UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

INVESTIGATING ADOLESCENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES AND GENDER BELIEFS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES

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DECEMBER, 2023

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **Joana Yevu**, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: …………………………………

DATE: …………………………………………

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: PROF. CHRISTIANA HAMMOND

SIGNATURE: ………………………………

DATE: …………………………………………….

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Mr. Anthony Kwabena de Youngster for the unflinching support in diverse ways throughout the period of the MPhil programme.

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ABSTRACT

The exposure to modernity and feminists' advocacies have brought about the need to re-examine the traditional gender roles of both men and women or boys and girls. This study investigates the perspectives of adolescents on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes. The study identifies the roles that adolescent girls and boys perform in the construction of gender role attitudes. It also examines the mechanisms through which evolving gender roles and beliefs are communicated to adolescents. The study is grounded in the gender performativity theory and the gender schema theory. Data for the study was qualitatively gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions from purposively selected twenty-six (26) adolescent girls and boys of Accra Grammar School in Oyibi. The data was thematically analysed. The findings indicate that in the construction of gender role attitudes, adolescent girls and boys perform age-appropriate, helping-hand, and gender-specific roles. However, embedded in age-appropriate and helping-hand roles are gender relations. The study further reveals that evolving gender roles and beliefs are communicated to adolescents through family dynamics, the media, empowerment initiatives and peer interactions. The study also reveals that though adolescent girls and boys will love to have a society where gender roles are evened, those adolescents who have one parent away from home observe and internalise a more egalitarian attitude towards the performance of gender roles. The study concludes that by promoting open dialogue, providing education on gender diversity, and challenging harmful stereotypes, adolescent girls and boys can be empowered to shape their own identities and beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes, fostering a future where gender equality is embraced and celebrated. The study, thus, recommends that Policy makers, most especially the sector in charge of gender and social protection, should take into consideration the formulation of policies and programmes for adolescents that will help shape their perspectives towards achieving gender equality.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The exposure to modernity, and feminists' advocacy have brought about the need to re-examine the traditional gender roles of both men and women or boys and girls. Traditional gender role beliefs state that a woman's role involves taking care of the home and family while a man's role is to provide financial support or seen as the breadwinner of the family (Dicke et al., 2019). Blackstone (2003) asserts that a traditional gender role orientation emphasises differences between men and women and assumes that each gender has a natural affinity to particular behaviours. This could be explained that those who maintain traditional gender role orientations are likely to be influenced by the rules and rituals of the generations that came before them.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as a phase of life between 10-19 years of age characterised by physical growth, emotional, psychosocial and behavioural changes, thus, bringing about transformation from childhood to adulthood. Adolescent development is complex; involving the interaction between fundamental biological and cognitive developmental processes, and the unique environment inhabited by the adolescent (Bell, 2016). Although discussions of adolescence may be traced back to Ancient Greece and the works of prominent philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, it was not until the turn of the 20th century that adolescence became recognised as a unique developmental period (Petersen, 1988). Seminal work by Hall (1904) identified adolescence as a period of storm and stress, claiming that struggles and difficulties during adolescence were not a normative feature of the adolescent experience, but an essential part of healthy development. However, Hall's

understandings of adolescence were purely theoretical; the empirical study of adolescence did not begin until the latter half of the 20th century where a boom in the social and behavioural sciences literature pertaining to adolescent development was observed (Petersen, 1988; Steinberg & Lerner, 2004). Early empirical studies of adolescence were heavily influenced by Hall, and tended to focus on the problematic aspects of adolescent development. However, the notion that adolescence is inherently a period of storm and stress has been challenged as researchers increasingly recognise the malleability and opportunity created by the developmental processes at work during adolescence (Arnett, 1999; Blakemore & Mills, 2014; Steinberg, 2014b).

Within some literature, the terms 'teenager' and 'adolescent' are often used interchangeably. Whereas the former may be concretely defined in terms of biological age, specifically referring to individuals aged 13-19 years old, the latter is more difficult to define in terms of age-related boundaries. Instead, adolescence is defined as a developmental period straddling the transition from childhood to adulthood, which may be characterised by the biological, cognitive, psychological and social changes that occur during this time (Steinberg, 2014b). Assigning age-related boundaries to adolescence is problematic since the developmental processes underpinning the transition from childhood to adulthood begin and end at different times for different individuals (Dorn & Biro, 2011), and do not always follow the same sequence (Peterson, 1988). There is also increasing evidence that the developmental processes underpinning adolescent development stretch beyond the teenage years. Recent neuroscientific research, for example, has suggested that brain development is not complete until one has reached their mid-20s (Blakemore & Mills, 2014). Furthermore, there are also important cultural variations in terms of how adolescence is defined, particularly surrounding

societal conceptions of how and when adult status is achieved (Bell, 2016). Many traditional societies view marriage as the marker signifying the end of adolescence, and many adult privileges are not afforded to an individual until marriage is achieved (Grant & Furstenberg, 2007). In contrast in industrialised societies, where marriage typically happens much later (if at all), achieving financial independence is more readily recognised as the defining marker of adulthood (Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007). However, for the purpose of this study, the World Health Organisation's definition of adolescence should suffice. Therefore, an adolescent, is a person between ages ten (10) and nineteen (19), who is transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

The concept of 'gender' was used for the first time in the 1940s by an innovative and controversial sexologist known as John Money (Hameed & Shukri, 2014). From the late 1960s upwards, the Social Sciences began to employ the concept and the question of gender became central to discussions of social life. Also, the concept of gender is largely associated with the second wave feminism which drew attention to sexual divisions in society as well as the patterns of social differences and inequalities (Hameed & Shukri, 2014). According to the World Health Organisation (2017), gender is a socio-cultural construct which distinguishes differences in the attributes of men and women or girls and boys. Gender also describes the roles and responsibilities of men and women. Thus, gender refers to the characteristics of men, boys, women, and girls that are socially constructed where such characteristics include norms, behaviours, and roles associated with men and women, boys and girls. Gender thus, prescribes relationships between such groups including how one group would act or behave towards members of their in-group, as well as towards members of their out-group.

Hameed and Shukri (2014) opine that studying gender is an interdisciplinary area and can be approached from different perspectives. They add that although gender is mainly associated with feminism and feminist theories, it can be described and explained by other disciplines such as Biology, Sociology, Psychology, Language, Literature, Communication, Anthropology, Political Science among others. For instance, Sociological perspectives focus on the sociocultural determinants of gender-role development and functioning. That is, the social construction of gender roles at the institutional level is the main focus of such perspectives. Investigating these roles at the individual level is the main focus of the psychological approach. Hameed and Shukri (2014) concluded that gender is determined by biological, sociological and psychological factors. Hameed and Shukri (2014) argued further that one factor complements the other, that is, biology sets the stage; society and interaction with the social environment determine the nature of gender identity. To Hameed and Shukri (2014), becoming a male or female is not only a matter of genes, hormones and social conditioning, but also by how individuals view themselves.

Blackstone (2003) asserts that understanding the term 'gender roles' requires an understanding of the term 'gender' as distinct from 'sex' and postulates that gender refers to the meanings, values, and characteristics that people ascribe to different sexes, while sex is a biological make-up of a person. This means that individuals are born either male or female based on the reproductive organ they come into the world with at birth. According to Blackstone (2003), gender roles are based on the different expectations that individuals, groups, and societies have of individuals based on their sex and based on each society's values and beliefs about gender. Traditional gender roles are the product of the interactions between individuals and their environments, and they give individuals cues about what sort of

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behaviour is believed to be appropriate for what sex (Blackstone, 2003). Thus, appropriate gender roles are defined according to a society's beliefs about differences between the sexes.

UNICEF (2017) define gender roles as social and behavioural norms within a specific culture that are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex.

The family is the first point of socialisation and has thus become one of the pivotal sites where gender relations are produced and reproduced (Gornick & Meyers, 2009). That is to say, the family is of crucial importance to the creation, transmission, and enforcement of gender attitudes and behaviours. This allows for the transmission of societal beliefs, attitudes and orientation as well as gender relations to other members of the society. This assertion is reinforced by Anyidoho (2020) who posits that when a child is born, its biological sex is used as a reference point to socialise him/her into a particular gender for the subsequent acceptance of how to think or behave conveyed through clear instructions, conditioning and modeling. In this sense, gendered characteristics and identities become the interactions of biology, socialisation, and self-regulation (Wood & Eagly, 2012) which result in an individual's gendered subjectivity, conformity or deviation from gendered expectations in social contexts.

Anyidoho (2020) asserts that issues of gender greatly influence development. This makes it easier to recognise gender inequalities as sources of obstacles for development. Differences exist in the social structures of family and other social institutions with regard to traditional gender roles and modern governance (Anyidoho, 2020). Given that all aspects of the human life are gendered, Anyidoho (2020) posits that development must necessarily lead to change in social relations of every gender. This notion is seeded in the claims of Jayachandran (2014) which state that existing gender gaps favour males in varied sectors including education,

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health, personal autonomy and many more. That is to say, when a country begins to advance or develop, the existing gender gaps are likely to close up enabling the citizens to live more fulfilled lives.

In most poor countries, traditional customs and laws continue to work against the attainment of gender equality, especially in the rural areas (Jayachandran, 2014). A report by Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning Department (1999) shows that within all communities in Ghana, there is a general gender inequality in social and personal relationships. The report further reveals that certain tasks and duties are designated as feminine and such sexual division of labour imposes on women the most enormous, time-consuming, labour-intensive and poorly rewarded chores both inside and outside their homes. These tasks are regarded as naturally determined for women, but demeaning to men. With such societal conventions improving the social and economic status of one gender over the other, there is the likelihood of developing one gender at the detriment of the other.

The World Health Organisation (2014) describes adolescents as persons from the ages of ten (10) to nineteen (19). During adolescence, girls and boys begin to interact with the world in new ways – taking chances, learning skills and experiencing unfamiliar emotions. UNICEF (2016) declares that there are 1.2 billion adolescents worldwide and this number makes the largest ever. They are also the most educated and urbanised. UNICEF (2016) further posits that Sub-Saharan Africa's growing adolescent population which is expected to reach 500 million by 2050, has the potential to fuel powerful change if governments invest in and engage it. Saewyc (2017) asserts that among the social determinants that affect the health and well-being of young people throughout the world, gender is a pivotal influence, with both subtle

and overt, immediate as well as long term influences on adolescent development, resources and opportunities, and ultimately, adolescent and adult health.

John et al. (2017) assert that adolescence is a critical period in the development of gender attitudes and behaviours which have potentially life-long effects. UNICEF (2016) also asserts that adolescents undergo significant changes in brain and physical maturation, gender and social relations, and familial responsibilities. Kagesten et al. (2016) argue that adolescence is not only a period of rapid physical, sexual and brain development, but also one when the shaping of gender beliefs and attitudes intensifies, with potentially life-long effects. This means that the ideas and perspectives regarding gender that individuals develop during adolescence can influence their behaviour, relationships and choices throughout their lives as they can impact how they perceive themselves and others, their career choices, future relationships and overall well-being.

Ridgeway and Correll (2004) define traditional gender beliefs as universal stereotypes about gender that serve to exacerbate the differences between men and women. They illustrate that the assumption that women are more emotional than men is for instance, a gender belief. Stockard (1999) had contended the assumptions and had indicated that gender beliefs are the beliefs regarding the expected roles associated with each sex group. Dicke et al. (2019) on the other hand, also consider gender role beliefs as referring to the beliefs about gender-specific responsibilities. John et al. (2017) assert that through gender socialisation, children and adolescents learn to associate activities and behaviours with specific gender and as a result, adopt appropriate gender roles. John et al. (2017, p.3) define gender socialisation as "a process by which individuals develop, refine and learn to 'do' gender through internalising gender norms and roles as they interact with key agents of socialisation, such as their family, social

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networks and other social institutions". This assertion is a confirmation of an earlier claim by Wigfield et al. (2015) who describe gendered socialisation as specific gender roles or the gender-stereotypical attitudes and expectations of parents, teachers, and other socialising influences such as the media, all of which transmit gender stereotypes.

Gender role attitudes are defined as perceptions and beliefs regarding the unique roles of men and women, and ranges on a continuum where traditional perceptions regarding gender roles are found at one end, and liberal perceptions are found at the other end (Korabik et al., 2008). Traditional gender role attitudes reflect perceptions regarding distinctive roles for women and men (Krais, 2006). According to traditional gender role attitudes, men fulfill their role through instrumental, breadwinning activities and women fulfill their roles through nurturing, homemaking, and parenting activities. In contradistinction, according to liberal gender role attitudes, men and women may successfully fulfill the same social roles (Lindsey, 2015). Egalitarian gender-role attitudes can be seen as a more advanced stage of liberal gender attitudes, because they endorse and value men's and women's equal and shared breadwinning and nurturing family roles (Lorber, 1994). Moreover, egalitarian gender role attitudes refer to the idea that individuals should have access to the same rights and opportunities irrespective of their sex, and should be treated according to the same principles, norms, and standards (Walby, 2005). The basic assumption of scholars who tested gender role attitudes based on the traditional sexist view (Glick et al., 2000) was that of gender polarisation, according to which behaviours and attitudes that are acceptable for females are not seen as appropriate for males, and vice versa (Bem, 1985). To Kulik (2018), the application of this perception in research methods for assessing gender role attitudes was usually expressed by evaluating the participants' agreement with social norms as masculine roles (e.g., breadwinner and protector)

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or as feminine roles (e.g., caregivers for the family and carrying the responsibility of the household). In such studies, the participants' agreement with customary norms was interpreted as holding traditional gender role attitudes, and disagreement was interpreted as holding liberal gender role attitudes (Kulik, 2018).

Individual attitudes toward gender roles arise from an inner framework of values and beliefs concerning, for example, egalitarianism, autonomy, self-determination, and so on (Kalmijn, 2003). Values transmission during the primary socialisation and experiences during the course of life, including secondary socialisation processes and daily negotiations between partners and primary groups, contribute to the development of individual value systems, of which gender equality value and gender role attitudes are also part (Moen et al., 1997).

Research on gender and adolescence has flourished including how adolescents negotiate the challenges of gender gaps that affect their persona (Perry & Pauletti, 2011). Research has also established that some important linkages between gender phenomena in childhood and gender phenomena in adulthood are mediated by gender phenomena in adolescence (Perry & Pauletti, 2011) as adolescence is reputed to be a crucial bridge between childhood and adulthood.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Research has shown that gender inequalities in the home make it difficult to achieve gender equality at the workplace (Park et al., 2013). As established by Gornick and Meyers (2009), the family is the first point of call in the socialisation of the individual. Therefore, the values imbibed by this first agent are likely to influence the formation of every individual. John et al. (2017) argue that the process of gender socialisation is particularly important during the period of adolescence, which is often reinforced by the norms and beliefs of the individual's family

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and close relations in the society. They further argue that the importance of gender socialisation lies in its ability to reduce gender inequalities. Thus, by understanding how young people form their gender beliefs and attitudes, interventions can be designed to challenge harmful stereotypes, promote inclusivity, and empower individuals to break free from rigid gender norms.

Although several studies have been conducted on adolescents and gender, Halimi et al. (2020) assert that the phase of early adolescence, which is one of the crucial life phases in the development of gender role attitudes, is under researched. Some studies (Abad et al., 2018; Wille et al., 2018; Bailey et al., 2019; Dicke et al. 2019; Han, 2019; Saß & Kampa, 2019) have focused on disparities between females and males in academia, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). For instance, Dicke et al. (2019) focused on STEM careers and examined the impact of traditional family related gender role beliefs in adolescence on education and STEM occupational attainments in adulthood. Findings from the study indicated that higher education is attained by females when they give lower endorsement to traditional gender role beliefs, while stronger endorsement of traditional gender role beliefs by males leads to a higher rate of educational attainment and attainment of STEM-related careers.

Studies (Kongolo, 2009; Dietrich et al., 2021; Gyan et al., 2021) also exist on the lack of women's participation in political and social events. For instance, Gyan et al. (2021) conducted a study to examine the relative strength of barriers to women's involvement in the community development processes in rural Ghana. Seven key barriers that were examined by the study included low level of education, motherhood and family responsibilities, a low confidence level of women, lack of information, unacceptability of women's participation in

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the community, lack of nominations from NGOs, and males having too much control over the process on the level of participation of women in the community development process in rural Ghana. The research identified that five of the barriers were significant. These were: males having too much control over the process, unacceptability of women's participation, motherhood and family responsibilities, lack of nomination by NGOs, and low level of education. Of these, the study revealed that 'males having too much control over the process' serves as the strongest barrier to the involvement of women in community development processes in rural Ghana. According to Gyan et al. (2021) this is because in Ghana, especially within rural communities, cultural narratives position men as virile, strong, intelligent, good for leadership positions, and offering protection and sustenance, intelligence, and wisdom. Women, on the other hand, are socialised to believe that males are wiser and more responsible to lead. By this, males amass power and exercise this power by making various decisions throughout the community development process – initiation, designing, implementation, and evaluation (Gyan et al., 2021).

Gyan et al. (2021) concluded that women are disadvantaged in their participation in community development due to their gender, socio-economic and cultural contexts, and these barriers relate to behavioural and idiosyncratic patterns associated with their socialisation.

With regards to adolescents and traditional gender roles and beliefs, a study by Mensch et al. (2000) focused on socialisation to gender roles and marriage among Egyptian adolescents. The study discovered a strong gender differentiation among boys and girls and revealed that boys are more likely to favour traditional marriage arrangements, while girls are somewhat egalitarian. This study is in sync with the current study because the current study also seeks

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to investigate the views of Ghanaian adolescents on traditional gender roles and their experiences in constructing gender role attitudes.

John et al. (2017) examined the main influences on the gender socialisation process during adolescence in order to provide practical suggestions for policy and programmes on how to achieve more gender equitable outcomes. John et al. (2017) identified four main influences on the gender socialisation process during adolescence to be agents of socialisation, life course factors, changes in economic structures, and an increasingly globalised world. The study concluded that understanding how factors at the structural, social-interactional and individual levels are interlinked is critical for developing better approaches to promoting gender equality. John et al.'s (2017) study recommended more holistic policy and programming efforts around gender socialisation in adolescence. From the above, there appear to be minimal studies on adolescents' perspectives on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes. Hence, the current study seeks to contribute to literature by investigating the perspectives of Ghanaian adolescents in the Oyibi community on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify the roles that adolescents at Accra Grammar School perform in the construction of gender role attitudes

2. To examine how evolving gender roles are communicated to the adolescents of Accra Grammar School

3. To examine the perspectives of the adolescents at Accra Grammar School on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the roles that adolescents at Accra Grammar School perform in the construction of gender role attitudes?

2. How are evolving gender roles and beliefs communicated to the adolescents of Accra Grammar School?

3. What are the perspectives of the adolescents of Accra Grammar School on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs?

1.5 Significance of the Study

John et al. (2017) posit that adolescence is a critical period in the development of gender attitudes and behaviours. This current study is, therefore, relevant to adolescents in that results from this study will help them develop positive gender attitudes and behaviours. Also, knowing the perspectives that adolescents hold about traditional gender role beliefs will help policy makers formulate the right policies towards attaining gender equality as John et al. (2017) theorise that the rapid changes that take place during adolescence provide opportunities for the development and implementation of policies and programmes which can influence the gender socialisation process in order to maximise positive outcomes.

This study is also important because apart from the potential of adding to literature in the field of gender research, data gathered from the study can be used as basis for future research into the fields of adolescence gender communication in Ghana and Africa. This is because the world swarms with ideas about gender – and these ideas are so commonplace that we take it

for granted that they are true, accepting common adage as scientific fact. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013) note that as scholars and researchers, it is our job to look beyond what appears to be common sense to find not simply what truth might be behind it, but how it came to be common sense. It is precisely because gender seems natural, and beliefs about gender seem to be obvious truths, that scholars need to step back and examine gender from a new perspective (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013). Results from this study will also be of great importance to society too, as Anyidoho (2020) asserts that issues of gender greatly influence development.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was limited to investigating the perspectives of adolescents on traditional gender roles and beliefs in constructing gender role attitudes. The study was conducted at a private basic school, Accra Grammar School located in the Greater Accra Region, specifically Oyibi, a town in the Kpone-Katamanso Municipality. I purposively selected this study area for convenience sake in order to save time, money and efforts (Creswell, 2013). I also selected the Oyibi area to make the research process seamless and focused, handy and manageable (Akanle et al., 2020).

