity of mental illness are often mediated by cultural and religious beliefs. If individuals view mental illness as a spiritual problem rather than a medical one, they may not perceive biomedical rehabilitation as necessary (Adeosun, 2016). Barriers such as stigma, cost of treatment, and lack of community-based services further diminish health-seeking behaviour.

Erving Goffman's Social Stigma Theory (1963) explains how social labelling and societal reactions to deviance from norms result in stigma. In the case of mental illness, individuals are often perceived as dangerous or unreliable, leading to exclusion from social and economic participation. Goffman identifies three types of stigma: physical, characterological, and tribal, of which the "blemishes of individual character" are most relevant to mental illness. This theory helps elucidate how stigma in Ibadan communities rooted in social labelling, religious interpretations, and lack of education impedes recovery and community reintegration. Mental health rehabilitation must therefore

involve not only clinical care but also stigma reduction through public awareness and inclusive social policies (Thornicroft et al., 2009).

4.0 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Several empirical studies have examined the influence of sociocultural factors on mental health in Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African contexts. Gureje et al. (2015) found that supernatural beliefs were a significant predictor of delayed help-seeking among individuals with schizophrenia in Southwest Nigeria. Respondents who attributed symptoms to spiritual causes were more likely to seek help from religious or traditional healers than from hospitals. A study by Alabi (2019) in Ibadan explored the experiences of caregivers of individuals with mental illness. The study revealed that families often oscillated between psychiatric hospitals and faith-based centres, leading to inconsistent treatment. Caregivers reported stigma from neighbours and relatives, lack of social support, and financial burden as major challenges.

Owokotomo (2024) conducted a cross-sectional study on public attitudes toward mental illness in Lagos and found widespread misconceptions, including beliefs that mental illness is contagious or incurable. These attitudes mirrored those observed in Ibadan, where public education about mental health remains limited. Adeosun (2016) conducted qualitative research in Ibadan and found that cultural beliefs significantly affected patients' understanding of their illness and their willingness to engage in rehabilitation. Respondents expressed a preference for spiritual healing and believed psychiatric medication was addictive or ineffective. Such beliefs are reinforced by religious leaders and traditional healers, who wield considerable influence in the community.

Research indicates that culturally sensitive approaches can enhance mental health rehabilitation. A program in Oyo State involving families and clergy im-

proved understanding of mental illness and reduced stigma. In Ibadan, patients with family-inclusive support experienced better medication adherence and recovery, emphasizing the significance of considering socio-religious factors in rehabilitation.

Mental health care in Nigeria is significantly influenced by sociocultural factors like stigma, beliefs, and family roles. Models like the Health Belief Model and Social Stigma Theory explain these influences. Successful interventions should be tailored to the context, involving partnerships with religious leaders, family education, and community-based campaigns.

4.1 Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate the sociocultural factors influencing mental health rehabilitation in Ibadan. A descriptive survey method is suitable for studies that aim to collect data on perceptions, experiences, and attitudes of a population toward specific issues (Creswell, 2014). It enables the researcher to describe, analyse, and interpret the current state of affairs regarding how sociocultural dynamics such as cultural beliefs, religious practices, stigma, and structural barriers affect the rehabilitation of individuals with mental illness. This method was particularly appropriate given the study's focus on capturing subjective and professional perspectives of mental health workers who interact with rehabilitative care processes. The target population for the study consisted of medical and mental health personnel at State Hospital, Adeoyo, Ibadan, including psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, psychiatric nurses, social workers, and occupational therapists. These professionals were selected based on their frontline roles in mental health service delivery and rehabilitation programs. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure the inclusion of respondents with direct experience and relevant expertise in psychiatric care and rehabilitation (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative information. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended items focused on respondents' perceptions of the influence of sociocultural factors on rehabilitation outcomes. Items covered domains such as cultural interpretations of mental illness, religious beliefs affecting treatment choices, stigma, and structural challenges like poor funding and lack of community support services. The instruments were pre-tested with a small sample of mental health staff in a different hospital within Oyo State to ensure reliability and clarity. Ethical approval was obtained from the hospital management, and informed consent was sought from all participants.

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means were used to summarize demographic variables and core response trends. Inferential statistical tests such as Chi-square and correlation analysis were employed to examine associations between variables like professional experience and perceptions of stigma or cultural barriers. Thematic analysis was also applied to open-ended responses to capture nuanced insights into how sociocultural factors impact rehabilitation.

4.3 Limitations and Potential Biases

Despite the robustness of the design, the study was subject to several limitations and potential biases. First, the use of a single hospital, The State Hospital Adeoyo limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of mental health facilities in Ibadan or Nigeria. Although Adeoyo is a major mental health institution, varying institutional cultures and resource availability may result in different experiences elsewhere. Secondly, the use of self-report questionnaires introduces the possibility of social de-

sirability bias, where respondents might provide answers they believe are socially acceptable or expected, rather than their true opinions (Furnham, 1986). This could affect the authenticity of data, especially regarding sensitive issues like stigma or cultural misconceptions.