The study's participants were school-going adolescents, who were aged between eleven (11) and fifteen (15) years. The data for the study was gathered within two months from a sample size of 26 adolescent girls and boys.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

The study is organised and presented in five interrelated chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction to the study and comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem,

research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of study and organisation of study. Chapter two presents a detailed analysis of the review of related literature on gender, gender roles, gender inequalities, adolescents and gender. The chapter also discusses the symbolic interactionism and gender schema theories which aid to situate the research within context. Chapter three discusses the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing data for the study and comprises the research approach, research design, sampling and sample size, data analysis plan and trustworthiness of the study. The chapter four is devoted to discussion of the findings of the study, and primarily examines the analysis of data through the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter five summarises the findings of the study, draws conclusions and presents recommendations.

1.8 Operational definition of terms

'Traditional societies' – societies in which division of labour is influenced primarily by age, gender and status

'Evolving gender roles' – gender roles that are shifting from the traditional ways of doing things

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the review of related literature on the sub themes of gender, gender roles, gender beliefs, construction of gender role attitudes, gender inequalities, adolescents and gender. The chapter also discusses the theories underpinning the study, which are the gender performativity and gender schema theories. The relevance of the theories to the study is also taken into consideration.

2.1 Gender

The concept of 'gender' was used for the first time in the 1940s by an innovative and controversial sexologist known as John Money (Hameed & Shukri, 2014). From the late 1960s upwards, the Social Sciences began to employ the concept and the question of gender became central to discussions of social life. Also, the concept of gender is largely associated with the second wave feminism which drew attention to sexual divisions in society as well as the patterns of social differences and inequalities (Hameed & Shukri, 2014).

According to the World Health Organisation (2017), gender is a socio-cultural construct which distinguishes differences in the attributes of men and women, girls and boys, and accordingly refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women. Thus, gender refers to the characteristics of men, boys, women, and girls that are socially constructed. Such characteristics include norms, behaviours, and roles associated with men and women, boys and girls. Gender thus, prescribes relationships between such groups including how one group

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would act or behave towards members of their in-group, as well as towards members of their out-group.

Anyidoho (2020) asserts that issues of gender greatly influence development. This makes it easier to recognise gender inequalities as sources of obstacles for development. Differences exist in the social structures of family and other social institutions with regards to traditional gender roles and modern governance (Anyidoho, 2020). Given that all aspects of the human life are gendered, Anyidoho (2020) posits that development must necessarily lead to change in social relations of every gender. This notion is seeded in the claims of Jayachandran (2014) which state that existing gender gaps favour males in varied sectors including education, health, personal autonomy and many more. That is to say, when a country begins to advance or develop, the existing gender gaps are likely to close up enabling the citizens to live more fulfilled lives.

Krieger (2003) postulates that the word 'gender' came into common use as an alternative to the word 'sex' in the United States in the 1970s, and was a way for researchers and activists to counter the belief that our masculinity and femininity were biologically determined – a belief pervading the scientific and lay communities at the time. Rolleri (2013) opines that gender is not a binary concept; rather, it is fluid and can take on many variations. That is to say that people of either sexes can, at a point in time, take on roles considered as feminine or masculine. This is because gender is not innate, but something one learns from watching and doing. Individuals are considered active agents in constructing (and deconstructing) norms of masculinity and femininity (Courtenay, 2000).

Gornick and Meyers (2009) assert that the family is one of the pivotal sites where gender relations are produced and reproduced. This means that the family is a central place where

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children first learn about the roles connected to gender, and where power relations built around gender are located. Patriarchy as a historically central form of gender relations means literally 'rule by the father' and was firmly based in male domination inside of families (Gerson, 2009). Gornick and Meyers (2009) explain further that gender relations are not formed only within the intimate relations of the family; they are constructed within the public sphere as well. But a good case can be made that the family constitutes the most fundamental arena within which these relations are forged.

According to Gerson (2009), at the core of the sociological analysis of gender is the distinction between biological sex and gender: sex is a property of the biological characteristics of an organism; gender is socially constructed, socially created. This is a powerful and totally revolutionary idea, in that we have the potential capacity to change the social relations in which we live, including the social relations between biologically defined men and women. Sometimes in the media one hears a discussion in which someone talks about the gender of a dog. In the sociological use of the term, dogs don't have gender; only people living within socially constructed relations are gendered.

To Gerson (2009), this distinction raises a fundamental question in sociological theory about what it means to say that something is 'natural'. Gender relations are generally experienced as 'natural' rather than as something created by cultural and social processes. Throughout most of history for most people the roles performed by men and women seem to be derived from inherent biological properties. After all, it is a biological fact that women get pregnant and give birth to babies and have the capacities to breastfeed them. Men cannot do this. It is biological fact that all women know that they are the mothers of the babies they bear, whereas

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men know that they are the fathers of particular children only when they have confidence that they know the sexual behavior of the mother.

Gerson (2009) asserted further that it is a small step from these biological facts to the view that it is also a fact of nature that women are best suited to have primary responsibility for rearing children as well, and because of this, they should be responsible for other domestic chores. Gerson (2009) went on to theorise that the central thesis of sociological accounts of gender relations is that these biological facts by themselves do not determine the specific form that social relations between men and women take. Gerson (2009) added that this assertion does not imply, however, an even stronger view, that gender relations have nothing to do with biology. Therefore, to Gerson (2009), gender relations are the result of the way social processes act on specific biological categories and form social relations between them.

One way of thinking about this, Gerson (2009) continued, is with a metaphor of production: biological differences rooted in sex constitute the raw materials which, through a specific process of social production, get transformed into the social relations we call 'gender'. Gerson (2009) opined that this way of thinking about sex and gender leaves entirely open the very difficult question of what range of variation in gender relations is stably possible. This question is critical if one holds to a broadly egalitarian conception of social justice and fairness. From an egalitarian point of view, gender relations are fair if, within those relations, males and females have equal power and equal autonomy (Gerson, 2009). This equality in power and autonomy is what could be termed egalitarian gender relations. According to Gerson (2009), this does not imply that all men and all women do exactly the same things, but it does mean that gender relations do not generate unequal opportunities and choices for men

and women. The sociological problem, then, is whether or not a society within which deeply egalitarian gender relations predominate is possible (Gerson, 2009).

Gerson (2009) asserted that from anthropological research, it is known that in human history as a whole, there is enormous variation in the character of social relations between men and women, and in some societies at some points in history, women were virtually the slaves of men, completely disempowered and vulnerable. Gerson (2009) revealed that in some contemporary societies they must cover their faces in public and cannot appear outside of the home without being accompanied by an appropriate man. In other times and places, women have had considerable autonomy and control over their bodies and activities. So, one thing is for sure: there is enormous empirical variation which we can observe. What is much less clear is what sorts of variation are possible, and what sorts of possibilities that have not yet occurred could nevertheless be stable over time. For example, in all societies, women have historically had primary responsibility for early-infant care; in no society has it been the case that the prevalent social norms backed the principle that fathers should be as involved in the care of babies as mothers.

As a generalisation from this empirical observation, therefore, Gerson (2009) opined that we might conclude that strongly egalitarian norms about parenting of babies are not possible. Such a conclusion would be unjustified. Since this observed universal trait has occurred in a world characterised by certain specific economic, political and cultural properties, the empirical universality of this 'fact' does not mean that this is simply a 'natural' reflection of biological imperatives. Gerson (2009) discovered that until the very recent past, for example, birth control was relatively ineffective; now it is reliable. Gerson (2009), again, found that

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until the last one hundred and fifty years or so, most people had to spend most of their time producing food. This is no longer true.

Also, Gerson (2009) uncovered that until recently, because of relatively high infant mortality, women needed to have many children in order to ensure that there would be surviving adult children. For most people, this was essential if they hoped to have anyone to take care of them when they were old. Again, this is no longer the case in countries like the United States (Gerson, 2009). Gerson (2009) further posited that most of these changes have occurred only in the last few generations, and until the recent past, no governments were organised on popular-democratic principles and no cultures valued individual autonomy and liberal rights. All of these are historically novel developments of the past few centuries. To Gerson (2009), what we do not know, then, is what new forms of gender relations might become possible and stable given these dramatically altered economic, cultural and political conditions.

2.1.1 Gender Roles

To Blackstone (2003), gender roles are the products of the interactions between individuals and their environments, and they give individuals cues about what sort of behaviour is believed to be appropriate for what sex. In Blackstone's (2003) article on gender roles and society, she defines gender roles as the roles that men and women are expected to occupy based on their sex. Blackstone (2003) explored the range of perspectives that different disciplines offered on gender roles.

Blackstone (2003) discovered that an ecological perspective on gender roles suggests that gender roles are created by the interactions between individuals, communities and their environment. That is, while individual people play a role in constructing gender roles, so, too

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do the physical and social environments within which they operate. A biological perspective to gender role suggests that women have a natural affinity towards the feminine gender role and that men have a natural affinity toward the masculine gender role. Blackstone (2003) was quick to add that the biological perspective does not in any way suggest that one role holds any inherently greater value than the other. A sociological perspective toward gender roles suggests that masculine and feminine roles are learned and that masculine and feminine gender roles are not necessarily connected to males' and females' biological traits. Related to the sociological perspective is the feminist perspective which asserts that because gender roles are learned, they can also be unlearned, and that new and different gender roles can be created. Blackstone (2003) further expatiated that the feminist perspective points out that gender roles are not simply ideas about appropriate behaviour for males and females, but are also linked to the different levels of power that males and females hold in the society. Finally, Blackstone (2003) also discovered that gender roles are often discussed in terms of an individual's gender role orientation, which is typically described as either traditional or nontraditional.

To Blacktone (2003), a traditional gender role orientation emphasises differences between men and women and assumes that each sex has a natural affinity to particular behaviours. Those who maintain a traditional gender role orientation are likely to be influenced by the rules and rituals of the generations that came before them, by their parents and grandparents. Conversely, individuals with nontraditional gender role orientations are more likely to believe in the value of egalitarian relationships between men and women and in the power of individual human beings to determine what roles they wish to occupy and the extent to which those roles are or should be associated with their sex.

According to Stockard (1999), gender roles delineate the expected societal roles assigned to individuals based on their sex. In a similar vein, John et al. (2017) argue that children and adolescents internalise gender roles through gender socialisation, whereby activities and behaviours become associated with specific genders. This process occurs as individuals interact with influential agents of socialisation, including their family, social networks, and social institutions. John et al. (2017) provide a comprehensive definition of gender socialisation as the process through which individuals develop, refine, and learn to embody gender norms and roles by internalising socially constructed expectations. This perspective supports a previous assertion by Wigfield et al. (2015) who describe gendered socialisation as the inculcation of specific gender roles, gender-stereotypical attitudes, and expectations by parents, teachers, media, and other socialising influences, all of which perpetuate gender stereotypes.

To Ercan and Uçar (2021), gender roles contribute to the differences between women and men. When gender comes into question, personality traits, roles and responsibilities of women and men that are predetermined by the society also step in. Ercan and Uçar (2021) believe that these differences reveal themselves as determiners in designating expectations and roles related to how women and men behave and how they think depending on the culture they live in. In brief, gender roles determine the traits which structure women and men socially with their behaviours and thoughts (Hiller & Philliber, 1986).

Expectations about marriage differ depending on gender, and women have a more optimistic attitude towards marriage when compared to men (Alqashan & Alkandari, 2010; Bruce et al., 2004). The differences of women and men in expectations towards marriage roles also draw attention. The gender roles can come into play in these differences, and the fact that the

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individuals do not want to leave these roles becomes effective. The perception of expectation of an individual affects the role of their partners. Waller and McLanahan (2005), state that the expectation of a man has a powerful impact in moving a relationship towards marriage whereas the expectation of a woman determines whether the parties will continue their relationship or not (Amato & Booth, 1995). Women show a less tendency towards traditional roles when compared to men (Faulkner et al., 2005). On the contrary, marriage satisfaction levels of the men who have a more tendency towards traditional gender roles reveal a lesser decrease over time (Losrocco & Spitze, 2007). While women look for a more egalitarian attitude in marriage, men play the part of service provider (Balik, 2017).

Ercan and Uçar (2021) conducted a study to examine how gender roles and personality traits influence the expectations of men and women towards marriage. The study aimed to determine whether gender roles, self-esteem and personality predict the expectations of men and women' attitudes about marriage. The study was conducted in Turkey and consisted of 491 participants; 345 females and 146 males, who were university graduates between 18-53 years of age. The participants were all single. The convenient sampling method was used in the formation of the sample group. The relational screening model was used in order to determine the level at which gender roles and personality traits predict the expectations of women and men towards marriage. Also, the Socialisation of Gender Norms Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection Scale and Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale were the data collection tools used. The dependent variable in the study was marriage expectation, and the independent variables were self-esteem, egalitarian gender roles, traditional gender roles, sociotropy and autonomy. Regression analysis was conducted separately for women and men.

The findings of Ercan and Uçar (2021) showed that the variables predicting marriage expectations of women and men are different. According to the results, the expectations and attitudes of women towards marriage are affected by their personality traits and traditional gender roles. On the other hand, the expectations of men are affected by sociotropic personality trait, which is linked to establishing intimate relationships and valuing the feeling of trust in the relationships.

2.1.2 Gender Beliefs

Ridgeway and Correll (2004) define gender beliefs as universal stereotypes about gender that serve to intensify the differences between men and women. Ridgeway and Correll (2004) illustrate that the assumption that women are more emotional than men is for instance, a gender belief. Also, Dicke et al. (2019) define gender role-beliefs as the beliefs concerning gender-specific responsibilities. Assimeng (2007) holds that right from the time of birth, individuals are taught through socialisation to play certain roles which society deems useful for the perpetuation of its institutional arrangements. Shortly after birth, young boys are socialised into recognising that assertiveness, aggression, and violence are qualities to aspire to, while vulnerability, empathy, and sensitivity are deemed to be exclusively 'feminine' and, thus, inferior (Assimeng, 2007). Words commonly used to describe masculinity are 'independent,' 'competitive,' 'aggressive,' 'non-emotional,' 'self-confident,' and so on while femininity is described as 'dependent,' 'passive,' 'sensitive,' 'emotional,' 'nurturing,' 'soft,' or even 'weak' and this impacts ways in which adolescents learn to perceive the world around them (Karklina, 2015). According Adinkrah (2004), in Ghana, as in many societies, teaching of gender beliefs commences at birth and continues through the lifecycle. Like in many other societies, males are characterised by virility, strength, authority, power, and leadership, the

ability to offer protection and sustenance, intelligence and wisdom and the ability to bear physical and emotional pain. Girls however, are taught to regard boys as stronger and wiser, while boys get accustomed to dominate and control women (Ampofo & Boateng, 2007). These roles, according to Ampofo (2001), are expressed in community norms and values. Therefore, those who do not conform to it are subjected to name tags such as 'bema-basia,' meaning 'man-woman' and 'babasia-kokonin,' meaning 'woman-cock' or 'male woman' (Ampofo, 2001). Adjei (2014) and Braimah (2015) assert that these social constructions influence men and women to behave in ways that conform to the stereotype of masculinity (aggressive, independent, authoritative and controlling) and femininity (emotional, nurturer, cooperative and dependent) and this affects their perceptions and actions. Evidently, gender divisions are common in our daily life and deeply embedded in our institutions, actions, beliefs, and desires that it appears to be completely natural to the extent that for most people it cannot be challenged (Eckert& McConnell-Ginet, 2013; Lorber, 2000). Vance (1995), however, argues that the pervasive gendered characteristics and roles that have been accepted as natural are not really natural, rather products of long and persistent socialisations that have led to the acceptance of certain characteristics and roles as the natural standards for masculine or feminine. Although most of people rarely notice this overtly in everyday life, most interactions are coloured by performance of one's own gender and by one's attribution of gender to others (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013). Notwithstanding, gender is not something people are born with, and not something people have, but something they do (West & Zimmerman, 1987), something they perform (Butler 1990). Chen (2005) is of the view that feminine and masculine behaviours are learned. This is because, a woman acts femininely not due to the fact that she is biologically a female, but by repeated practice and imitation of being

a woman in the process of social learning. Therefore, gender is not innate, rather performative in nature (Chen, 2005). Although, it is a performance, its enactment is hemmed in by the general rules of social life, cultural expectations, workplace norms and laws (Lorber, 2000). Ocha (2013) purports that though gender remains the basis on which sexuality is structured, we live in a world in which gender relations themselves are constantly being transformed. In same manner, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013) brings to light the idea that gender continues to be transformed as our social life changes or when we find ourselves in a particular situation. This validates Chen's (2005) claim that people constantly change their gendered behaviour. For instance, men can behave in ways stereotypically associated with femininity and women may display masculine behaviour when they need to appear strong.

Per the 2011 National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) Report, in Ghana, gender roles socialisation and allocation play a very vital feature in the various ethnic societies. According to the report, in the pre-modern society, there were roles that were solely preserved or played by women and men. Among all the ethnic groups in Ghana, men were seen as the overall heads of the family, undertook the more laborious tasks and were usually appointed to fill leadership positions. Women on the other hand assumed basic domestic roles and were seen as bearers of children and retailers of food items. Petty trade was a pervasive economic activity that was exclusively a woman's occupation (NCCE Research Report, 2011) and this still pertains in current traditional segment of modern Ghana. The NCCE Research Report (2011) cited an example from the Ghanaian traditional setting, precisely in the northern sector, where gender roles are very clear. The Report indicated that in the household or family, roles are assigned to men and women, such as the men provide solid food and women the ingredients for the food. Women are also the caretakers of the home and nurturers of the

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children. Women are, therefore, house keepers and their place is said to be the kitchen, catering for the home, nurturing of children and fetching of water (NCCE Research Report, 2011).

Ghanaian women occupy a subordinate social status vis-à-vis their male counterparts in virtually every domain of social life (Amoah, 1987; Latimore, 1997). Indeed, there is a general cultural expectation that women demonstrate respect, passivity, obedience, submissiveness, and acquiescence toward men, particularly with respect to husbands' wishes and demands (Adinkrah, 2004). According to the report on National Gender Policy by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) in 2015, Ghana, over the past decade has made progress in the advancement of gender equality and empowerment of women in political, economic and social spheres through government's initiatives at promoting the issues of women and men. However, irrespective of the gains made so far, these inequalities are still deeply rooted in the social system and manifest particularly in matters of access to justice, health, finance, education, security, politics, energy, agricultural practices, environmental management processes among others (Akotia & Anum, 2015). This has been attributed to the historical legacy of patriarchal influences and the form of socialisation received from homes to public settings (MoGCSP National Gender report, 2015). In spite of the constitutional provisions and international treaties, Sossou (2011) contends that customs and cultural practices continue to adversely affect the rights and lives of women in Ghana. Historically, women have been oppressed and dominated by the patriarchal society in Ghana (Sossou, 2011). Since the attainment of independence in Ghana, women have increasingly moved into the paid labor force; however, women still lag behind men in all sectors (Sossou, 2011). In the Ghanaian society, the ability of women to perform their domestic responsibilities

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is more valued than their effectiveness in their careers (Owusu, 2014). It has been argued that in Ghana, the gendering of societal roles and toxic constructions of masculinity and femininity produce systems of knowledge that normalise the use of violence against women (and children) and embed the perceptions of women as childlike, inferior, and subordinate to men into the fabric of the society (Owusu, 2014). These experiences reflect the deeply embedded social constructions of masculinity and femininity, which shape societal attitudes, values, and norms that in turn characterise the nature of gender relations in Ghana (Karklina, 2015).

2.1.3 Construction of Gender Role Attitudes

Differences in societal views on the roles of men and women have been addressed in many large-scale comparative studies by employing indicators of gender roles attitudes from cross-sectional surveys (Lomazzi & Seddig, 2020). Assuming that cross-country differences in gender role attitudes are linked to the prevailing cultural value orientations in each society, Lomazzi and Seddig (2020) investigated the association between societal views on gender roles, as measured by the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), and the prevailing cultural values, as defined by Schwartz's theory. Positioned at the intersection between the interest in substantive comparative research on gender role attitudes and in the methodological development of the techniques to assess measurement equivalence, Lomazzi and Seddig's (2020) study had two aims. The first aim was to test the cross-country equivalence of the popular measurement instrument of gender role attitudes utilised in the ISSP by adopting the novel alignment method in addition to the more traditional Multiple-Group Confirmatory Factor Ananlysis (MGCFA) assessment. The second aim was substantive and concerned with the explanation of cross-country differences in the prevalent views on gender roles by different cultural value orientations.

The study adopted the quantitative approach and used data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). Forty (40) countries were sampled for the study. First, the study tested the measurement model for the latent factor "gender role attitudes" with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) across all countries. Second, the study tested the base model country by country. The model did not fit well and had low standardised factor loadings in Austria, India, Norway, and Mexico. Not being able to reproduce the base model, the study excluded these countries from all subsequent analyses because there was no common ground for testing comparability. In the 36 remaining countries, the basic model fit the data well. The study then continued to test for measurement invariance across the 36 countries with MGCFA and began with the configural model, which fit well.

The ranking started from zero (0), indicating the most traditional gender role attitudes. The factor means across the 36 countries estimated by the alignment procedure in descending order were as follow: The Philippines (0.000), Korea (−0.793), Turkey (−0.797), Argentina (−0.873), and Chile (−0.875) are the countries where people tend to support more traditional views on gender roles based on a gendered separation of social roles, with women devoted to the domestic sphere and men to the public one. Conversely, at the bottom of the ranking the study discovered Denmark (−3.359), Sweden (−3.174), Finland (−2.705), Iceland (−2.662), and Germany (−2.493), where people tend to support more egalitarian gender roles in the private and public sphere. Lomazzi and Seddig (2020) were quick to add, however, that the factor means are arbitrary and should not be used as substantive information. Also, the study observed a positive relationship between embeddedness and gender role attitudes. Thus, the more societies emphasise the importance of the collective and status quo, the more they favour traditional gender roles. Lomazzi and Seddig (2020) also found that some of the countries

with the highest levels of embeddedness (e.g., Philippines, South Africa, Bulgaria, Poland) favour a more traditional gender role model. On the contrary, the countries with the lowest scores on embeddedness (Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Germany) are among those with the least traditional gender role attitudes. Hierarchy was positively related to gender role attitudes. According to Lomazzi and Seddig (2020), this implies that societies that adhere to a hierarchical system of societal roles are more traditional in their view on gender roles. Countries with the highest scores on hierarchy (e.g., Korea, Turkey, Russia, Philippines) also show more traditional gender role attitudes. Countries with rather low scores on hierarchy (e.g., Finland, Belgium, Germany) hold less traditional gender role attitudes. Lomazzi and Seddig (2020) also discovered that the relationship between egalitarianism and gender role attitudes was negative, implying that societies that emphasise the benefit and welfare of all its members to an equal degree do not hold traditional views on gender roles. Among the countries with the highest scores on egalitarianism are some of those with the least traditional gender role attitudes (e.g., Belgium, France, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany).

To Lomazzi and Seddig (2020), the ranking of the factor means of gender role attitudes collocates the Philippines, Korea, and Turkey as the three most traditional countries with regard to gender beliefs while Denmark, Sweden, and Finland are the most egalitarian countries. The study concluded that societies with high levels of embeddedness, emphasising the importance of the collective and status quo, as well as those with a strong preference in the maintenance of a hierarchical system of societal roles tend to show more traditional gender role attitudes. Societies that manifest egalitarianism as the predominant cultural value also display more egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles.

According to Kulik (2018), understanding the differences between dominant and disadvantaged social categories in attitudes toward equality in gender roles is the first step in exposing the mechanism that discriminates against women and prevents them from achieving key social roles. Thus, Kulik (2018) conducted a study in Israel to examine whether in an age of accelerated changes in gender roles in central areas of life (family, work, interpersonal relationships), there are differences in egalitarian gender role attitudes between the main social categories: men versus women and heterosexuals versus homosexuals. The study tested the contribution of several major background variables, which are indicators of the socialisation process, to explain egalitarianism in gender role attitudes: Age, education, degree of religiosity, and status of intimate relationship (living or not living with a partner). Adopting the quantitative approach, Kulik (2018) sampled 228 participants (97 men and 131 women), of whom 114 were homosexuals and 114 were heterosexuals. Pearson correlations performed separately for the heterosexual participants (men versus women) and for the homosexual participants (gays versus lesbians) revealed that age was related positively to egalitarianism in gender role attitudes among gays in the work domain and the interpersonal relations domain. Kulik (2018) found a negative correlation between the degree of religiosity and the extent of egalitarianism in gender role attitudes in all three domains among gays and in the interpersonal relations domain among heterosexual men. Among heterosexual women, the degree of religiosity was also negatively correlated with the extent of egalitarianism in gender role attitudes in the work and in the interpersonal relations domains. Among lesbians, this correlation was found in all three tested domains, such that a lower extent of religiosity was correlated with more egalitarian attitudes. The study found a positive correlation between education and egalitarianism in gender role attitudes among heterosexual men and women in

the work and the interpersonal relations domains. No significant correlations were found between economic status, employment status, and fulfillment of managerial roles and egalitarianism in gender role attitudes in any of the four research groups.

Kulik's (2018) study revealed that the gender role attitudes of women are more egalitarian than those of men in the three tested domains, regardless of their sexual orientation. This finding indicated that in spite of the numerous ethical, normative, and technological changes that have taken place in the present era, which have led to greater equality between men and women in the fulfillment of roles in various life domains compared to the past, women still aspire to a more balanced gender-role division than men, and this aspiration shapes their gender role attitudes. Kulik (2018) revealed that both gays and lesbians tend to adopt more egalitarian attitudes compared to the heterosexual population in all tested domains (Kulik, 2018). The finding of differences according to the participants' sex and according to sexual orientation indicates that the gaps between the different research groups in gender role attitudes extend to all life domains. It was found that lesbians do not adopt more egalitarian attitudes compared to their heterosexual counterparts, nor to men, regardless of sexual orientation. differences between lesbians and gays in their gender role attitudes in the work domain are lower than the differences between heterosexual men and women. According to one explanation, this finding can be attributed to differences in the reference groups of lesbians compared to heterosexual women (Kulik, 2018). According to Kulik (2018), it may be assumed that the reference group of heterosexual women is the men around them in different social situations and contexts. Thus, owing to the prominent discrimination against women in the work domain, heterosexual women express a desire for change and for equality in their status in this domain. However, the reference group of lesbians who maintain intimate and

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social reciprocal activity in diverse situations with women is not necessarily composed of men, but to a large extent of women who have an equal social status. Thus, because of the higher sense of discrimination among heterosexual women, which is derived from their comparison to men, they express a greater desire to correct the situation in the work domain through adoption of gender role attitudes that are characterized by greater egalitarianism than their lesbian counterparts. Kulik (2018) also asserts that according to another explanation, heterosexual men hold less egalitarian gender-role attitudes in the work domain than heterosexual women, whereas gays adopt particularly egalitarian gender-role attitudes in the work domain out of identification with the discrimination experienced by women. The gap between gays and lesbians in the extent of egalitarian attitudes is therefore much smaller than between heterosexual men and women. The higher the degree of the participants' religiosity, the less egalitarian are their gender-role attitudes, in all tested domains. It was further found that gender role attitudes among participants who are in an intimate relationship are less egalitarian compared to the attitudes of participants who are not in an intimate relationship, in all tested domains: family, work, and interpersonal relations. Thus, the findings indicate that less egalitarianism in gender role attitudes characterises people who are in an intimate relationship, both among those with a heterosexual orientation and among those with a homosexual orientation. This finding can probably be attributed to heterosexual socialisation processes regarding the division of labor in the homes of the participants' parents, regardless of their sexual orientation (Kulik, 2018). The study highlighted that the education and age variables do not contribute to explaining egalitarianism in gender role attitudes. Apparently, because of the greater importance, which is today accorded to gender equality, the general population, regardless of the level of education and age, is exposed to social messages and to

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public debates on the importance of flexibility in gender roles and to models of men and women who have burst the boundaries of gender roles at work, in the family, and in society (Kulik, 2018). Kulik (2018) ended by stating that the effect of education and age on shaping the attitudes of the individual is decreasing.

According to Ghevolor et al. (2021), several studies in language and gender have asserted that language is not mere words, but a system of cultural values, lifestyle, perception and a world view which assigns roles and identities to people in the society. In their paper entitled "The discursive construction of gender identity in Sefi Atta's *Everything good will come*", Ghevolor et al. (2021) sought to explicate how the above acclaimed functional impact of language in society, is reflected in the novel. Privileging the social constructionist theory, this paper reveals that gender identity is not equated with sexual identity since the two belong to two separate systems: the former social, and the latter biological. The findings reveal that two main gender identities are discursively constructed in the text, namely male (masculine) and female (feminine) gender identities. The characters discursively construct their gender identities in interaction based on their established societal norms as well as based on their deviation from such established norms. The findings also show that some male characters, contrary to expectation, construct feminine identity, while some female characters also enact masculine identity in the text. Male identity in this study is indexed by the socio-cultural and psychological expression of masculinity in discourse. It reflects the expression of male superiority over female gender. Female identity in this study relates to the portrayal of females as unassertive and inferior to males. It also shows that women are restricted to the kitchen and certain traditional games.

The study by Ghevolor et al. (2021) also shows that sexual identity as well as gender bonding is binary as it has been differentiated into male and female sub-cultural groups, whereas gender identity is multiplex as it can assume diverse/varied forms depending on the sociological and physiological factors that influence and impact upon it. The study further reveals that the talk-style, actions, reactions, interaction, exposure, education and experiences of individual males and females influence and impact upon their individual gender identities. This study submits that gender identity is not static nor fixed, but flexible, changing and diverse as constructed in interaction. Put differently, language (talk-style) influences and impacts upon gender identity.

In this paper also, Ghevolor et al. (2021) demonstrate that language and gender identity are intertwined. The paper has also shown that gender identity is not necessarily biological, but a behaviour, attitude and performance embedded in an individual's linguistic choices in interaction. In conclusion, the study revealed that gender identity in Sefi Atta's *Everything Good will Come* is multiplex, discursive, and subject to change due to its ephemeral and dynamic nature. The fluidity of gender role and gender identity arises from the varied and diverse linguistic options and choices available to an individual. The paper has further illustrated that "Doing gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987) involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional and micro-political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine natures. It recognises that performance of gender both structures human interactions and is created by them as it takes place in everyday social interactions and contexts.

Research has shown that one major development challenge is the increasing gender differences in HIV/AIDS prevalence (Coates et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2012; UNAIDS, 2018;

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Malik, 2020). In a patriarchal system – which reflects social attitudes and norms around the role of women in relation to men, women are often considered as the property of men (Black, Weisz, & Bennett, 2010). Women are deemed to be in a weaker position partly due to the difference in social roles (van de Vijver, 2007) which may put them at risk as far as their ability to negotiate safer sex is concerned. However, depending on the context that women find themselves in, the risk might not be the same for all women. Sexual behaviour in Ghana, like other societies is in transition as such certain social norms that used to restrict women's expression either have lost or are losing, their effectiveness (Anarfi, 1993). However, there is still evidence of patriarchy (Boakye, 2009; Takyi & Dodoo, 2005). Women are expected to be subservient to their male partners especially married women (Amoakohene, 2004). For example, women are expected to accept and not respond to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse from male partners and also take care of their husbands (Amoakohene, 2004; Ofei-Aboagye, 1994). Historically, marriage among the various ethnic groups in Ghana confers on a husband exclusive sexual rights and domestic services of the wife, and these sexual rights and domestic services applied only to women (Oppong, 1974; Sarpong, 1977). To the extent that sexual intercourse is a marital duty, some authors (Awusabo-Asare et al., 1993; Fortes, 1954) posit that marriage is a desired status for both men and women but women in particular, irrespective of educational or employment status, are expected to marry and have children. In at least one empirical study in Ghana, evidence seems to suggest that a woman's refusal to have sex with the husband could imply an allowance for the husband to engage in extramarital relations and could lead to divorce though not legally binding on women but a social construct (Awusabo-Asare et al., 1993). Despite the exclusive sexual rights of males, traditional marriages are polygamous in most cases (Archampong, 2010). Furthermore, a married woman

can be accused of infidelity by the partner if she asks the partner to use a condom (Bracher et al., 2004). This can limit a woman in such a marriage to negotiate for safer sex (i.e., refuse to have sexual relations with her husband or demand condom use), although the pattern varies across demographics such as rural-urban and religious affiliations.

Malik (2020) carried out a study to examine the interplay of individual factors (i.e., comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS) and collective/contextual factors (i.e., gender role attitudes and economic status) on women's ability to negotiate safer sex. This thesis was based on a multilevel moderation model utilising a sample of 1150 married/cohabiting women in 382 household clusters based on a secondary data of a nationally representative sample from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey – 2014.

The key finding of the study is that comprehensive knowledge on HIV/AIDS influenced women's ability to negotiate safer sex, but that this process was dependent on gender role attitudes and women's economic status. That is to say that the main predictor variable, comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS was positively associated with ability to negotiate safer sex. Also, the study found that there were significant interaction effects on the ability to negotiate safer sex such that the average marginal effects of comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS is somewhat different for (i) high and low gender role attitudes and (ii) among rich and not-rich groups of women (economic status variable). According to the study, this implies that women's associated ability to negotiate safer sex impacts the moderation effects between comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS on one hand, gender role attitudes and economic status on the other hand. Accordingly, the study found that gender role attitudes and economic status of women are significant and necessary scope conditions that impacts the expected positive association between comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS and the ability to

negotiate safer sex. Poor and more subservient women are, therefore, vulnerable and less likely to attain healthy sexual lifestyle choices if intervention strategy focuses only to increase knowledge and awareness. The study findings suggest that the odds of success of a woman's comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS being associated with increased ability to negotiate safer sex is weakened when she is more subservient. The moderation effect seems to suggest that although comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS is a significant predictor, its effectiveness in influencing women's healthy choices is contingent on the status of their gender role attitudes. Thus, the extent to which women have subservient position within the household is likely to influence their ability to negotiate safer sex regardless of their knowledge.

2.1.4 Gender Inequalities

Gender inequality is a problem in Ghana that has gained much attention in recent years, as an impediment to the development of the country (Appiah-Kubi et al., 2020). Gender inequality has usually rendered many women disadvantaged in efforts to develop and harness their human capital. Khan (2018) defines gender inequality as discrepancy between men and women and different access to resources in health, education, political empowerment and economic empowerment. In most poor countries, traditional customs and laws continue to work against the attainment of gender equality, especially in the rural areas (Jayachandran, 2014).

A report by Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning Department (1999) shows that within all communities in Ghana, there is a general gender inequality in social and personal relationships. The report further reveals that certain tasks and duties are designated as feminine and such sexual division of labour imposes on women the most enormous, time-

consuming, labour-intensive and poorly rewarded chores both inside and outside their homes. These tasks are regarded as naturally determined for women, but demeaning to men. With such societal conventions improving the social and economic status of one gender over the other, there is the likelihood of developing one gender at the detriment of the other.

While various reasons have been cited for the existence of gender inequality in the country, the most widely cited reason is culture, specifically the patriarchal system in the country (Appiah-Kubi et al., 2020). That is to say that patriarchy has placed men in a position of authority and reverence over their female counterparts in various facets of life. The revered position occupied by men in the traditional Ghanaian society means they decide what happens in the home, workplace and other places. Other key factors of gender inequalities that have been stated by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are the absence of protective apparatuses for women and the belief systems in the country. To a large extent, men influence the reproductive health and rights of women who are their wives, sisters or mothers. Gender inequality in Ghana, like in other countries have been maintained through generations, through the agencies of socialisation such as the family, school, media, peer groups and society as a whole (Appiah-Kubi et al., 2020).

There have been some studies (Kongolo, 2009; Madani et al., 2016; Appiah-Kubi et al., 2020; Dietrich et al., 2021; Gyan et al., 2021) on gender inequalities. For instance, Madani et al. (2016) investigated the psychosocial boundaries responsible for women's low economic participation in developing nations with focus on Pakistan. The study purposively sampled and interviewed middle class women aged 20 to 50 years. These women were degree holders, who were put into two groups of employed (50%) and unemployed (50%). The study utilised

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the Sadaf Stress Scale (SSS) to evaluate the level of emotional and mental stress in both groups.

Madani et al.'s (2016) study findings revealed that 65% of the total respondents realised the fact that being part of economic activities is a way to high-quality life for women, but these women were not in favour of being a professional after marriage. The reason behind this ideology lay in the traditional responsibilities and gender roles assigned to the married women in Pakistani culture. Participants described that the role of a woman is the most important in the family, especially when she is a mother and a wife. Further, the participants emphasised that working women ignore their families for the sake of their careers and in this scenario, children suffer the most as they do not get enough time and affection from their working mothers as they should. Majority of the respondents made it clear that working women cannot perform their traditional jobs (managing children and their homes) efficiently. The study participants also made it clear that if a woman works, then it is impossible for her to give proper time to her family and children which are primary responsibilities of a woman. The participants explained that after having a hectic day at the workplace and spending half of the day outside the home, women are either unable to, or find difficulty in staying connected with their families, particularly children, whereas housewives can easily manage to do so. The study also discovered that after marriage, responsibilities at home increase for women although the same is not true for men after marriage. Again, the study discovered that social circle is the most significant factor which influences women's career. In the working group, those respondents who already had working women in their families and social circle were highly motivated for having a career, while those respondents who showed negative response

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regarding married working women were from backgrounds with no practice of women's economic independency.

Majority of participants in both groups expressed marriage and children's socialisation as a main hurdle in their professionalism; majority believed that it was not women's responsibility to earn. Majority unmarried working females were ready to quit their jobs if their financial problems are solved in the future. Madani et al. (2016) found according to the participants' experiences that when a working woman gets married, she quits her job for the sake of a happy married life and if any married woman continues her career, then it is due to her family's financial needs. The proportion of women with high level stress was found in women of non-working group, who were of opinion that careers would have been good for them but would disturb their family lives. Level of stress was low in women whose religious level was high and were against the concept of women empowerment. Finally, the study revealed rigid and orthodox interpretation of religious and society's cultural values as some of the important factors that held back women from economic participation.

In a similar perspective, Kongolo (2009) conducted a study focusing on the factors that hindered active participation of women in the development process in semi-rural and rural areas of South Africa. The research was carried out in Ithuseng, a rural community within the country. Using a descriptive survey method, the study gathered data from 346 participants through a questionnaire. The findings revealed that women in rural South Africa predominantly manage their families while their husbands work in cities, industries, or mines. Traditionally, these women have been confined to their homes, expected to cater to their husbands' and children's needs, while decisions regarding economic and political matters were solely made by men. Additionally, the study highlighted that a lack of education restricts

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women's productivity in rural areas. The women's limited access to education was found to be influenced by cultural values and inadequate family resources, which historically prevented girls from attending primary and secondary schools. Presently, these factors persist and hinder women's entry into universities. Another significant barrier to rural women's involvement in development was the absence of government incentives aimed at empowering and supporting women in initiating and participating in development activities. Overall, the study identified six key factors contributing to the passive involvement of women in development. These factors include lack of government assistance, limited resources, insufficient information, lack of education, cultural values and beliefs that prioritise men, and gender discrimination. To address these challenges, Kongolo (2009) recommended the establishment and implementation of practical mechanisms by the national machinery to promote women's active participation in development.

Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) investigated gender inequality in Ghana in the areas of education, economy and political participation. Their investigation revealed that gender inequality is experienced in Ghana's educational system. To these scholars, although the population of females in Ghana is almost at par with that of men as shown by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), the educational system is dominated by males. In the various mixed-sex educational institutions in Ghana, with the exception of courses conventionally ascribed for women such as Home Economics, the other courses are dominated by males. Common factors cited for the gender gap in education in Ghana were culture, poverty and pregnancy (Appiah-Kubi et al., 2020).

According to Tanye (2008), attention has not been given to the education of girls in some Ghanaian communities because of the cultural belief that the education of girls is not as

important as that of boys. Tanye (2008) argues that this perception is dominant especially in the rural areas where the conventional traditional values, customs and belief systems of the Ghanaian society still prevail. The little attachment of importance to girl child education has been born out of the belief that she does not require book knowledge to play her traditional roles. Examples of such roles include giving birth, raising children, cooking, cleaning the home and working on the farm. With such mindset, the girl child's education is seen as a waste of time and resources by some people. However, Tanye (2008) discovered this cultural perception is changing over the years upon seeing the importance of education in the lives of girls and women, with many accomplished women emerging and demonstrating the importance of education. Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) note that with regard to poverty, the lack of resources in some families has led to the situation where some girls are not taken to school against the backdrop of the less importance given to girls' education. With such low reverence in some families, the education of girls is sacrificed so that boys can advance their education in instances where there is not enough money to educate both genders. Besides the perception based on the little reverence given to the education of the girl child, this phenomenon is justified by the idea that the boy child is traditionally expected to take care of his wife and family in future. Such socially ascribed responsibility therefore calls for boys to be educated and put in a situation where they can succeed and be able to shoulder such responsibilities.

Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) further posited that for the girl child, it is expected that her husband will take care of her and her children in the future. The pregnancy of girls and women has also contributed to the gender gap between the males and females in education in Ghana. This is one of the main factors that has widened gender gap between males and females at the secondary and tertiary levels. The education of many girls has been jeopardised due to

pregnancy which impeded their ability to further their education. Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) also discovered that although some girls are able to resume schooling after giving birth, others stop schooling completely due to the stigma related to being pregnant at young ages, lack of financial support and loss of interest in education.

Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) noted that successive governments, in their efforts to resolve gender inequality in education in Ghana, have adopted some interventions. The first of such policies is the Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education (Appiah-Kubi et al., 2020). Under this policy, every child in Ghana is supposed to attend school free of charge. This first policy of Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) applies to only the government basic schools in the country. The FCUBE compels parents to take all their children to school as it criminalises parents' failure to educate their children at the basic level. It also deals with poverty as a challenge because fees are not charged. However, there are other minor charges such as examination fee, which parents are supposed to pay. Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) revealed that through this policy, there has been increased school enrollment among both genders, thus, bridging the gender gap at the basic level. At the tertiary level, two key mechanisms that have been adopted are the quota scheme and affirmative action. With regard to the quota scheme, females are given predetermined quota of admission which is increased periodically. This means that, at least, a certain percentage of slots of admission into the universities and other institutions of higher learning in Ghana is pre-apportioned to females to ensure that their number continues to grow, but not drop.

Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) further exposed that with the affirmative action, which is a deliberate attempt to correct the gender inequality in students' enrollment, special favours are granted to female applicants to enable them gain admission. Under this policy, males and

females do not have the same grade point threshold. For example, if the cut off point for males' admission is aggregate 14, that of the females would be 15. These mechanisms are being employed to increase the enrollment of females, and over the years, they have yielded results as female enrollment keeps growing. Finally, although it is not a policy, mentorship has been useful in helping bridge the gender gap in Ghana's educational system. Through their study, Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) also identified that with mentorship, workshops and seminars are organised in various schools where accomplished women and female celebrities inspire the female students to work hard in their education. These programmes are usually carried out in the secondary and tertiary educational institutions in the country. Through these, female students are inspired to remain in school with the belief in the positive role education can play in their lives as it has done for the accomplished female mentors. Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) theorised that the mentorship programmes have been crucial, especially in ensuring the retention of females in schools.

Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) concluded by reiterating that although many factors have been cited by various studies to be the cause of women's disadvantaged situation in the country, the root cause is patriarchy which has permeated various aspects of society. Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) called for the reconstruction of people's mindset with regard to the status of women that has been perpetuated by patriarchy. Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) also recommended that the government and civil society groups also have to encourage more women to rise up to the challenge of developing themselves and their country as a whole. To Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020), this can be done by giving women more opportunities in leadership, decision making, education and economic activities. Finally, Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020) tasked the government to improve upon its commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of females in Ghana.

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Some studies (Abad et al., 2018; Boateng and Gaulee, 2019; Dicke et al., 2019; Han, 2019; Saß & Kampa, 2019; Mukhwana et al. 2020) have also focused on disparities between females and males in academia, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). For instance, Abad et al. (2018) examined the development of sex differences in the mental rotation skills of Hispanic children throughout pre-kindergarten to better understand the development of early sex differences in mental rotation. The study explored (1) whether sex differences exist in Hispanic pre-kindergartners' mental rotation skills at time 1 and time 2; and (2) whether there are sex differences in the changes (i.e., gains) that Hispanic children make on mental rotation skills throughout pre-kindergarten. The study's sample consisted of 96 children (45 boys; 51 girls) from 27 classrooms (in 20 private schools) enrolled in Florida's state funded pre-kindergarten program. Participants completed a mental rotation task at the beginning and end of pre-kindergarten, including the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, and Children's Mental Transformation Task at both Fall and Spring semesters. The average time lag between time 1 and time 2 assessments was approximately four and a half months. Children were tested individually at their preschool and were given a sticker at the end of each testing session as a reward. The results of Abad et al.'s (2018) study discovered that boys made greater gains in mental rotation than girls. Examining standard deviations for mean scores showed that while there is a similar amount of variability in boys' and girls' scores at time 1, there is much greater variability in boys' scores compared to girls' scores at time 2. The findings suggest then that pre-kindergarten is a time when sex differences in mental rotation skills are emerging. The study also highlighted that simply looking at sex differences at only one time would suggest there are no sex differences in mental rotation skills at this age; and suggested the need to explore change over time to attain a greater

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understanding of sex differences in mental rotation. Abad et al. (2018) also avowed that given the link between spatial thinking and future entry into STEM fields, a better understanding of the influence of early education, among other potential factors, on spatial development in boys and girls from diverse backgrounds is needed. Abad et al. (2018) further espoused that identifying mechanisms that promote growth in spatial thinking is critical to increasing the number of minorities and women entering STEM fields. Abad et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of their findings in threefold as they suggest (1) pre-kindergarten is a time of significant change and emergence of sex differences in mental rotation skills; (2) different methodologies such as including multiple timepoints and examining change is critical for understanding when sex differences in mental rotation skills develop; and (3) early sex differences in mental rotation are generalisable to the diverse population of Hispanic children living in the United States. Abad et al. (2018) outlined some possible explanations for their findings: boys are exposed to more activities (e.g., Legos, blocks, construction toys) that promote spatial learning than girls; boys hear more spatial language than girls from their parents in the home setting.

A study by Mukhwana et al. (2020) set out to investigate factors contributing to, or inhibiting women's careers in STEM in Africa. The study used a mixed-method approach to collect data that included conducting a scoping review of literature, in-depth interviews with a range of women working in STEM, and an online survey of women either working in STEM or still in school pursuing STEM related courses. The study sampled participants from all across Africa. Study findings showed that women's success in STEM was influenced by various factors that reinforce one another at individual, family, societal and the work environment. At the individual level, personal capabilities and academic preparation contributed significantly

towards the choice women made to pursue STEM related courses. Also influence from other women working in STEM both in and outside their families, motivated girls to take up STEM courses as such women acted as role models whom they looked up to. Mukhwana et al. (2020) revealed that at the societal level, attitudes, beliefs, values and working environment play a vital role. Again, patriarchal attitudes at the macro level were found to affect the choice of women to pursue and succeed in STEM. Lastly, the success of women already working in STEM was highly influenced by the work environment. The study further revealed the main factors that facilitated women to succeed in STEM to include: availability of equipment and resources where study participants attributed their success in STEM to availability of resources when they were undertaking their respective courses; aspects of empowerment of girls either through financial support or ensuring that female students were equally treated as their male counterparts, affirmative initiatives such as payment of school fees for girls, and being offered advice and direction regarding STEM-related career path; support from members both in the nuclear and extended families who were either working in STEM-related fields or family members who provided material support or encouragement to women; peer support from students of the same or different gender, with support from male students being key in ensuring that female students completed their STEM courses; availability of scholarship opportunities for women; support from teachers, especially those teaching Mathematics at lower levels of education, and supportive lecturers at higher levels of education.

From Mukhwana et al.'s (2020) study, the factors that inhibited women in STEM included: demanding schedules for STEM related careers that made it hard to either start or maintain a family; unsupportive work environment where female employees had challenges getting time

off work to attend to family matters; self-doubt and societal expectations; patriarchal perceptions of STEM careers with the perception that Science is a man's field; preferential treatment for men; and sexual harassment. The study concluded by highlighting that policies to address the gender gap in STEM exist, but they are rarely implemented.

From a similar angle, Boateng and Gaulee (2019) explored the educational and professional experiences of female faculty in STEM. In-depth semi-structured interviews were undertaken employing 20 participants from universities in Ghana. Participants were purposively sampled based on gender, discipline and faculty rank. Participants were recruited from publicly-funded universities in Ghana namely the University of Cape Coast (UCC), the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), both of which are predominantly non-STEM institutions, and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and technology (KNUST), a predominantly STEM institution. From the analysis of data, Boateng and Gaulee (2019) discovered that participants throughout their schooling and career (at the time of the study) relied on their support systems to succeed. However, the silver lining of support was smothered by gender discrimination underpinned by ingrained patriarchy in the Ghanaian society. Regardless of the feat they have accomplished, participants are perceived and treated as second fiddle to men. The participants' parents, especially their fathers, supported them in their education; however, their support was punctuated by their patriarchal beliefs that their daughters should relegate themselves to their male counterparts. Again, the study revealed that during their STEM school years, females benefitted from the support, cooperation and collaboration of their male mates. Such support, cooperation and collaboration plummeted as they proceeded to the STEM workplace where their former male mates became perpetrators of gender

discrimination. Boateng and Gaulee (2019) concluded with a call on stakeholders in Ghana to address patriarchal realities in order to nip gender inequalities and inequities in the bud.

2.1.5 Adolescents and Gender Issues

According to the World Health Organisation (2014), adolescents are defined as individuals aged between 10 and 19 years old. During this stage of life, both girls and boys start to engage with the world in different ways, taking risks, acquiring new skills, and encountering unfamiliar emotions (WHO, 2014). UNICEF reported in 2016 that there are approximately 1.2 billion adolescents worldwide, making it the largest and most educated generation ever, particularly with the increase in urbanisation. UNICEF (2016) also highlighted the potential of the growing adolescent population in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is expected to reach 500 million by the year 2050. This population has the capacity to drive significant positive change if governments invest in their development and actively involve them. Saewyc (2017) emphasised that gender plays a crucial role among the various social factors that influence the health and well-being of young people globally. That is to say that gender can have both direct and indirect influences on adolescent growth, access to resources and opportunities, and ultimately impact the health of individuals during adolescence and adulthood. This claim is supported by Rolleri (2013) who avows that gender and gender equality are two important determinants of adolescent reproductive and sexual health.

According to John et al. (2017), the stage of adolescence is a crucial time for the formation of gender beliefs and behaviors which can have long-lasting impacts. Additionally, UNICEF (2016) emphasises that during this period, adolescents experience significant changes in brain and physical development, as well as in their relationships and responsibilities within society. Kagesten et al. (2016) further argue that adolescence is not only characterised by rapid

physical, sexual, and brain development, but also by an intensification of the formation of gender beliefs and attitudes, which can have enduring consequences throughout one's life.

The UNICEF (2017) views adolescence as the second decade of life, from the ages of 10- 19; young adolescence is the age of 10-14 and late adolescence, age 15-19. The UNICEF (2017) believes this period between childhood and adulthood is a pivotal opportunity to consolidate any loss/gain made in early childhood. However, according to UNICEF (2017) all too often, adolescents - especially girls - are endangered by violence, limited by a lack of quality education and unable to access critical health services. Eckert (1989) discovered that in the US, gender difference and heterosexuality are deeply embedded (and intertwined) in the institution of adolescence and in the formal institution of the high schools that house the age group.

Research on gender and adolescence has flourished, including how adolescents negotiate the challenges of gender gaps that affect their persona (Perry & Pauletti, 2011). There is, therefore, the need to study the perspectives of adolescents in relation to traditional gender roles and beliefs to establish whether some important linkages between gender phenomena in childhood and gender phenomena in adulthood are mediated by gender phenomena in adolescence (Perry & Pauletti, 2011) as adolescence is reputed to be a crucial bridge between childhood and adulthood.

One study conducted by Mensch et al. (2000) explored the socialisation of gender roles and marriage among Egyptian adolescents. The study employed a mixed-method approach, sampling 660 unmarried adolescents aged 16 to 19 from a 1997 health survey in Egypt. The study examined various aspects such as school access and continuation, parental perspectives on education for boys and girls, time usage among adolescents, attitudes towards the timing

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of marriage and spouse selection, beliefs on decision-making within married couples, and expectations of roles and responsibilities in adulthood.

The findings of Mensch et al.'s (2000) study revealed a pronounced gender differentiation among boys and girls. It was observed that girls had less free time, limited mobility, lower participation in paid work, and heavier domestic responsibilities, regardless of their school attendance. The study also found that girls favored a later age for marriage, particularly for boys, indicating a preference for delaying traditional gender roles. On the other hand, boys were more inclined to support educational inequalities between spouses, suggesting a tendency towards upholding traditional marriage arrangements. In summary, Mensch et al.'s (2000) study indicated that boys generally held more traditional views on gender roles, while girls exhibited a somewhat more egalitarian perspective.

The findings from the aforementioned study align with the present research, which aims to investigate the perspectives of Ghanaian adolescents on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs and their experiences in forming gender role attitudes.

In a similar manner, John et al. (2017) conducted a comprehensive study to understand the factors that shape gender socialisation during adolescence and to provide actionable recommendations for policies and programmes aimed at achieving greater gender equality. The study primarily focused on middle and low-income countries. To develop a conceptual framework that captures the intricate and layered process of gender socialisation, John et al. (2017) analysed theoretical contributions from various fields such as psychology, sociology and biology. Within this framework, John et al. (2017) also introduced a socio-ecological perspective that considers the key factors influencing gender socialisation and its outcomes.

Additionally, John et al. (2017) synthesised knowledge on ways to influence the gender socialisation process and its subsequent outcomes. Their aim was to provide practical guidance for policies and programmes in order to facilitate positive changes. John et al. (2017) also examined how macro-level factors such as changes in demographics, global media and gendered economic opportunities have impacted the overall gender socialisation process, gender norms, and identities.

Furthermore, in their study, John et al. (2017) conducted a literature review of various small-scale programmes that aimed to impact the gender socialisation process. The study identified 31 programmes that can be categorised into three broad strategies: empowering young individuals, particularly girls, through information, skills and social support to challenge norms; creating an inclusive environment that supports the examination of gender norms; and engaging with men and boys, both directly and through influential male figures to promote attitude and belief changes.

In conclusion, John et al. (2017) highlighted four main influences on the gender socialisation process during adolescence: agents of socialisation, life course factors, changes in economic structures, and the impact of a globalised world. The study emphasised the importance of understanding the interconnectedness of structural, social-interactional and individual factors in order to develop more comprehensive approaches to promoting gender equality. John et al. (2017) underscore the need for holistic policy and programming efforts in addressing gender socialisation during adolescence.

Correspondingly, Halimi et al. (2016) conducted a thorough examination of the connection between the attitudes of young individuals towards gender roles and various factors related to their individual characteristics, home environment and school setting. The study took a

comprehensive approach by gathering and analysing literature from different countries that delve into the formation of young individuals' gender role attitudes (GRA). Through extensive searches in multiple databases, the researchers identified a total of thirty-five international studies that were relevant to the topic. The literature review demonstrated that the majority of these studies adopt a deterministic perspective when investigating the formation of gender role attitudes, with a primary focus on the transmission of these attitudes from parents to their children. For instance, thirty out of the 35 studies included parental variables, which implies that most of these studies found congruence in GRA between children and parents, indicating that offspring of parents with traditional views hold more traditional views themselves.

The study also discovered that effects of the school environment and the individuals' own life experiences are understudied and highlighted the need for further investigation into the influence of the school environment and personal life experiences on gender role attitudes. Halimi et al. (2016) therefore recommended that future research should focus on viewing GRA as a dynamic construct that is shaped by individual experiences and evolves over time. This means that the construction of gender role attitudes should be examined in the context of how adolescents develop their beliefs through interactions with various environments beyond their homes. Moreover, it is important to recognise GRA can be subject to change as individuals become exposed to different aspects of life. Building upon this recommendation by Halimi et al. (2016), Halimi et al. (2020) assert that there are fewer studies on early adolescence, which is one of the crucial life phases in the development of gender role attitudes. Therefore, the present research aims to investigate the perspectives of adolescents concerning traditional gender roles and beliefs in the development of gender role attitudes. Also, Mensch et al. (2000) assert that there is scant literature on adolescent socialisation that focuses mainly

on the roles of family, peers, and the media. Mensch et al. (2000) note that there is a lack of systematic research exploring how formal education impacts the development of both girls and boys. From the above discussions, there appear to be scarcity of studies on adolescents' perspectives on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs, as well as how these factors contribute to the formation of gender role attitudes. Consequently, the current study aims to address this gap in existing literature by providing new insights in this area.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

According to Littlejohn and Foss (2011), a theory is defined as a combined or comprehensible form of propositions that provides a philosophically consistent picture of a subject. They argue that theories reduce a complex experience into a manageable set of concepts and propositions to make for easy understanding. Deo-Silas (2013) sees the relationship between theory and research as a transaction where the theory determines the data to be collected on one hand, and how the research findings or data support or challenge the theory on the other. Thus, theories provide the framework or model to explain and make sense of data collected. In the context of this study, the gender performativity theory and the gender schema theory will serve as the framework. The concepts and tenets as well as the relevance of these theories to the study are discussed.

2.2.1 The Gender Performativity Theory

The gender performativity theory, introduced by Judith Butler in 1990, challenges the notion that one's biological sex determines their behaviour. Instead, Butler (1990) argues that individuals learn how to act in specific ways to conform to societal expectations. This theory emerged from discussions in phenomenology, anthropology, and philosophy. From a phenomenological perspective, De Beauvoir (1974) argued that one does not inherently

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possess a femininity, but rather becomes a woman through socialisation. Building upon this, Butler (1990) posits that gender is performative in nature – an ongoing act or performance. This performance is evident in the way individuals carry themselves, communicate, dress, and conduct themselves.

Butler's (1990) ideas draw upon the concept of constituting acts, but she takes it a step further, asserting that gender is not a fixed identity from which actions stem, but rather a fluid identity constructed over time through repetitive acts. Performance theory, as explained by Wood (2013) posits that humans shape their identities, including gender, through their performances and expressions. Thus, gender comes to play only as it is expressed or performed. It is therefore, the performance that is called gender. It has been argued that when individuals perform feminine or masculine traits, they create and define gender. There is, therefore, no preconceived notion of gender that is based on biological fact or simplistic notions of genders either entirely feminine or masculine (Butler, 1990). Likewise, when individuals perform gender, they construct their gender identity; thus, if individuals are to act feminine (regardless of their biological sex), they construct feminine identities; acting masculine also leads to the construction of masculine identities. Although gender is always a doing (Butler, 1990), it is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy.

Like other performative theorists, Wood (2013) postulates that gender is more appropriately regarded as a verb than a noun. It is a doing, signifying that without doing and without the action of performance, there is no gender. In this vein, Butler (1990) posits that gender which is inextricably linked with sexuality is performative. This means that it is staged in our daily lives and daily practices like a performance. Performance theorists are of the view that all

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persons perform gender even though we may do that in subtle ways (Butler, 1990). We express or perform conventional gender through everyday practices such as dominating or deferring in conversations, offering solutions and judgements, to mention a few. Conversely, we resist conventional views of gender if we act in ways inconsistent with the gender the society has prescribed for us (Wood, 2013). Although gender is performed, Butler (1990) contends that it is constructed in situated interactions and the performance is always contextual, guided by institutionalised norms and habits that restrict the actual outcome of each of such performance.

Butler (1990) further states that rather than defining who we intrinsically are, gender is what we are doing at specific occasions. Butler (1990), among many other theorists, argues that gender is socially constructed and is something that is performed, something we become, not something we inherently are; hence gender is a performance. Gender performances are, therefore, repetitions in an ongoing social and cultural process. The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. (Butler, 1990). As a performativity act, Butler (1990) argues that actors are always already on the stage, within the terms of the performance. Gender performances are, therefore, governed by more clearly punitive and regulatory social conventions (Butler 1990). Performing one's gender wrongly initiates a set of punishments both overtly and covertly, and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity (Butler, 1988). This performativity includes a wide range of behaviours, from the way we talk, walk, perform certain rituals; acts that we all keep on performing through the course of our lives, and this performance is what constitutes the meaning of masculine or feminine identities (Butler, 1990).

Wood (2013) is of the view that although gender is performative, the performances are not solo in operations. They are always collaborative. This is because in whichever way it is being expressed, gender is done in a context of social meanings that transcends our individual experiences. Citing an example, Wood (2013) notes that a woman who defers to men and tilts her head when talking to men is acting individually. Nonetheless, her individual actions are conventional performances of femininity that are coded into cultural life.

2.2.2 The Gender Schema Theory

The gender schema theory was propounded by feminist and psychologist Sandra Lipsitz Bem in 1981 as a cognitive theory to explain how individuals become gendered in society and how sex-linked characteristics are maintained and transmitted to other members of a culture. The theory posits that there are cognitive frameworks, known as gender schemas, through which individuals understand and interpret the concept of gender (Bem, 1981). These schemas are deeply ingrained in society and influence how individuals perceive themselves and others in terms of gender. The theory also proposes that children form various forms of schema for gender at an early age and the gender schema becomes increasingly complex as children develop (Bem, 1981).

Bem (1981) revealed that core gender identity is tied up in the sex typing that an individual undergoes. She outlined four (4) categories in which an individual may fall: sex-typed, cross-sex-typed, androgynous, and undifferentiated. Bem (1981) explained further that sex-typed individuals process and integrate information that is in line with their gender. Cross-sex-typed individuals process and integrate information that is in line with the opposite gender. Androgynous individuals process and integrate traits and information from both genders, Undifferentiated individuals do not show efficient processing of sex-typed information.