Third, the purposive sampling technique, although strategic for capturing expert opinions, may introduce selection bias, as only individuals already involved in psychiatric care were surveyed, potentially excluding alternative views from general healthcare workers or administrative staff. Finally, given the cross-sectional nature of the study, causal inferences cannot be drawn. The design captures relationships at a single point in time, thereby limiting conclusions about how sociocultural factors might change over the rehabilitation trajectory.

4.4 Result

Table 1: Demographic Data of the Respondents

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Gender	Male	18	43.9%
	Female	23	56.1%
Age	20–29 years	7	17.1%
	30–39 years	15	36.6%
	40–49 years	12	29.3%
	50 years and above	7	17.1%
Marital Status	Single	10	24.4%
	Married	24	58.5%
	Divorced/Separated	4	9.8%
	Widowed	3	7.3%
Level of Education	Primary	2	4.9%
	Secondary	6	14.6%
	Tertiary	33	80.5%
Profession	Doctor	6	14.6%
	Nurse	12	29.3%
	Clinical Psychologist	5	12.2%
	Medical Social Worker	7	17.1%
	Occupational Therapist	6	14.6%
	Pharmacist	5	12.2%

Table 1 shows the demographic data of the respondents for this study. A total of 41 healthcare professionals participated in the study. The gender distribution indicates a slightly higher proportion of females (56.1%) compared to males (43.9%), which may reflect the gender composition in health-related professions in Nigeria. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 30 and 39 years (36.6%), followed by those in the 40–49 years bracket (29.3%). The youngest group (20–29 years) and those aged 50 and above each made up 17.1% of the sample, indicating a diverse age representation that spans early-career to more experienced professionals.

Regarding marital status, a majority (58.5%) were married, while 24.4% were single. Divorced/separated respondents accounted for 9.8%, and widowed participants represented 7.3%. This distribution may influence respondents' perspectives on family support and psychosocial dynamics in rehabilitation. Educationally, the study population was predominantly well-educated, with 80.5% holding tertiary qualifications. Only a small fraction had secondary (14.6%) or primary (4.9%) education, suggesting that most respondents have formal training relevant to their professional roles in mental health care. The professional breakdown shows that nurses were the largest group of respondents (29.3%), followed by medical social workers (17.1%) and doctors (14.6%). Occupational therapists (14.6%), clinical psychologists (12.2%), and pharmacists (12.2%) were also represented, ensuring a multidisciplinary perspective in the study.

4.5 Hypotheses Testing

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Negative sociocultural beliefs significantly hinder the rehabilitation of individuals with mental illness in Ibadan

R=.200						
R ² =.040						
Adj. R ² =.015						
Std. Error =.77840						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Regression	2.915	10	.972	1.604	.192b	Not Significant
Residual	70.285	31	.606			
Total	73.200	41				

Source: Field Survey 2025

The regression analysis presented in Table 1 shows that the relationship between negative sociocultural beliefs and rehabilitation outcomes is not statistically significant. The R value of .200 indicates a weak positive correlation between the independent variable (negative sociocultural beliefs) and the dependent variable (rehabilitation outcomes). The R² value of .040 suggests that only 4% of the variance in mental health rehabilitation outcomes can be explained by negative sociocultural beliefs.

The Adjusted R² of .015 further confirms that the predictive power of the model is minimal when adjusted for the number of predictors. The F-statistic (F = 1.604) and the p-value (.192) show that the model does not reach the conventional level of statistical significance (p < 0.05). This result implies that although negative sociocultural beliefs exist and may appear to influence mental health rehabilitation, they do not significantly hinder the rehabilitation outcomes in a statistically measurable way within this sample. Other unmeasured variables, such as health infrastructure, financial access, or family support, may have a stronger impact. Therefore, the hypothesis is not supported by the data.

Hypothesis Two: Social stigma is a significant predictor of delayed or discontinued participation in mental health rehabilitation.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Social stigma is a significant predictor of delayed or discontinued participation in mental health rehabilitation.

R=.179						
R ² =.032						
Adj. R ² =.007						
Std. Error =.78161						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Regression	2.333	7	.778	1.273	.287b	Not Significant
Residual	70.867	34	.611			
Total	73.200	41				

Source: (Field Survey 2025)

Table 2 presents the regression analysis assessing whether social stigma significantly predicts delays or discontinuation in participation in mental health rehabilitation programs. The key findings from the table are as follows: $R = .179$ suggests a very weak positive correlation between social stigma and delayed/discontinued participation in rehabilitation. This means that while there is some relationship, it is not strong. $R^2 = .032$ indicates that only 3.2% of the variance in delayed or discontinued rehabilitation participation can be explained by social stigma. This implies that other variables are likely to have stronger predictive power. Adjusted $R^2 = .007$ shows that after adjusting for the number of predictors in the model, the explained variance drops even further, indicating a minimal effect size.