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To Canevello (2020), gender schema theory assumes that from an early age, children naturally extract information from their social environments, which they encode and organise into networks of mental associations that allow them to make sense of their worlds and themselves. In doing so, children develop schema or cognitive structures that represent information about the world and the self; these schema help organise information and guide perception, evaluation, and encoding of new information (Canevello, 2020).

The following are some of the key tenets of the gender schema theory: gender schemas are learned (Bem, 1981). According to the theory, gender schemas are acquired through socialisation processes, from a very young age. Children learn and internalise societal expectations and norms associated with femininity and masculinity. These schemas shape their perceptions about gender roles, behaviours and identities.

Gender schemas organise and influence perception (Bem, 1981). This means that gender schemas serve as mental filters that organise information and influence how individuals perceive the world around them. According to Wood and Eagly (2012), people tend to pay more attention to, remember, and interpret information that is consistent with their gender schemas. This selective perception reinforces gender stereotypes and shapes individuals' beliefs and attitudes (Bem, 1981).

Gender schemas are self-perpetuating (Bem, 1981). Gender schemas do not only influence the perception of others, but also the perception of oneself. Martin and Halverson (1981) avow that individuals tend to incorporate societal gender expectations into their self-concept, leading to reinforcement and maintenance of traditional gender roles. This self-perpetuation occurs through the internalisation of gendered beliefs and the tendency to engage in behaviours consistent with one's gender schema (Martin & Halverson, 1981).

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Gender schemas affect behaviour (Bem, 1981). The gender schema theory suggests that gender schemas influence individuals' behavioural choices. Bem (1981) posits that people are likely to engage in activities and endorse behaviours that are consistent with their gender schema, while avoiding those that are inconsistent.

The gender schema theory also proposes flexibility (Bem, 1981). While gender schemas are often presented as rigid and binary (female vs. male), the gender schema theory acknowledges that individuals can possess varying degrees of flexibility in their gender schemas. Some individuals may have more androgynous or non-conforming gender schemas, allowing them to be more open to a broader range of gender roles and behaviours (Bem, 1981).

2.3 Relevance of the Theories to the Study

Literature has revealed how people at all times express their gender identity making gender a socially-constructed performance rather than just an act based on biological make-up. For this reason, the gender performance theory aided the researcher in answering and analysing research question one (RQI) which has to do with identifying the roles that adolescent girls and boys at Oyibi perform at home in the construction of gender role attitudes.

The gender schema theory is relevant to the current study because it plays a major role in understanding how gender expectations are socially and culturally constructed (Canevello, 2020). Therefore, the theory explains perfectly what goes on before adolescents internalise gender norms, develop perspectives, and construct gender role attitudes. Also, some studies have employed the gender schema theory in studying gender relations and gender roles and have established that becoming a male or female is not only a matter of genes, hormones and social conditioning, but also how individuals view themselves, (Hameed & Shukri, 2014; John

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et al, 2017). So, the gender schema theory helped in looking out for the agents of socialisation in the development of gender role attitudes among adolescent girls and boys at Oyibi, and to examine the perspectives of adolescent girls and boys at Oyibi on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs, which answered research questions 2 and 3.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing data for the study and comprises the research approach, research design, sampling and sample size, data collection methods and procedures, data analysis plan, ethical consideration, and trustworthiness of data.

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopted the qualitative approach. This is because according to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. This assertion is supported by Burns and Grove (2009) that qualitative research is subjective and systematic and it highlights and explains daily life experiences, and further gives them proper meaning. This means that qualitative research focuses on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives. The current study sought to investigate the perspectives of adolescents in constructing gender role attitudes, and since perspectives are formed out of experiences, employing the qualitative approach enabled the investigation and assignment of proper meaning to such life experiences.

According to Braun and Clarke (2016), qualitative research is critical in nature and does not take data on face value, but interrogates it to explore some other meanings that might have been ignored. This means that qualitative research does not accept or believe what someone says without thinking about it critically. Therefore, using this approach helped me to unearth

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deeper meanings into why adolescent girls and boys at Oyibi perform different roles at home, and their perspectives on gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes, rather than just accepting and believing their responses as they were.

3.2 Research Design

For this study, the case study research design was adopted. Yin (2018) asserts that research design is the logic that links the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial questions of the study. Yin (2009) adds that a research design is crucial to every research process because it gives the direction for the researcher to follow. "Qualitative research comprises of the following methods: logic, ethnography, discourse analysis, case study, open-ended interview, participant observation, counselling, therapy, grounded theory, biography, comparative method, introspection, casuistry, focus group, literary meditation practice, historical research, etc." (Mohajan, 2018 p.2). The current study employed the case study design because the phenomenon under investigation is a contemporary one within a real-life context and the researcher had little control over events (Yin, 2018). Also, the case study design allowed the researcher to extensively analyse the object of the study (Yin, 2018).

Additionally, Yin (2018) outlines different types of case studies and provides two ways of categorising case studies. The first is based on the aim of the study and identifies three types: explanatory, exploratory, descriptive. The second is based on the number of cases and for that he identified the single or holistic case study and multiple case study. A single case study enables a researcher to focus on a single phenomenon or a single group of people while a multiple case study involves studying two or more cases or one case across two or more groups (Yin, 2018). This study adopted the single case study design, where the phenomenon of gender roles and gender beliefs was investigated among a single group of individual adolescent girls

and boys to examine their perspectives on gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes.

3.3 Sampling and Sample Size

The participants for the study were sampled from Accra Grammar School, a private basic school in the Oyibi Community in the Kpone-Katamanso Municipality in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The reasons for the choice of the Oyibi area were the accessibility of potential participants, the time and the resources available for the field work as asserted by Lindlof and Taylor (2017) that a qualitative researcher needs to consider the scope of the study, the complexity of the research problem, the accessibility of potential participants, and the time and resources that are available for the field. Alvi (2016) defined a sample as a group of relatively smaller number of people selected from a population for investigation purpose. Thus, the process through which a sample is extracted from a population is called sampling. Singh and Musuku (2014) assert that sampling is related with the selection of a subset of individuals from within a population to estimate the characteristics of the whole population. Alvi (2016) outlined various sampling techniques available to every qualitative researcher. They are simple random sampling, stratified sampling, purposive sampling, among others. This study settled on the purposive sampling technique. According to Etikan et al. (2017, p.3) purposive sampling is "a form of sampling technique in which the researcher chooses his or her participants based on the judgement that the informants chosen will provide the best information needed to achieve the objective of the study".

Etikan et al. (2017) proclaim that the purposive sampling technique is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. The researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the

information by virtue of knowledge and experience (Etikan et al., 2017). In relation, only elements of the population that suit best for the purpose of the study were selected through the homogeneous sampling technique. The homogeneous sampling is the process of selecting a small homogeneous group of subjects or units for examination and analysis (Elmusharaf, 2016). This means that it is used when the sample has units that share the same or similar characteristics or traits. The researcher adopted this technique to sample adolescents who were homogeneous in terms of age, gender, and educational background.

As the study's participants were minors under 18 years of age, explicitly written consent was sought from their parents. This was in the form of a consent form that was issued to participants to be given to parents or guardians to sign to show their approval. (See Appendix A.) According to Ivey and Ivey (2003), it is necessary, depending on the jurisdiction within which an interview takes place, to gain written permission or consent from the legal caregiver of a child to be interviewed.
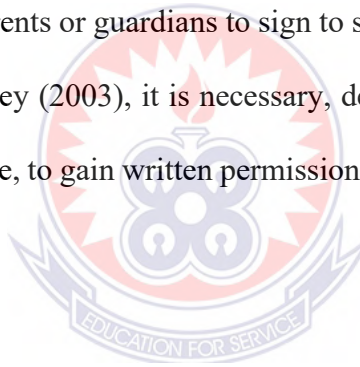
3.3.1 Sample Size

The study's sample size was 26 adolescents: eight (8) for interviews, and 18 for three (3) focus groups discussions. Sample size is generally the total number of participants for a study. It is critical to data collection and analysis. Lindlof and Taylor (2017) posit that a qualitative researcher needs to consider the scope of the study, the complexity of the research problem, the accessibility of potential participants, and the time and resources that are available for the field before deciding on a sample size. Kuzel (1999) posits that generally, qualitative sampling consists of small sampling units studied in depth. Daymon and Holloway (2011) indicate that with qualitative studies, the sample size does not necessarily determine the quality of the study. Walcott (1994) also asserts that the wish for a large sample size is rooted in quantitative

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research where there is a need to generalise. Walcott (1994) maintains that rather than enhance qualitative research, a large sample may actually harm it, as the research is likely to lack the depth and richness of a smaller sample. Small sample allows you to capture participants' specific responses and individual interpretations. This aspect is often lost when large samples are used (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). Creswell (2014) states that as a general rule of thumb, qualitative sample for a single study involving individual interviews usually lies at under 50. Therefore, the sample size of 26 was taken to provide the opportunity to easily record participants' responses and interpretations of the phenomenon. It was also chosen to gain in-depth knowledge into the phenomenon under study and not for generalisation as with quantitative research.

To recognise the appropriate participants, the researcher initially identified the complete population of adolescent girls and boys in the Junior High School department of Accra Grammar School in Oyibi which totalled 163 students as at January 2023. Contact was made with the entire population through the Vice Principal of the school, and ultimately, a subset of 26 adolescents, consisting of 13 girls and 13 boys, volunteered to participate in the study. This selection represents a portion of the population who willingly availed themselves after parental consent was sought, contributing their insights and experiences to the study.

According to Creswell (2014), a focus group discussion should have a minimum of six participants. In line with this, each of the study's focus group was made of 6 participants. The 1st group was made up of 6 girls. The 2nd group consisted of 6 boys. The 3rd group comprised 3 girls and 3 boys. This is buttressed by the fact that a case study should intensively investigate a small sample of either one or a few cases and the cases can be of various sizes (Karlsson,

2016). The eight (8) participants for the interview also comprised four (4) girls and four (4) boys.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The methods adopted for this research were interviews and focus groups discussions. Kabir (2016) defines data collection as the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. Generally, the methods available to qualitative researchers for the collection of data include in-depth interviewing, group discussions, observational methods, and analysing documents and material culture (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

3.4.1 Interviews

The study employed interviews as one of the data collection methods. The type of interview adopted here was the semi-structured interview, where participants spoke about themselves, expressed themselves on the issue, and explained what they felt, (Allen, 2017). Semi-structured questions in the form of an interview guide were developed and used. (See Appendix B.) Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used because they allow for greater flexibility and freedom on the parts of both the interviewer and interviewees in terms of planning, implementing and organising the interview content and questions (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

Interviews are one of the most important data-gathering methods in qualitative research, (Fetterman, 2010). According to Yin (2018), in qualitative research, the interview process is a conventional method used to collect descriptive rich text data, where participants share their

ideas through responding to semi-structured interview questions, playing an active role in the data collection process. To Easwaramoorthy and Zarinpoush (2006), an interview is a conversation for gathering information, and a research interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions. Lindlof and Taylor (2017) assert that interviews are helpful in qualitative studies because they help the researcher understand people's experiences and perspectives in order to obtain answers to a particular research question. Wilson (2014) asserted that researchers recommend semi-structured interviews in qualitative research because participants are meaningfully involved and have more room for expressing their perceptions and experiences.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions

The second data collection method was focus groups discussions. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2017), focus group discussion has evolved to the extent that it can stand alone as a data collection method in as much as is a form of interview. Creswell (2013) posits that focus group discussion is the process of gathering data from a group of people through interviews. Creswell (2013) further adds that focus group discussion provides better results when participants have commonalities and come from similar backgrounds. Also, it becomes necessary when discussions with the group is likely to provide newer insights. Additionally, Krueger and Casey (2000) state that focus groups provide "a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others just as they are in real life" (p.11). In line with these views, the researcher conducted focus group discussions because this method helped to seek and gather different views from

participants on the research questions. Semi-structured questions in the form of a focus group discussion guide was developed and used. (See Appendix B.)

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

3.5.1 Interviews

The study sought to investigate adolescents' perspectives on traditional gender roles and beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes. The interviews followed an unstructured manner. They were conducted during the free time of the participants. The interviews were held under a tree on Accra Grammar School's football field, and on different dates. The researcher adopted the face-to-face interviews. For flexibility and openness sake, the interviews were conducted in the English language. The English language was chosen because it was perfectly well-understood by the participants. An interview guide was used. (See Appendix B.) The questions asked through the help of the interview guide were free of ambiguity and gave room for participants to also bring on new ideas. The questions were proofread and approved by the researcher's supervisor to ensure they were of standard and spoke to the phenomenon under study. Participants had the free will to seek clarification on questions they did not understand. They could also choose not to answer questions they did not want to. The interviews were planned, and the researcher met with the participants when they were ready. The researcher did a self-introduction to the participants and stated the purpose for the study before beginning the interview. The researcher also informed them that the responses would be recorded. The responses from the interviews were recorded using a Samsung Galaxy A03 Core mobile phone. The interviews were conducted sitting. The first participant for the interview was a girl. She was assigned the alphanumeric code P1. This interview was held on 23rd January, 2023, and it lasted for 14 minutes, 45 seconds. The second

interviewee was a boy. He was assigned the alphanumeric code P2. This interview took place on the 24th of January, 2023, and it lasted for 15 minutes, 25 seconds. The third participant was a girl, given the alphanumeric code P3. This interview took place on 31st January, 2023, and went on for 17 minutes, 11 seconds. The fourth was a boy who was also interviewed on 31st January, 2023, and assigned the alphanumeric code P4. The duration for this interview was 12 minutes, 47 seconds. The fifth interviewee was a girl who was interviewed on 3rd February, 2023. She was engaged for 14 minutes, 02 seconds, and allocated the alphanumeric code P5. The sixth interviewee, assigned the alphanumeric code P6, was a boy and he was engaged for 16 minutes, 11 seconds on 9th February, 2023. The seventh and eighth participants were both interviewed on 17th February, 2023. The seventh participant was a girl, labelled P7. The interview with her lasted for 13 minutes, 16 seconds. The eighth participant, labelled P8, was a boy who was engaged for 15 minutes, 35 seconds. Hence, P1, P3, P5, and P7 were adolescent girls while P2, P4, P6, and P8 were adolescent boys.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions

Three (3) focus groups were formed for the study. Based on Creswell's (2014) assertion on the size of a focus group, each of the focus groups contained 6 participants. The focus group discussions were held under a tree on the school's football field, and on different dates following Krueger's (2002) characteristics of focus groups which emphasises on participants, environment for the focus group, moderator, and analysis and reporting. The researcher served as the moderator in all the three discussions. For flexibility and openness sake, all three group discussions were conducted in the English language. The English language was chosen because it was perfectly well-understood by the participants.

The chairs and benches for the discussions were arranged in a semi-circle form where the participants sat. The researcher adopted this method because a semi-circular seating arrangement facilitates interaction among participants as it allows them to clearly see and hear one another (Escalada & Heong, 2018). The researcher sat facing the participants to moderate the discussion which is in line with Krueger's (2002) argument that a focus group should have a moderator who has adequate knowledge of the phenomenon under study and sets the guidelines for the discussion. Before the discussions started, the researcher welcomed the participants, did a self-introduction, and informed the participants of the purpose of the discussion. The researcher encouraged the participants to feel free to share their views. To have a detailed discussion on the topic, a semi-structured focus group discussion guide was used. (See Appendix B.) The guide mainly included open-ended questions. In a simple and coordinated manner, questions were put forward and participants responded accordingly. The questions were set in a simple and clear manner to allow participants to talk freely and spontaneously. It was also to help the researcher keep the conversation on track. At points, where the discussions drifted from the norm, the researcher politely intervened to bring the discussion back on track. However, those off-track discussions that had the potential to boost the study's findings were duly noted. Again, room was given for clarifications and further explanations. By the permission of the participants, the researcher used a Samsung Galaxy A03 Core mobile phone to record everything discussed. Even before the commencement of the discussions, the participants were entreated to speak louder in order for the recording device to capture all that would be said. The English language was used throughout the discussion processes. This is because it was the language that all the participants could easily and better communicate in. Intermittently, the discussion processes were filled with comments

and jokes that stimulated the interest of the participants to respond to issues. These also helped to reduce tension. On each focus group discussion day, as courtesy demands, the researcher arrived at the arranged venues some minutes earlier to the agreed meeting time.

Three separate days were used to collect the data from the focus groups discussions. The researcher met with the first focus group of adolescents on 11th January, 2023. This group was an all-female group made up of 6 girls. These participants were given the alphanumeric codes FGD1, P1; FGD1, P2; FGD1, P3 and so on. This session of focus group discussion lasted for 50 minutes, 12 seconds. The second focus group discussion was held on the 12th of January, 2023. This session saw 6 adolescent boys availing themselves for a discussion. The discussion session lasted for 43 minutes, 46 seconds. The participants were given the alphanumeric codes FGD2, P1; FGD2, P2; FGD2, P3; FGD2, P4 and so on. The third focus group discussion happened on 27th January, 2023. The group was made of 3 boys and 3 girls. The discussion lasted for 48 minutes and 56 seconds. Participants were given the alphanumeric codes FGD3, P1; FGD3, P2; and FGD3, P3 (for the girls) FGD3, P4; FGD3, P5; and FGD3, P6 (for the boys).

3.6 Data Analysis Plan

The qualitative data analysis approach that the study adopted is the thematic analysis. Data analysis is the process of cataloguing and breaking down raw data and reconstituting them into patterns, themes, concepts and propositions (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). Patton (2015) asserts that qualitative analysis transforms data into findings.

3.6.1 Thematic analysis

Patton (2015) proposes three general ways of conducting a data analysis, namely, data organisation, data reduction (through summarisation, categorisation), and identifying and linking of data through patterns and themes. According to Smith and Firth (2011, p.3), thematic analysis can be described as an "interpretive process, whereby data is systematically searched to identify patterns within the data to provide an illuminating description of the phenomenon." This means that in using thematic analysis, the researcher identified common patterns (themes) that were recurrent and offered a detailed description of such themes.

Also, according to Braun and Clarke (2016), thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data. This supports views expressed by Creswell (2014) which states that in analysing data, there is the need to sort the information gathered. The effect of this process is to aggregate data into a small number of themes. The themes for this analysis were inductively generated. Braun and Clarke (2016) assert that with an inductive type of thematic data analysis, the data is not fit into any form of preconceived analysis or pre-existing coding frame. The researcher analysed the data using Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phases thematic analysis approach. Further, the findings were interpreted using the reviewed literature and the gender performativity and the gender schema theories to draw meanings from the responses that the participants gave. Direct quotations were also used to support the interpretations and discussions.

Braun and Clarke (2022) outline six phases of the thematic analysis approach. The first phase deals with familiarising oneself with the gathered data. Therefore, the researcher got immersed in the data to become familiar with the depth and breadth of the content. This was done through repeated playing of the recorded responses from the interviews and focus groups

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discussions, searching for meanings and patterns. Braun and Clarke (2022) advised against skipping this phase as it provides the bedrock for the rest of the analysis. To have a written data which can be read through, there is the need to transcribe the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The researcher transcribed all the interviews manually by typing them in Word document. This was done by playing the recordings repeatedly to get exactly the responses given by the participants during the interviews and focus groups discussion sessions. In a detailed manner, the researcher described the identified issues and also ensured that direct quotations were used to support the detailed descriptions and discussions of the research questions. This step was important because it helped to create meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

The second phase of Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-step approach of thematic analysis involves generating initial codes. The data was, therefore, coded by highlighting portions and writing notes by the texts. Coding was necessary because it helped to identify features of the data that appeared relevant to the analysis and served as the most basic element of the raw data that could be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Phase three (3) refocuses the analysis at a broader level of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Themes are generated at this phase. Thus, the researcher sorted the different codes into potential themes and all relevant coded data were collated within identified themes. Similar codes were combined to form overarching themes that corresponded with the research questions.

In phase four (4), the themes were reviewed and refined. That is, the themes that did not have enough support from the data were collapsed into others or completely taken out. For example,

under research question 2, themes like the marketplace, the mall, the eatery, and the playground were merged and classified under 'others' because individually, they did not have enough support from the data. Next, the researcher went over the entire transcribed data once more in order to refine the themes. This is because Braun & Clarke (2022) suggest that the data set had to be re-read at this phase in order to ascertain whether the themes apply in relation to the data set, and to re-code themes that may have been missed in the earlier stage.

Themes are defined and named in the fifth phase. At this point, names were considered for the themes in the final analysis. The researcher ensured that the names were concise, punchy and would immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about. Then, the themes that were presented for the analysis were defined and further refined, and the data was analysed within them. For each individual theme, a detailed analysis was conducted and written in relation to the study's research questions.

The sixth phase is the report-producing stage. It involves the final analysis and write-up of the report. Thus, a report was written by analytically describing the data and making arguments in relation to the study's research questions. Further, the researcher interpreted the findings using existing works and theories to draw meanings from responses from the participants. Where applicable, extracts from the data were embedded in the description to provide enough evidence of the themes within the data.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that researchers need to protect their research participants, develop trust with them, promote the integrity of research and guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organisation or institution. Given the

justification above, an introductory letter from the School of Communication and Media Studies of University of Education, Winneba, was sent to the authorities of Accra Grammar School in Oyibi, seeking their consent and approval to allow their students to be engaged as participants for the study.

Halai (2006) avows that a good research is a moral and ethical task and the researcher should be very knowledgeable in making sure that the interests of a study's participants are not taken for granted in any way. The current study ensured that the research participants' autonomy, well-being, safety and dignity were protected. Before the researcher started the collection of data, some students in the Junior High section of Accra Grammar School were each given a consent form (see Appendix A) that was to be endorsed by their parents or guardians, seeking parental consent for their participation in the research process. Only students who agreed to the study and had returned an endorsed consent form were involved in the study. Before the start of the interviews and focus groups discussions, the participants for the study were informed about the study, and assured of their confidentiality. Also, participants were given maximum respect throughout the study. Participants chose freely to engage in the research, but were informed that they could withdraw any time they felt uncomfortable in the interviewing and discussion processes.

Consents of the participants were also sought before all the recordings made. The researcher was as objective as possible and did not in any way, knowingly, misrepresent or attempt to alter the participants' responses. In addition, while focusing on confidentiality, all private issues that were discussed were kept highly confidential except those that were relevant to the study and needed to be made public. With regards to anonymity, the names of participants were not, in any way, disclosed, but were represented with alphanumeric codes. The following

were the codes: FGD1, P1 (Focus Group Discussion 1, Participant 1); FGD2, P1 (Focus Group Discussion 2, Participant 1); FGD3, P4 (Focus Group Discussion 3, Participant 4); P1 (Participant 1); P2 (Participant 2); P7 (Participant 7) and so on.

3.8 Trustworthiness of the Data

Lincoln and Guba (2000) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Thus, trustworthiness is concerned with how reliable the methods of collection of data are to the study. Creswell (2014) submits that trustworthiness is used to determine whether the processes of findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the reader's account. These procedures, Creswell (2014) noted, include triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, prolonged time spent on the field by the researcher, rich thick description, clarification of bias that the researcher may bring on the study and presenting negative discrepant information that runs counter to the themes. Creswell (2014) agrees that in qualitative research, at least two of these verification procedures must be used. However, Anney (2014) recommends that qualitative researchers in their method of inquiry should employ the trustworthiness criteria of credibility, transferability (external validity), dependability (internal validity) and confirmability as given by Lincoln and Guba (2000). Therefore, five of the procedures were employed in order to make sure all information collected and analysed in this research was nothing short of the most accurate truth. These are peer debriefing, thick description, inquiry audit, triangulation, and spending prolonged time at the research field.

For credibility, the peer debriefing technique was used. Lincoln and Guba (2000) define peer debriefing as a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise

remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind. According to Heilman et al. (2010), peer debriefing ensures the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study. Heilman et al. (2010) again posit that through peer debriefing, the researcher explores the research design, data collection process, and data analysis while colleagues, serving as critical friends, encourage the researcher to examine the research process from multiple perspectives. This study was conducted in an objective manner and was subjected to peer review where the researcher permitted course mates to evaluate the work and offer constructive feedback.

Transferability is used to show that the findings have applicability in other contexts, that is other times, settings, situations and people (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Based on that, the thick description technique was employed to ensure the findings are transferable. Lincoln and Guba (2000) posit that thick description is the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context. In my data collection procedures, the thick description technique was used to give vivid account of what transpired in the field. Also, the thick description technique was applied to the analysis of data, as literature and theories were used to evaluate the data gathered from the field.

Dependability needs to be established to ensure the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Hence, inquiry audit technique was employed. This is an external audit that involves having a researcher not involved in the research process examine both the process and product of the research study (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). In this case, the external auditor consulted was the researcher's thesis supervisor, Professor Christiana Hammond who meticulously and assiduously examined the entire research process, making excellent inputs to achieve a brilliant product. Each chapter of the study was submitted to her

for her input and correction, and she made sure the feedback was rightly adhered to before moving on to the next chapter.

To establish confirmability is to evaluate the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The triangulation technique was adopted here. To Lincoln and Guba (2000), triangulation involves using multiple data sources in an investigation to produce understanding. The method triangulation and theory triangulation established confirmability as the study adopted the interview and focus group discussion methods of data collection, and also used the gender performativity and the gender schema theories to examine and interpret the data.

The researcher spent a prolonged period at the research field by getting immersed in the data on countless times. This was done by repeatedly playing the recorded responses of the interviews and focus groups discussions. This helped to become familiar with the data and to identify the recurring themes, which ensured a credible analysis of data.

3.9 Summary

The chapter has discussed in detail the methodological procedures of the study. The study is qualitative in nature, and the case study design was adopted with the aim to understand the people involved in the study in their social context. The chapter has also presented descriptions on the data collection processes and the plan for the data analysis. The chapter concludes with how ethical consideration and the trustworthiness of the data gathered were ensured.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The study sets out to investigate adolescents' perspectives on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes. This chapter presents the findings and discussion from the analysis of data collected from interviews and focus groups discussions with selected adolescents from Accra Grammar School, a private basic school in Oyibi town in the Kpone-Katamanso Municipality in Ghana. There were three (3) focus groups discussions in all. The first group was an all-girls group made up of 6 participants. It is labelled FGD1. The 2nd group was an all-boys group of 6 adolescents. It is labelled FGD2. The 3rd group was a mixed-gender group of 3 girls and 3 boys. It is labelled FGD3. Eight (8) separate adolescents were interviewed individually. Participants 1, 3, 5 and 7 were girls while Participants 2, 4, 6 and 8 were boys. The participants were within the age range of eleven (11) to fifteen (15) years.

The data gathered were simplified into twelve (12) themes to ensure easy analysis and interpretations. The analysis was aided by existing works and the theories of gender performativity and gender schema. In order to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, they were labelled using alphanumeric codes such as: FGD1, P1 (Focus Group Discussion 1, Participant 1); FGD2, P6 (Focus Group Discussion 2, Participant 6); FGD3, P4 (Focus Group Discussion 3, Participant 4); P1 (Participant 1); (P3) Participant 3.

The following research questions guided the data collection and analysis:

1. What are the roles that the adolescents of Accra Grammar School perform in the construction of gender role attitudes?

2. How are evolving gender roles and gender beliefs communicated to the adolescents of Accra Grammar School?

3. What are the perspectives of the adolescents of Accra Grammar School on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs?

4.1   RQ 1. What are the roles that adolescents of Accra Grammar School perform in the construction of gender role attitudes?

Children learn about male and female roles from the culture in which they live (Bem, 1981). Thus, children adjust their behaviour to align with the gender norms of their culture from the earliest stages of social development. In the case of the roles that adolescents play at home, this research question sought to highlight some of the differences in roles that girls and boys engage in at home based on gender. From the analysis of data gathered, the following themes were identified to answer the research question: *Age-appropriate roles, helping-hand roles, and gender-specific roles.*

4.1.1 Age-appropriate Roles

An analysis of the data revealed that at home, adolescent girls and boys perform age-appropriate roles in the construction of gender role attitudes. The study found that at home, through observation and performance, adolescents realised that members of their households are assigned roles based on their age. Those children who were younger were assigned lighter roles while older children performed more difficult roles.

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During adolescence, young girls and boys conform to societal expectations and fulfill their respective roles within the domestic setting. This means that they engage in behaviours and activities that are considered suitable and expected for their age within their household. These age-appropriate roles may vary depending on cultural norms and family dynamics, but typically include responsibilities such as helping with household chores, assisting in taking care of younger siblings, studying, or participating in activities that align with their developmental stage. For example, adolescent girls may be encouraged to help with cooking, cleaning, or nurturing activities, while adolescent boys may be expected to engage in more physically demanding tasks or take on leadership roles.

It is important to note that these roles are not biologically predetermined, but rather, are learned and reinforced through socialisation, so they come about as a result of repeated performance. Society influences adolescents' understanding of what is considered appropriate behavior for their gender, and they adapt their actions accordingly to fit into these expectations. Overall, the notion that adolescent girls and boys perform age-appropriate roles at home implies that they adhere to societal norms and fulfill specific gender-related obligations within the context of their family environment.

Below are some quotes from the participants when asked to give a breakdown of the roles that each person in the home or household performed:

> *I do the cooking, my immediate younger sister does the dishes, the two youngest ones do nothing since they are young* (FGD1, P6)
>
> *My brother sweeps and runs errands for my mum. I sweep. Sometimes, I help my mum wash the clothes. The chores are shared according to one's level of what one can do* (FGD2, P4)

> *Mum cooks. Elder sister helps Mum cook and sometimes cooks when*
> *Mum is tired. My junior brother helps when Dad arranges the room,*
> *and my youngest brother sometimes goes to the kitchen when Mum*
> *is cooking. My elder sister does the scrubbing of the washroom, sink*
> *and others because my mom and dad said she is older and has more*
> *strength to do those stuff* (FGD2, P6)

One participant was of the view that the work being assigned based on age ensured that the chore was carried out speedily. To him, age was synonymous with capability for the task. He avowed:

> *Roles are shared to make the work faster and easier. I'm the one*
> *who can clean the car, so it's based on ability, not gender, in my*
> *home. For now, I help to cook. I'll start fully when I complete the*
> *JHS. I operate the washing machine because I'm the next oldest*
> *after my brother who is away in the boarding house. In the absence*
> *of the machine, we would each wash our clothes* (P2)

From the foregoing, it is gathered that roles are assigned to adolescents based on what their parents perceive them capable of doing. Thus, one's age determines one's role at the family level. It is, however, obvious, though subtly, that these age-appropriate roles have some form of gendered elements within them. Take the extract from the response of FGD3, P6 for instance. Even as the younger ones grew up to relieve the elder sister of some of the chores, the cooking chore was still left in her care. This buttresses the claim that gender is a socially constructed category created during gendered "performances" (Butler, 1990). This means that as people interact with one another over time, they come to share meanings for certain terms and actions, and thus come to understand events in particular and similar ways, (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). Therefore, as adolescents continue to interact with their parents and the family

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setting, they have come to interpret, to their own understanding, that the roles shared for them at home are based on their ages and abilities -what one can do and cannot do.

4.1.2 Helping-hand Roles

During adolescence, both girls and boys engage in acts of helping others. By performing these helping-hand roles, adolescents contribute to the well-being and the functioning of the family. These helping-hand roles are undertaken by adolescents in their interaction with others in their households. This signifies that helping-hand roles are not inherent or pre-determined, but are rather learned and acted upon. This confirms that all forms of behaviours are learned through performance. Participants alluded to the fact that some of the chores they performed at home were just to lend a hand to other members of the family. Below are some extracts from the interviews and focus groups discussions when participants were asked to state the reasons for the way that roles were assigned in their homes:

> *My elder sister and I do the house chores to help our mother. We can't just be in the house doing nothing* (FGD1, P1)

> *My father said the girls are to wash, so I sweep while they are washing to reduce the burden on them* (FGD3, P5)

> *Elder sister helps Mum cook and sometimes cooks when Mum is tired. My junior brother helps when Dad arranges the room* (FGD2, P6)

From the above, it is inferred that adolescents are also assigned roles just so they could lend support at home. Again, there is some sort of gender differentiation with the roles that adolescents perform to help at home. Most of the girls help their mothers while the boys help their fathers. This gendered differentiation may appear elusive, but performativity theorists have proven that all persons perform gender even though we may do that subtly.

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4.1.3 Gender-specific roles

The nuclear family of a married heterosexual couple brings up their children with knowledge on traditional gender roles or division of labour (Park et al., 2013). This means that parents mostly raise their children by teaching them how to behave and work based on their genders, more especially as the family is the first point of socialisation (Gornick & Meyers, 2009). Ercan and Uçar (2021) believe that when gender comes into question, personality traits, roles and responsibilities of women and men that are predetermined by the society also step in.

Family models tend to have a direct impact on gender roles because they transmit gender role models concerning, for example, the division of tasks and responsibilities between parents and siblings. The male breadwinner–female homemaker is a model based on the gendered specialisation of tasks: Family members are socialised to the gendered division of paid/unpaid work and this contributes to internalising traditional gender role expectations (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004).

During adolescence, both girls and boys engage in behaviors and adopt social roles that align with societal expectations associated with their respective genders. This means that they conform to traditional notions of how males and females should behave, based on cultural norms and stereotypes. For adolescent girls, performing gender-specific roles may involve conforming to expectations such as being nurturing, submissive, or focused on appearance. They may engage in behaviors like taking care of younger siblings, showing interest in fashion and beauty, or displaying more cooperative and emotionally expressive traits. On the other hand, adolescent boys often perform gender-specific roles that align with expectations of masculinity. These roles may include being assertive, competitive, and independent. Boys may engage in activities seen as traditionally masculine, such as sports and assertive

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behaviour, and may avoid behaviours associated with femininity due to fear of being labeled as weak or unmanly.

Again, these gender-specific roles are not inherent, but rather learned constructs. Society and cultural norms play a significant role in shaping these expectations, and individuals often internalise and perform these roles without necessarily questioning them. The theory of gender performativity argues that individuals actively create and reinforce these gender roles through repeated acts and behaviours in order to fit into social expectations.

With regards to the roles that adolescent girls and boys play at home in the construction of gender role attitudes, the data revealed that gender, still, is of significant consideration in assigning roles at home. Below are some quotes from the participants when asked to give reasons behind the nature of role-assignment in their homes:

> *I do the cooking because I am a girl and once you are a girl, you have to cook* (FGD1, P6)

This adolescent was of the view that cooking is a girl's job. When asked the source of such knowledge, she responded that she had been hearing people say so.

> *That's what I have been hearing. In some other families, only females do the cooking and the boys do the washing* (FGD1, P6)

The researcher then asked why her younger sister did not cook as she had provided earlier, and she responded by saying:

> *My younger sister does not cook because she is now learning how to cook. So, she does the dishes* (FGD1, P6)

Another participant declared:

> *My brother washes the car because it is believed males are supposed to wash cars, weed, and other stuff. I sweep and wash sometimes because it is said that girls are supposed to do most of the house chores to become good wives in future* (FGD3, P1)

When asked who was behind the logic she had outlined, she had this to say:

> *People normally say that* (FGD3, P1)

Other participants made it known that their parents were emphatic about the gender roles. The following were how they put it:

> *I cook because my parents say I'm a girl and as a girl, I'm supposed to cook. The boys wash our parents' cars because my parents believe that's what males or boys are supposed to do* (FGD3, P2)

> *My sister cooks because society says so* (FGD3, P5)

> *My mum says I'm a girl and will grow up to be a wife and a mother, so I need to know these things before getting to that stage* (P1)

The discoveries above prove that gender beliefs are still very much with us and are universal stereotypes as avowed by Ridgeway and Correll (2004). These serve to exacerbate the differences between girls and boys. Society or parents say girls are to cook, so the participants and their siblings internalise that. In the same vein, society and parents say boys are to wash cars and weed, so these have also been internalised and adhered to by both members of the in-group and the out-group. Ercan and Uçar (2021) believe that the differences that gender roles create reveal themselves as determiners in designating expectations and roles related to how women and men behave and how they think depending on the culture they live in.

It was also discovered from the data that some roles were assigned to one particular gender only because children born to the parents were all of the same gender. Adolescents from such

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homes are irked they have to perform what they classify as roles of the other gender. One participant had this to say:

> *We take turns to do the chores; the bathroom is very scary because*
> *there are a lot of geckos, so we are only 4 boys, if we had a sister,*
> *we would have left the scrubbing of the bathroom in her care* (P8)

As contained in the literature, norms are passed down from generation to generation, so children learn from their parents (Gornick &Meyers, 2009; Anyidoho, 2020). This allows for the transmission of societal beliefs, attitudes and orientation as well as gender relations to children. From the data gathered, it appears parents perform the traditional gender roles themselves, which, automatically, rubs off on their offspring. The sub question that was posed for participants to expatiate on who does what at home, revealed that beliefs about gender-specific responsibilities (Dicke et al., 2019) had been internalised by the participants (John et al., 2017). The following extracts show that:

> *Both of my parents go to work outside the home; Dad handles the*
> *bills since he is mostly at work. Dad also earns more money. Mum*
> *cooks and monitors the house chores* (FGD1, P1)

This participant revealed that both of her parents work outside the home, but believes her dad is in charge of the bill because he is mostly away from home than her mother is. Her mother also works outside the home, but is in charge of cooking and ensuring that the house chores are carried out. This corroborates the report by the Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning Department (1999), which states that there are tasks that are regarded as naturally determined for women, but demeaning to men, both inside and outside their homes.

There was a participant with a scenario similar to the one above. She stated:

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> *Both parents work outside the home, but my father provides all the finances. My mum does the cooking, and I help her* (FGD3, P2)

Another participant was of this view:

> *My father goes to work outside the home, my mother operates a shop in front of our house. My father is the one who assigns the roles at the beginning of every week. My father gives instructions because he is the head of the house. Mom will forget and she is easily convinced when we complain of tiredness and time to learn and do other stuff* (FGD1, P3)

The above finding agrees with Dietrich et al.'s (2021) discovery, which stated that the idea that men should make decisions and hold positions of authority and leadership has been normalised both at the household and community levels. Other participants gave reasons other than ones based on superiority of one gender over the other. Below are few of such extracts:

> *Dad cleans the ceiling fans and the ceilings because of safety reasons* (FGD1, P6)
>
> *Dad washes his cars and weeds because he wants to do it* (FGD1, P2)

According to most of the participants, both parents provide for the home financially, but some made mention of their mothers still pitching in to either support, or take charge of the house chores.

One of them had this to say:

> *Both parents work outside the home. They both provide for the home. Mum does the chores* (P5)

Another also articulated:

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> *Only my father goes to work outside the home, but both parents*
> *provide for the home. My mother usually cooks* (FGD3, P5)

One participant revealed that both parents provide for the home in order to support each other so that the financial burdens will be shared or made lighter. However, at the end, his mother alone 'stresses' herself by helping with the chores. This was how he put it:

> *Both of my parents work from outside the home. They both also*
> *provide for the house to help each other, so they don't stress*
> *themselves. My mother helps with the house chores* (FGD3, P6)

This means that no matter how women try to fit into the institutionalised domain of men, women must still return to their own institutionalised domain.

The data also revealed that fathers performed roles that gave protection to their families while mothers performed care-giving roles as avowed by Blackstone (2003) who affirmed that traditional gender role orientation assumes that each gender has a natural affinity to particular behaviours. So, here, fathers assume their duty is to protect their families and mothers assume their duty is to give care to their families. The members of each group also believe same of their own in-group and of the members their out-group. That is to say, mothers and fathers agree, in unspoken terms, that protection is required of the father, and care-giving is required of the mother. This is in sync with Dicke et al.'s (2019) exposition that traditional gender role beliefs state that a woman's role is taking care of the home and the family, while according to Gyan et al. (2021), cultural narratives position men as virile, strong, intelligent, good for leadership positions, and offering protection and sustenance, intelligence, and wisdom. In answering the question on who does what at home, some participants professed:

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My father takes care of the compound and sometimes helps to gather leaves shed by the trees to burn them. Mum cooks and washes my younger siblings' clothes (FGD2, P2)

My father always goes round to ensure all the doors and windows are locked before we go to bed. Sometimes, even when we are all watching TV, he will get up and do that. He is also the one who checks the cars in the morning before they are used (FGD1, P4)

Dad mostly helps to arrange the room and helps with cleaning the compound. Mum cooks (P7)

Dad sprays the weeds, Mum cooks (P6)

Gyan et al. (2021) discovered this in their study and declared that in Ghana, especially within rural communities, cultural narratives portray men as strong, good for leadership positions, and the ones who offer protection and sustenance, whereas women are socialised to believe that males are wiser and more responsible to lead.