The F-statistic ($F = 1.273$) and p-value (.287) show that the regression model is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In other words, we cannot confidently say that social stigma alone significantly predicts rehabilitation dropout or delay based on this sample. The hypothesis that social stigma is a significant predictor of delayed or discontinued rehabilitation is not supported by the data in this study. Although stigma is widely acknowledged in literature as a barrier to mental health care (Goffman, 1963; Adewuya & Makanjuola, 2008), this finding suggests that in this particular context or sample, stigma may not be the dominant factor influencing rehabilitation participation. Other sociocultural or structural factors may play a more substantial role and warrant further investigation.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The analysis of the study provided nuanced insights into the complex interplay between sociocultural beliefs, family support, and social stigma in shaping mental health rehabilitation outcomes in Ibadan. Interestingly, the regression result for negative sociocultural beliefs represented by traditional interpretations

such as supernatural causation, ancestral retribution, or spiritual affliction indicated that such beliefs did not significantly predict rehabilitation outcomes ($R^2 = .040$, $p = .192$). This contradicts long-held assumptions in mental health literature that such beliefs always act as rigid barriers to recovery. The findings suggest that although these beliefs remain prevalent within the sociocultural fabric of Yoruba communities (Festus, 2025), their adverse impact on rehabilitation may be moderated by other factors. These could include increased access to biomedical explanations through education, exposure to mental health advocacy, or enhanced services provided by professionals within institutions such as the State Hospital Adeoyo. Additionally, institutional programs that involve culturally sensitive education and intervention strategies may help reconcile traditional and biomedical models of understanding mental illness.

In contrast, the data demonstrated that family support significantly influenced the success of rehabilitation among individuals with mental illness ($R^2 = .080$, $p = .045$). This is consistent with previous studies that have emphasized the importance of family in caregiving, emotional stability, and monitoring of treatment adherence (Gureje et al., 2015). In collectivist cultures like that of the Yoruba, where the family plays a central role in the individual's well-being, strong familial support can buffer stress and enhance treatment outcomes. Social stigma, although theoretically relevant, did not emerge as a statistically significant predictor of delayed or discontinued rehabilitation ($R^2 = .032$, $p = .287$). This finding may be attributed to social desirability bias, where respondents underreport stigma-related experiences, or to the internalization and normalization of stigma in daily life (Goffman, 1963). Despite the insignificance, stigma should not be dismissed, as other qualitative studies have documented its pervasive role in deterring help-seeking behaviour.

5.1 Implications of the Research

The implications of these findings are both practical and theoretical. Practically, the results underscore the importance of integrating families into the treatment process and designing community-based mental health programs that reinforce supportive structures. From a policy perspective, the data support the argument for decentralizing mental health services in Nigeria and strengthening family-inclusive models of care. Theoretically, the results challenge simplistic models that position traditional beliefs or stigma as isolated predictors, suggesting instead a more nuanced interplay of factors influencing rehabilitation.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

Given the limitations of this study such as the relatively small sample size and the concentration of participants from one hospital future research should adopt a multi-site approach and include service users to gain a more holistic understanding. Longitudinal studies could further explore how sociocultural influences evolve over time. Additionally, mental health interventions in Ibadan should prioritize family counselling and community awareness campaigns aimed at reframing mental illness in culturally resonant ways.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study explored the sociocultural factors influencing mental health rehabilitation in Ibadan, Nigeria, with a particular focus on negative cultural beliefs, family support, and social stigma. The findings revealed that while negative sociocultural beliefs such as attributing mental illness to supernatural causes remain common, they did not significantly hinder rehabilitation outcomes. This suggests that other mitigating factors, including education, access to professional care, and cultural integration within health services, may be reducing their impact. In contrast, family support emerged as a statistically significant positive predictor of rehabilitation success. This underscores the vital role of familial involvement in the mental health recovery process, particularly in collectivist societies where communal responsibility is deeply embedded. On the other hand, social stigma, although widely acknowledged as a barrier in mental health literature, was not found to be a significant predictor of delayed or discontinued treatment participation in this study.

These findings enhance the understanding of how culture affects mental health rehabilitation in Nigeria. They challenge broad assumptions and stress the need for specific approaches that consider the local context. The results indicate that programs focusing on family engagement may be more effective than those targeting traditional beliefs or stigma.

For future mental health policies in Nigeria, it is essential to integrate family support into rehabilitation. Further research should investigate other factors like education, income, or religious influence. Mixed-method studies are needed to capture cultural details, aiming for community-centred and family-inclusive mental health services to improve recovery and wellbeing.

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