Finally, there are also fathers who help with the chores aside providing financial support. A few extracts are provided to highlight this:

Dad goes to work outside the home. Actually, he works overseas. Mom trades from home. Dad provides the finances. Mom cooks. When Dad is in the country, he helps with the chores, usually on Saturdays (P2)

We are seven in the family, but I live with one elder brother and my mother. My father visits from time to time. Both parents go to work outside the home. Mom does the cooking and cleaning. Dad sometimes cooks once in a while, and does the financial part of the things in the house (P1)

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It can be argued out that the revelations above could be linked to the fact that the fathers in the above scenarios do not live permanently with the family and hence, perform some or all of the chores on their own wherever they are, and so they are used to doing the domestic chores. In that regard, they do not see it as demeaning when helping out anytime they visit their families. This brings to the fore the argument of some of the advocates for gender equality on the fact that prior to getting married, majority of men perform their chores when living alone, so men should be able to continue doing the chores, or, at least, relegate only a few, and not all chores, to their wives after marriage. This is because Madani et al. (2016) revealed that after marriage, responsibilities at home increase for women although the same is not true for men after marriage.

From the findings that this first research question has brought to bear, it can be concluded that gender performances are, indeed, repetitions in an ongoing social and cultural process, supporting the gender performativity theory. The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. These performances are not solo in operations. They are always collaborative. This is because in whichever way the performances are being expressed, they are done in a context of social meanings that transcends our individual experiences.

After identifying the roles that adolescent girls and boys of Accra Grammar School perform in the construction of gender role attitudes, the next objective of the study was to examine the mechanisms through which evolving gender roles and beliefs are communicated to the adolescents.

4.2 RQ2. How are evolving gender roles and gender beliefs communicated to the adolescents of Accra Grammar School?

During adolescence, girls and boys begin to interact with the world in new ways – taking chances, learning skills and experiencing unfamiliar emotions (The World Health Organisation, 2014). Gender schemas are learned (Bem, 1981). According to the gender schema theory, gender schemas are acquired through socialisation processes, from a very young age. Children learn and internalise societal expectations and norms associated with femininity and masculinity. These schemas shape their perceptions about gender roles, behaviours and identities.

The research question two sought to examine how evolving gender roles and gender beliefs are communicated to adolescents in developing their gender role attitudes. After a careful analysis of the research data, the following themes were identified as being done *through family dynamics, the Media, empowerment initiatives, and peer interactions.*

4.2.1 Through Family Dynamics

The family is the first point of call in the socialisation of its members, and has thus, become one of the pivotal sites where gender relations are produced and reproduced (Gornick & Meyers, 2009). Therefore, the values imbibed by members from the home setting are projected by these members and guide them. The home has historically been regarded as the primary agent of gender socialisation. This means that it is largely responsible for instilling in individuals the societal expectations, norms, and roles associated with their gender. As a mechanism, family dynamics play a crucial role in communicating evolving gender roles to adolescents. Parents and caregivers serve as primary role models, shaping adolescents' beliefs and attitudes towards gender through their behaviors, expectations, and conversations. Firstly,

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parents or caregivers are typically the first and most immediate sources of influence for children. They often provide guidance, encouragement, and discipline, all of which can involve instructing children on how to conform to gender-specific behaviours. Because they are young, adolescents are, primarily, the responsibilities of their parents. It is, therefore, not a wonder that the data identified family dynamics as the foremost mechanism through which evolving gender roles and beliefs are communicated to adolescents. The participants affirmed this and few of the extracts are provided below:

> *In my home, we all help with the chores. I can wash cars and my brothers can cook. There is nothing like this chore is for a girl or boy. All of us help with different chores at home irrespective of our gender* (FGD3, P2).

> *My mom told me that she is teaching me how to cook, wash, and do house chores so that when I grow up, I won't suffer, and I won't need someone to depend on* (P5).

> *My mother cooks and washes my younger siblings' clothes. My elder brother washes. The rest of us help with the house chores* (FGD2, P1).

In modern families, there is a shift towards more equal sharing of household responsibilities regardless of gender. Parents may demonstrate to their children that tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare are not assigned based on traditional gender roles, but rather on individual interests and capabilities. Also, there is the encouragement of open communication and emotional expression within the family unit, breaking away from the stereotype that men should be stoic and unemotional. Parents may actively promote emotional intelligence and vulnerability in both their sons and daughters, challenging the notion that certain emotions are exclusively masculine or feminine. This means as adolescents interact with their parents in

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the home setting over time, they understand events in ways their parents portray to them, and this is mostly done through communication, which is the exchange of meaning through language and symbols (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). The findings are also in consonance with the gender schema theory which proposes that children form various forms of schema for gender at an early age and the gender schema becomes increasingly complex as children develop.

4.2.2 Through the Media

Even though gender stereotypes are embedded in children's television programmes (Wille et al., 2018), the media plays a significant role in communicating evolving gender roles and beliefs to audiences, including adolescents. Through various platforms such as television, film, social media, advertising, and news outlets, the media influences perceptions of gender by portraying diverse representations, challenging stereotypes, and promoting inclusive narratives (Dietrich et al., 2021).

Television shows and movies often depict characters breaking traditional gender norms and exploring a wide range of identities and relationships. These representations can shape viewers' attitudes and beliefs about gender roles, showcasing alternative perspectives and promoting acceptance of gender diversity (Dietrich et al., 2021). From the data gathered, several of the participants cited the media as a source of information on evolving gender roles and beliefs. With regards to the traditional media, the electronic (television), and print (storybooks) were the leading sources mentioned. Few extracts from the data are as displayed:

> *I see that in movies, both men and women serve food at restaurants,*
> *even though some men want only ladies to serve them. They also*
> *cook and take care of children. So, such roles are not based on any*
> *gender and we should learn from it* (FGD1, P3).

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> *In story books like the 'Lemon Suitcase' by Peggy Oppong, females*
> *are made to take high positions and they succeeded. This shows that*
> *women can also be good leaders and therefore, we should give them*
> *the opportunity* (FGD3, P5).

Animated cartoons are enjoyed by children who learn from what they watch (Derzyan, 2019). These animated cartoons are disseminated through Cable TV such as DSTV and Netflix. This makes Cable TV a mechanism that communicates evolving gender roles. These evolving gender roles are displayed through animated movies that promote gender parity and egalitarian lifestyles. One participant indicated that:

> *In the animated movies or cartoons that we watch, a male can be a*
> *hero, a female can be hero, and a male can be evil and a female can*
> *be evil. The characters and the roles they play are not based on their*
> *gender* (P3).

News outlets also contribute to the communication of evolving gender roles by covering stories related to gender equality, women's empowerment, and other issues that shape societal attitudes toward gender. One participant had this to say from news item he had watched:

> *In news, there are plenty stories of women who have come into power and done*
> *dramatic changes. For example, in one country, there is a female majority in*
> *parliament and because of that they were able to bring policies on sanitation and*
> *that country their capital is the cleanest in Africa* (FGD3, P5)

Social media platforms have also become powerful tools for shaping evolving gender roles by allowing individuals to share their experiences, express themselves, and engage in conversations about gender identity and equality. Influencers and content creators on social media play a crucial role in challenging societal norms and promoting inclusive messages about gender. Data gathered revealed that adolescents also see and learn about evolving

gender roles and beliefs through the social media. YouTube, TikTok and Facebook were named by the participants. Some extracts are displayed below:

> *On social media, example, on YouTube, when a girl does a video of*
> *not knowing how to cook or something, when some people in the*
> *comment section say a girl must know how to cook, wash her clothes*
> *and parents' clothes because she'll grow up to become a wife, other*
> *people will be supporting the girl saying everyone should know how*
> *to do everything* (FGD3, P2)

Generally, the media serves as a powerful tool for communicating evolving gender roles and beliefs to a wide audience, including adolescents. By promoting diverse representations, challenging stereotypes, and fostering inclusive narratives, the media plays a vital role in shaping societal attitudes and perceptions of gender.

4.2.3 Through Empowerment Initiatives

Gender schemas organise and influence perception (Bem, 1981). This means that gender schemas serve as mental filters that organise information and influence how individuals perceive the world around them. Empowerment initiatives play a crucial role in communicating evolving gender roles and beliefs to adolescents by providing them with opportunities, resources, and support to challenge traditional norms and advocate for gender equality (John et al., 2017). Also, these initiatives often focus on promoting self-confidence, leadership skills, and critical thinking abilities among adolescents, empowering them to question existing stereotypes and beliefs about gender.

Some of the participants had these to say in regard to the role of empowerment initiatives in their development:

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At my church, sometimes, they organise programmes for the teen class and speak to us about gender equality. I got to learn that as a girl, I can become whatever I want to be only if I am interested in that (P3).

Some people visit our school sometimes to talk to us about equal rights and stuff. One time during morning worship, a resource person came to talk to us about survival skills. On that day, I learnt that boys have to learn how to cook to survive. It isn't only girls that must cook (FGD3, P2).

Empowerment initiatives communicate evolving gender roles and beliefs to adolescents through education and awareness campaigns. According to John et al. (2017), through the provision of workshops, training sessions, and educational materials on topics such as gender equality, consent, healthy relationships, and diversity, these initiatives help adolescents develop a deeper understanding of complex gender issues and encourage them to think critically about societal expectations and norms. Also, when adolescents are connected with role models and mentors who have defied traditional gender norms and achieved success in various fields, the initiative inspires them to challenge limitations and pursue their goals without being constrained by gender stereotypes. Some adolescents revealed that they pick up evolving gender roles and beliefs from people they look up to:

My favourite teacher always says that both boys and girls must be treated equally, and she shows that in the way she treats us. She does not show that she likes girls more than boys or boys more than girls. Because of her, I know that I deserve to be treated equally as everyone (P7).

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> *My uncle is my role model. I do whatever I see him do because I want to become like him in future. Even though he is a banker, he cooks for us when we visit their house on some weekends, and he makes all of us help out. Through that, I have learnt how to cook as a boy and I take care of my younger siblings when my parents are not home* (FGD3, P4).

All in all, empowerment initiatives leverage education, mentorship, advocacy, and safe spaces to communicate evolving gender roles and beliefs to adolescents. By empowering young people to think critically, challenge stereotypes, and advocate for gender equality, these initiatives play a crucial role in shaping the next generation's attitudes and perceptions of gender.

4.2.4 Through Peer Interactions

The gender schema theory suggests that gender schemas influence individuals' behavioural choices. Bem (1981) posits that people are likely to engage in activities and endorse behaviours that are consistent with their gender schema, while avoiding those that are inconsistent. Peer interactions within social circles and communities also contribute to shaping adolescents' understanding of evolving gender roles. When adolescents interact with their peers on regular basis, those ones who have schemas on egalitarianism are likely to influence some, if not all, of their peers (Appiah-Kubi et al., 2020). This will in turn influence the perceptions and consequently, the behaviours of the adolescents towards the gender roles that are evolving.

Peer groups provide a space for adolescents to explore different perspectives, challenge stereotypes, and develop their own beliefs regarding gender equality, identity, and expression (Appiah-Kubi et al., 2020). Through daily interactions with peers, individuals learn and

internalise societal norms, expectations, and attitudes related to gender. Also, through group discussions, debates, and shared experiences, peers can influence each other's understanding of gender and contribute to the ongoing evolution of gender roles and beliefs. Some extracts from the data include:

> *I used to think only girls had to wash clothes. When my friends found out I don't wash my clothes, they began to tease me. This made me learn how to wash my clothes to stop their comments about me being lazy.* (FGD1, P4)

> *At home, I was used to leaving my plates for my younger sister to wash after we eat. One time, I visited my best friend on Saturday and after eating, I left my plate on the table. He told me to go and wash the plate if not his mother would be angry. I learnt to wash my own plate from that day not because I am a boy, but to show I am responsible* (P6)

It can be seen that through peer interactions, new ideas and perspectives about gender are introduced and disseminated. As individuals interact with a diverse range of peers, they may come into contact with differing viewpoints on what it means to be masculine or feminine. Furthermore, peer interactions provide a space for individuals to experiment with and perform gender in various ways. By observing how their peers express and embody gender, individuals may feel empowered to explore and express their own gender identity more freely. This can lead to the questioning and subversion of traditional gender norms, as well as the creation of new and more inclusive ways of being and relating to one another. Some extracts also showed how individuals questioned their parents after learning that gender roles are evolving:

> *I have always wanted to try my hands on cooking, but my parents said no. When I found out from my friends that they help in the*

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kitchen, I told my mother things are changing so she should allow
me cook (FGD3, P4)

My father wants all the girls to attend Aburi Girls' so that they can
visit us easily, but my brothers were free to choose the school they
want. I wish to go to Wesley Girls' but my father said no. My friends
told me to tell my father that girls are no longer the weaker ones
that need protection. When I told him, he said I can go to any school
of my choice (P1).

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that peer interactions serve as a dynamic and influential environment in which evolving gender roles and beliefs are communicated, negotiated, and transformed. As adolescents engage with peers in meaningful and reflective ways, they have the opportunity to both challenge and reshape existing gender norms, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive society.

The findings from the data in answering the second research question are not too far from the evidence gathered from the reviewed literature. This is because John et al. (2017, p.3) define gender socialisation as "a process by which individuals develop, refine and learn to 'do' gender through internalising gender norms and roles as they interact with key agents of socialisation, such as their family, social networks and other social institutions". Auerbach (1989) also asserts that gender socialisation, which includes gender identification and role specific behaviour, is through parents, peers, siblings, school, society and religion, and one's social circle is said to be an important agent which affects one's attitude and thought on any issue. Values transmission during the primary socialisation and experiences during the course of life, including secondary socialisation processes and daily negotiations between partners and primary groups, contribute to the development of individual value systems. Gender equality value and gender role attitudes are also part of this process (Moen et al., 1997).

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After examining how evolving gender roles and beliefs are communicated to the adolescents of Accra Grammar School, the study sought to examine the perspectives of the adolescents of Accra Grammar School on traditional gender roles and beliefs.

4.3 RQ3. What are the perspectives of the adolescents of Accra Grammar School on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs?

John et al. (2017) posit that adolescence is a critical period in the development of gender attitudes and behaviours which have potentially life-long effects. UNICEF (2012) also asserts that adolescents undergo significant changes in brain and physical maturation, gender and social relations, and familial responsibilities. Kagesten et al. (2016) argue that adolescence is not only a period of rapid physical, sexual and brain development, but also one when the shaping of gender beliefs and attitudes intensifies, with potentially life-long effects. The perspectives of adolescent girls and boys on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs can be diverse and influenced by various factors such as cultural, societal, and individual experiences.

The third research question sought to investigate the perspectives that adolescent girls and boys at Oyibi hold about traditional gender roles and gender beliefs. The data revealed that gender schemas organise and influence perception (Bem, 1981). This means that gender schemas serve as mental filters that organise information and influence how individuals perceive the world around them. The themes generated to help answer the research question include: *Exacting, Inequitable, Inexorable, Sacred, Evened.*

4.3.1 Exacting

The Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning Department report (1999) revealed that certain tasks and duties are designated as feminine and such sexual division of labour imposes

on women the most enormous, time-consuming, labour-intensive and poorly rewarded chores both inside and outside their homes. Thus, females are stressed with the tasks designated to them traditionally. The adolescents alluded to this when they stated that traditional gender roles are exacting. Some extracts from the data are cited below:

> *In my house, the boys do most of the work, and my sister only washes the plates and she chooses whether she wants to do it or not, and my father says we should allow her because she is the only girl. It puts a lot of stress on us* (P6)

> *With traditional gender division of labour, usually, one person is burdened with all the jobs* (FGD3, P4)

> *Being in the kitchen is not an easy thing, but they say women should be in the kitchen because men are going out to work. Won't the woman also work? She won't be in the kitchen forever* (P7)

From the foregoing, it is clear that no gender likes to be burdened with the chunk of the chores. They will consider it burdensome when it is about them. Both male and female participants saw the gender roles as stressful. The information that has been extracted due to these experiences will become the schema to guide these adolescents in forming various perceptions about traditional gender roles, and such perceptions are what they will implement as they develop. This is because according to the gender schema theory, individuals tend to pay more attention to information relevant to their own gender, and they store information in memory in ways to make it consistent with their existing gender schemas (Bem, 1981).

4.3.2 Inequitable

The responses here were to the question on what the participants would think of the traditional gender roles if they belonged to the opposite gender. Majority of them expressed that

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performing the roles of the other gender wouldn't be fair to them. The following extracts back their assertions:

> *It wouldn't be fair because I would be getting the harder works because I'm stronger and the girls would be getting the easier ones. As a boy, I would make sure that the girls also do some of the work so that they get to know how the boys suffer. In certain aspects like carrying of books and packing of chairs while the girls are just in the classroom, at least they can try and help with something. As a girl, I am okay with that arrangement, but if I were a boy, I wouldn't be okay* (FGD1, P1)

> *If I were of the opposite gender, I wouldn't even tolerate shared responsibilities. I would like both of us to do the same things. If both of us do the same things, the stress will be less on both of us, both at home and at work so it will be equal. That would be fair, and then we can manage it* (P4)

> *As a female, I wouldn't see it as fair because knowing what I am supposed to do, if no one else is doing the chores, I have to take it upon myself and do it* (FGD2, P2)

> *It is not fair that males are seen as more important than us because it is believed they carry the family name, they continue with the family name, and we are the ones who will go and take others' family names, so we are supposed to be in the kitchen taking care of them, which is not right. If I were a boy, I will still see traditional gender roles as not fair. I see it as unlawful* (P5)

It was amazing to discover that most of the girls were sympathising with the male gender, believing boys did harder chores while girls did lighter chores. This can be likened to the discovery made by Dietrich et al. (2021) on how women joined men to ridicule and stigmatise those men who treated their wives equally. These are some of the factors or attitudes that

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impede the success of the fight against gender inequality. This is the result of internalising gender schemas which have become complex and intensified as adolescent girls and boys are evolving.

4.3.3 Inexorable

People expressing traditional gender role attitudes manifest their support for the specialisation of tasks and roles by gender, with women devoted to the family chores and men to tasks in the public realm (Blackstone, 2003). Few of the participants were of the view that assigning roles based on traditional gender division of labour cannot be stopped nor prevented. This was due to the fact that to them, campaigns to stop it have been going on for a long time, but not much success has been chalked. When I argued that the rate at which girl-children are getting education in recent times was as a result of a fierce campaign in that regard in the past, some of the participants still doubted that much gain could be made with advocacies for gender equality. This implies that the participants' mindset with regard to the status of women and men has been entrenched, so there is the need for mindset reconstruction as proposed by Appiah-Kubi et al. (2020). Also, some of the participants believed the traditional gender division of labour is a natural phenomenon that cannot be altered. These responses were to the sub question of what participants would do differently about the traditional gender roles if they belonged to the other gender Some extracts to back the assertion are presented below:

> *I think there is no way gender roles can be stopped. There will be a bit of chaos or confusion if gender roles are mixed up or reversed because there will still be some people who will be against it and maybe will try to do protests and other things which will cause chaos* (FGD1, P1)

Trying to change the system of gender will bring confusion because it will be like NDC, NPP. People will kill, like what is happening in Israel or so. They have asked women to cover up and not to come out without covering their faces. If they want to buy something, they should go and buy the thing and quickly get back into their homes. Men can do all this stuff. Where men are walking, women shouldn't pass there, so the women are protesting. But they are being killed because they want to reverse that rule, so it will bring confusion like what is happening there (FGD1, P5)

No one knows what happens when men are on the job field. Men face a lot of attacks in their various works, but no one comes to attack a woman that 'Why is your home not tidy?', so men return home very, very tired. Men don't tell the women what they went through at work. Men don't communicate, and say maybe they are tired, so the women should bear with them. Men can't take women's problems and put them on their heads, so when we come home, we are expected to go and relax. Women must pamper their husbands. Women should stay at home. They can't do men's work. They are very emotional. When a man's boss insults him, the man can endure it, but a woman can't stand it (P8)

This assertion by Participant 8 proves that Ridgeway and Correll (2004) were right when they illustrated that the assumption that women are more emotional than men is an example of gender beliefs. This is true because Ridgeway and Correll (2004) defined gender beliefs as universal stereotypes about gender that serve to exacerbate the differences between men and women. And that is exactly what this participant tried to prove.

On their views on what would happen to society if traditional gender roles are reversed or mixed up, one participant affirmed:

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> *Society will be destabilised if the roles are reversed. None of the house chores brings money to the house. Men are to do the outside work because those are very risky. I say society will be destabilised if they do the same work because when a woman gets pregnant, she can't go to work and do the house chores too, so if the woman was also working, it was adding to the income of the family. When she goes on maternity leave, it will interrupt the income of the family* (P6)

4.3.4 Sacred

According to Burkert (1996), there has never been a society without religion. Thus, religion is part of culture in its wider sense. Raday (2003, p.669) believes religion has a direct bearing on gender inequality and argued that "… religion forms, both theoretically and empirically, the core of cultural resistance to human rights and gender equality". Raday (2003) also claimed that religious norms impose patriarchal regimes that disadvantage women. Therefore, religion and its doctrines are great perpetrators of gender inequality. It is, therefore, not surprising that a number of the participants viewed gendered traditional division of labour as religious, and therefore should not be altered. These are some extracts of participants' perspectives on what would happen to society if traditional gender roles are reversed or mixed up:

> *Ghanaian society will be destabilised if the gender roles are reversed because we are very traditional and religious. If you go to the Bible, God is always quoting, Abraham is a man, this, is a man, God is always referring to men. So, it's like we rule. Even if the roles are mixed up and a woman fails at something, she will be blamed for being a woman* (P8)

> *Women do more work than men at home. Though men could do those work, because they are lazy and seen as head of the family, no one cares about it. Even religion sees it as right* (P4)

> *Per the movies I have watched, most traditional leaders take their ancestors' words or rules set to be final, nothing can change about it. They will bring in the gods and their ancestors and how their ancestors were living with that peacefully, but you are coming to change it* (FGD1, P3)

The discussion above supports Raday's (2003) assertion that claims of religious freedom are used to oppose women's demands for gender equality. Mostly, people that benefit from a particular regulation find all sorts of justification to back and maintain the status-quo in order to continue enjoying the benefits. The same applies to gender differentiation. Usually, the male gender hides behind religion to justify the world order in terms of gender roles, gender beliefs, and gender expectations in order to continue enjoying the subservience of the female gender. Martin and Halverson (1981) avow that individuals tend to incorporate societal gender expectations into their self-concept, leading to reinforcement and maintenance of traditional gender roles. This self-perpetuation occurs through the internalisation of gendered beliefs and the tendency to engage in behaviours consistent with one's gender schema.

4.3.5 Evened

The cry for a balance in the traditional roles that are assigned to males and females is at the core of every gender advocacy, otherwise known as feminism. The gender schema theory proposes flexibility. According to Bem (1981), while gender schemas are often presented as rigid and binary (female vs. male), the gender schema theory acknowledges that individuals can possess varying degrees of flexibility in their gender schemas. Some individuals may have

more androgynous or non-conforming gender schemas, allowing them to be more open to a broader range of gender roles and behaviours. Results from the research work indicate that adolescents have inclination towards equal domestic work and equal opportunities outside the home. A greater number of the participants had the perspective of balanced gender roles. That is, roles should be mixed up, where everyone can, and should be able to perform any role at all. There should be no limitation, hinderance, nor favouritism because of gender. The extracts below are in support of such:

> *When gender roles are balanced, both girls and boys will be happy and work together. Example, if Ama is sick, because Kweku knows how to do Ama's job, he will be happy to do it for Ama* (FGD1, P3)

> *Society won't be destabilised if girls are entitled to work. It will help raise the country's income, and stress will be reduced in the family since men will help to cook and women will help with money* (FGD2, P6)

> *If a woman works, she will support the man financially and it will help reduce pressure on the man* (P3)

> *The jobs should be shared among everyone, so everyone has something to do. In the future, they grow up with all such training and have a normal life. Being a boy myself, I don't really like the lifting of objects and other stuff. I will really like to try other things like cooking...* (FGD3, P4)

> *Traditional gender roles should be mixed up because in life, you don't know what will come to you, so it's best you are good at various things. As a girl, you should still know how to do some of the things boys do like weeding, changing the light bulb, and as a boy, you should know how to cook, clean* (P6)

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From the foregoing, it can be established that some important linkages between gender phenomena in childhood and gender phenomena in adulthood are mediated by gender phenomena in adolescence (Perry & Pauletti, 2011) as adolescence is reputed to be a crucial bridge between childhood and adulthood. The schemas formed during childhood begin to either change or get entrenched during this period as adolescent girls and boys continue to interact with the social world and create meanings subjective to their worldviews.

More extracts to support participants' perspectives on the need for traditional gender roles to be mixed up are recorded below:

> *I would love to do other things apart from doing manual jobs, so when I do that as an adult, my child will learn and know how to do other things apart from the manual work* (FGD3, P5)

> *When you stick to one thing, you cannot progress. But when you learn a lot, you can go far in life. Mixed-up roles will favour both genders, but when it is reversed, it will end up being the same thing, just in the opposite way* (FGD3, P6)

> *I will like a change so that girls will do what boys are doing and boys will do what girls are doing, so that maybe when I grow and I get married and I'm pregnant, and I'm at the hospital and we don't have children yet, my husband can clean the house and do other things so that when I return, I won't find the home dirty* (FGD1, P3)

From the findings, almost all the participants are in favour of the gender roles being mixed up for fairness. To them, reversing the roles to favour one gender against the other will cause chaos, and maintaining them as they are should be a thing of the past. Again, from the findings, it is evident majority of the participants - boys and girls alike – will favour an egalitarian life

in future. This disagrees with Mensch et al.'s (2000) discovery which revealed that boys are likely to favour traditional marriage arrangements. This result could be due to inter-generational shifts, modernisation and urbanisation, and/or technological advances as espoused by Dietrich et al. (2021) when they recorded changing attitudes about gender roles and norms.

Finally, the participants were of the view that more liberal means should be used in advocating for gender balance as the radical approaches were not yielding much of the desired results. Some cited the media as the best means of advocacy, citing stories they had read from books on how women can achieve a lot when they are empowered and given opportunities to serve. These findings are in sync with the tenets of the gender schema theories, which argues that children are active learners who essentially socialise themselves. The theory also postulates that a child who lives in a very traditional culture might believe that a woman's role is in the caring and raising of children, while a man's role is in work and industry. The participants for this study do not live in typical traditional cultures, hence they have socialised themselves differently, which is in line with the desires of the advocates of gender equality. This is because the participants have created and modified meanings for themselves through social interactions with other people.

To draw the curtain, in many societies, traditional gender roles dictate specific behaviours, roles, and expectations for males and females. However, not all adolescents conform to these traditional expectations. Some girls may reject or challenge traditional gender roles that confine them to domestic roles or subordinate positions, and instead, aspire to achieve career success, pursue education, or engage in activities traditionally associated with males. They might question the limited roles assigned to women and advocate for gender equality.

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Similarly, adolescent boys may also have varying perspectives. While some might embrace and uphold traditional gender roles, others may reject the notion that masculinity is solely defined by physical strength, aggression, or dominance. They may challenge societal expectations and explore alternative ways of expressing their masculinity, such as embracing emotions, engaging in artistic pursuits, or adopting non-traditional careers.

It is important to note that these perspectives are not fixed or universal. Adolescents' views on gender roles and gender beliefs can change and evolve over time as they navigate their own experiences, interact with diverse individuals and communities, and access information that challenges traditional norms. Some adolescents may experience conflicts between their own desires and societal expectations, leading to feelings of confusion or pressure. Understanding and respecting the perspectives of adolescent girls and boys on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs is crucial for creating an inclusive and equitable society. By promoting open dialogue, providing education on gender diversity, and challenging harmful stereotypes, we can help empower adolescents to shape their own identities and beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes, fostering a future where gender equality is embraced and celebrated.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the findings from the data collected through interviews and focus group discussions on the perspectives of adolescents on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes using the thematic analysis. Relying on the theory of gender performativity (Butler, 1990), the gender schema theory (Bem, 1981) and relevant literature, the chapter identified the roles that adolescents of Accra Grammar School perform; examined the mechanisms for communicating evolving gender roles and beliefs to the adolescents of Accra Grammar School; and also examined the perspectives of adolescents of

Accra Grammar School on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of

gender role attitudes.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. 0 Introduction

This final chapter gives a summary of the study and draws conclusions based on the major findings of the study. Based on the research findings that came out of the gathered data, the chapter also provides recommendations for both academia and stakeholders on how the perspectives of adolescents on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs shape the construction of their gender role attitudes. Furthermore, the limitations of the study as well as suggestions for future research are outlined in this chapter.

5.1 Summary of Main Findings

The study sought to investigate adolescents' perspectives on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes by identifying the roles of adolescents in the construction of gender role attitudes, and recognising some mechanisms through which evolving gender roles are communicated to adolescents. As a result, there was an extensive review of literature upon which the identified research gap was problematised and explained. Data was collected from adolescent girls and boys of Accra Grammar School, a private basic school situated in Oyibi, a sub urban town in the Kpone-Katamanso Municipality in Ghana. The research approach and design for this study were qualitative (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and case study (Yin, 2018) respectively. The participants of the study were selected using the purposive sampling technique (Etikan et al., 2017), specifically the homogeneous sampling (Elmusharaf, 2016). The methods used in collecting data were interviews and focus groups discussions. Data was collected from twenty-six (26) participants.

To analyse the data in a thick rich manner, Braun & Clarke's (2022) thematic analysis approach was used. The analysis also relied on the gender performativity theory (Butler, 1990) and the gender schema theory (Bem, 1981), as well as existing literature. The findings of this study are, therefore, a result of critical iterative analysis of the data gathered.

The first research question (i.e. R.Q. 1) aimed at identifying the roles that adolescents of Accra Grammar School performed in the construction of gender role attitudes. The data gathered for this R.Q was thus thematically analysed using the gender performativity theory and the relevant literature. The themes for R.Q. 1 were age-appropriate roles, helping-hand roles, and gender-specific roles.

It emerged from the data that the roles that girls and boys play were not only gender-based. The participants revealed that they performed age-appropriate roles, helping hand roles, and gender-specific roles. The study found that at home, through observation and performance, adolescents realised that members of their households are assigned roles based on their age. Those children who were younger were assigned lighter roles while older children performed more difficult roles.

The data also revealed that during adolescence, both girls and boys engage in acts of helping others. By performing these helping-hand roles, adolescents contribute to the well-being and the functioning of the family. These helping-hand roles are undertaken by adolescents in their interaction with others in their households. This signifies that helping-hand roles are not inherent or pre-determined, but are rather learned and acted upon. This confirms that all forms of behaviours are learned through performance.

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The study further highlighted the performance of gender-specific roles. During adolescence, both girls and boys engage in behaviors and adopt social roles that align with societal expectations associated with their respective genders. This means that they conform to traditional notions of how males and females should behave, based on cultural norms and stereotypes (Ercan and Uçar, 2021). For adolescent girls, performing gender-specific roles involve conforming to expectations such as being nurturing, submissive, or focused on appearance. They engage in behaviors like taking care of younger siblings, showing interest in fashion and beauty, or displaying more cooperative and emotionally expressive traits. On the other hand, adolescent boys often perform gender-specific roles that align with expectations of masculinity. These roles include being assertive, competitive, and independent. Boys engage in activities seen as traditionally masculine, such as sports and assertive behaviour, and may avoid behaviours associated with femininity due to fear of being labeled as weak or unmanly.

It is important to note that these roles are not biologically predetermined, but rather, are learned and reinforced through socialisation, so they come about as a result of repeated performance (Butler, 1990).

Research question two (i.e. R.Q. 2) was targeted at gathering data on some mechanisms through which evolving gender roles and beliefs are communicated to the adolescents of Accra Grammar School. In answering this research question, the gender schema theory (Bem, 1981) was used, which states that gender schemas are acquired through socialisation processes, from a very young age. Children learn and internalise societal expectations and norms associated with femininity and masculinity. The themes that emerged from the data in

examining the mechanisms for communicating evolving gender roles and beliefs to adolescents were family dynamics, the media, empowerment initiatives and peer interactions.

The data revealed that family dynamics serves as an important channel through which evolving gender roles and beliefs are communicated to adolescents. This is because children spend a significant amount of their formative years with their families. The social interactions, values, and attitudes transmitted by close relations shape a child's perception of gender and influence their subsequent behaviour and identity.

Additionally, the data showed that through various platforms such as television, film, social media, advertising, and news outlets, the media influences perceptions of gender by portraying diverse representations, challenging stereotypes, and promoting inclusive narratives.

The study also highlighted how empowerment initiatives play a crucial role in communicating evolving gender roles and beliefs to adolescents by providing them with opportunities, resources, and support to challenge traditional norms and advocate for gender equality. These initiatives often focus on promoting self-confidence, leadership skills, and critical thinking abilities among adolescents, empowering them to question existing stereotypes and beliefs about gender. By providing workshops, training sessions, and educational materials on topics such as gender equality, consent, healthy relationships, and diversity, these initiatives help adolescents develop a deeper understanding of complex gender issues and encourage them to think critically about societal expectations and norms.

Lastly for R.Q. 2, the study identified that peer interactions within social circles and communities contribute to shaping adolescents' understanding of evolving gender roles. Peer groups provide a space for adolescents to explore different perspectives, challenge

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stereotypes, and develop their own beliefs regarding gender equality, identity, and expression. Through daily interactions with peers, individuals learn and internalise societal norms, expectations, and attitudes related to gender. Also, through discussions, debates, and shared experiences, peers influence one another's understanding of gender and contribute to the ongoing evolution of gender roles and beliefs.

The second research question aided the study to reach a conclusion that adolescents interact with other people and places day in, day out. In their interaction, they function as both observers and participants. Hence, they gather a lot of experiences. All of these turn out to become their lived personal experiences, which guide their future actions and choices. In this sense, gendered characteristics and identities become the interactions of biology, socialisation and self-regulation as posited by Wood and Eagly (2012). Also, values transmission during the primary socialisation and experiences during the course of life, including secondary socialisation processes and daily negotiations between partners and primary groups, contribute to the development of individual value systems. Gender equality value and gender role attitudes are also part of this process (Moen et al., 1997).

The third research question (i.e. R.Q. 3) sought to gather data on the perspectives of the adolescents of Accra Grammar School on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs. To answer this research question, the data was analysed through the lens of the gender schema theory, which declares that gender schemas organise and influence perception. Therefore, gender schemas serve as mental filters that organise information and influence how individuals perceive the world around them. The data revealed that participants had varying views. Adolescent girls and boys viewed traditional gender roles and gender beliefs as exacting, inequitable, inexorable, sacred, and needed to be evened. Though there were varied

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perspectives, the findings revealed that almost all the participants were in favour of the gender roles being mixed up for fairness. To them, reversing the roles to favour one gender against the other will cause chaos, and maintaining them as they are should be a thing of the past. This implies that, according to the findings, majority of the participants - boys and girls alike – will favour an egalitarian life in future.

The participants were also of the view that more liberal means should be used in advocating for gender balance as the radical approaches were not yielding much of the desired results. Some cited the media as the best means of advocacy, citing stories they had read from books on how women can achieve a lot when they are empowered and given opportunities to serve. These findings are in sync with the tenets of the gender schema theory, which argues that children are active learners who essentially socialise themselves.

5.2 Conclusion

The study sought to investigate the perspectives of adolescents of Accra Grammar School on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes. Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions have been drawn;

Firstly, adolescent girls and boys, in the construction of gender role attitudes, engage in several forms of roles. Adolescents perform roles that befit their capabilities based on their age. They are also assigned roles so that they lend a hand to other members in their social circles. Again, adolescents perform tasks based on their gender as they socialise according to their biological make-up.

Secondly, for research question two, the study concludes that evolving gender roles and beliefs are communicated to adolescents through family dynamics, the media, empowerment initiatives and peer interactions.

Thirdly, R.Q. 3 concludes that despite having varying views about traditional gender roles and gender beliefs, adolescent girls and boys will love to have a society where gender roles are evened. They want a balance in the activities that adolescents engage in. They are of the notion that such a society will be a fair one which will ensure progress because all the social actors will help one another towards a common goal. It is, however, important to note that these perspectives are not fixed or universal. Adolescents' views on gender roles and gender beliefs can change and evolve over time as they navigate their own experiences, interact with diverse individuals and communities, and access information about gender norms. Therefore, by promoting open dialogue, providing education on gender diversity, and challenging harmful stereotypes, adolescent girls and boys can be empowered to shape their own identities and beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes, fostering a future where gender equality is embraced and celebrated.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Policy makers, most especially the sector in charge of gender and social protection, should take into consideration the formulation of policies and programmes for adolescents that will help shape their perspectives towards achieving gender equality.

2. In their attempts at bridging the gender gap, feminists and other advocates for gender equity and equality need to target adolescents, especially during the early adolescence (age 10 – 14 years) in order to get them to form schemas regarding fairness and balance so that these schemas would be internalised to become their entrenched world-view.

3. Parents should pay critical attention to the socialisation of their children during adolescence as adolescence is a critical period in the development of gender attitudes and behaviours. Also, the aim of gender socialisation is to reduce gender inequality.

4. Educational and religious institutions should enact and enforce policies that will help achieve gender balance because they are two institutions that wield very great influence over people in society and help shape same.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions are proffered for further studies:

1. This study focused on adolescents that live in sub-urban areas. Hence, their worldview differed from the worldview presumed to be held by children in typical traditional cultures as the gender schema theory postulates. Therefore, further studies can be carried out focusing on adolescents in typical traditional cultures.

2. The current study discovered that adolescents who had one parent away from home observed and internalised a more egalitarian attitude towards the performance of gender roles. Therefore, future research can look at studying, exclusively, the perspectives of adolescents who live with one parent only, to draw conclusions on how living or growing up with one parent shapes the gender beliefs and attitudes of adolescents in the construction of gender role attitudes.

3. Further studies can also be carried out to exclusively investigate if the home is still the pivotal site where gender relations are produced and reproduced as the world is increasingly becoming fast-paced and parents, presumably, spend less time with their children.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study sets out to investigate adolescents' perspectives on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs in the construction of gender role attitudes. Just like every other research project, this study was not without limitations. One clear limitation was the researcher's access to only a small geographical area. The study sampled adolescents from only one private basic school in Oyibi, a suburban town in the Kpone-Katamanso Municipality. Thus, the findings of this research cannot be readily extrapolated to other adolescents in Ghana and the world at large.
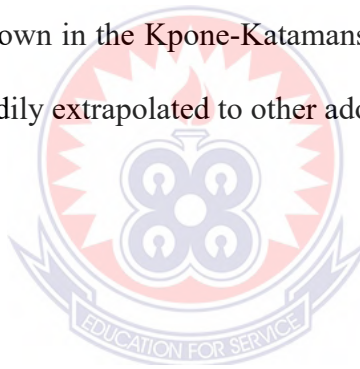
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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

Dear parent,

I am a student of the School of Communication and Media Studies in the University of Education, Winneba. I am pursuing Master of Philosophy in Journalism and Media Studies. For my research work, I am interviewing adolescent girls and boys to know what they think about traditional gender roles and beliefs, and how these views guide them in constructing their own gender role attitudes.

I would be grateful to have your permission to interview your ward for this academic exercise. All responses given will be treated with confidentiality, and the anonymity of the participants will be highly ensured.

Please, sign the document below to give your permission.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

…………………

Joana Yevu.

Informed Consent Statement

I, ……………………………………………………………., give permission for my child, ……………………………………………. to participate in the research project entitled Investigating Adolescents' Perspectives on Traditional Gender Roles and Gender Beliefs in the Construction of Gender Role Attitudes.

Signature of parent/guardian …………………………

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APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

My name is Joana Yevu, an M.Phil. student from University of Education, Winneba. I would like to interview you about your perspectives on traditional gender roles and beliefs, which will serve as data for my research work. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your responses will only be shared in my academic institution and produced as part of my M.Phil. thesis. Please know that you do not have to talk about anything you do not feel right talking about, and you are free to seek clarification on questions you do not understand.

    i.   Kindly, introduce yourself.

Q1. What are the roles that adolescents of Accra Grammar School perform in the construction of gender role attitudes?

    ii.   How many are you in your nuclear family/household?

    iii.   How many males and females?

    iv.   Do both of your parents go to work outside the home?

    v.   What are the roles assigned to each of you at home?

    vi.   What are the reasons for the types of roles assigned to each of you at home?

Q2. How are evolving gender roles and gender beliefs communicated to the adolescents of Accra Grammar School?

    vii.   Apart from your parents or guardians, where else do you see or experience these forms of gender-related division of labour?

viii.   What forms of gender-related roles do you experience or witness at other places you find yourself at, such as school, church, mosque, shrine, market (mall), playground, eatery?

Q3. What are the perspectives of the adolescents of Accra Grammar School on traditional gender roles and gender beliefs?

ix.   What are your views about gender-related division of labour at home?

x.   If you belonged to the opposite gender, what would be your views about the roles that that gender performs?

xi.   What would you do differently about the traditional gender roles if you belonged to the other gender?

xii.   How will you like to raise your children/young ones in terms of gender-related roles when you become a parent/adult?

xiii.   What are your views on the campaigns for gender equality?

xiv.   What do you think will happen to society if traditional gender roles are reversed or mixed up?