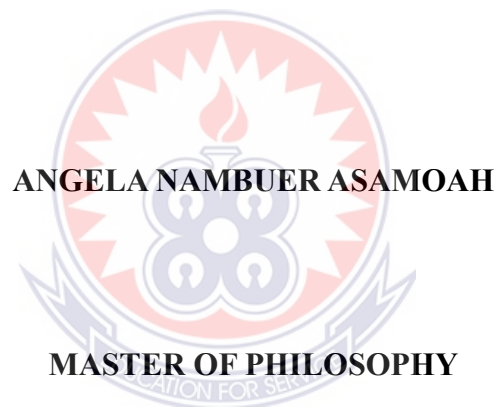**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

SOCIAL MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF FATHERHOOD IN GHANA: AN ANALYSIS OF FATHER'S DAY CELEBRATION POSTS ON FACEBOOK

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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A Dissertation in the Department of Strategic Communication,
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MAY, 2024

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Angela Nambuer Asamoah 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 original work, and it 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. ANDY OFORI-BIRIKORANG

SIGNATURE: ……………………………………………………………

DATE: ……………………………………………………………………

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my late Father, Mr. Anthony Kwame Asamoah.

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Thank you to the Almighty God, for seeing me through the entire duration of this endeavour.

To all the lecturers and staff at the School of Communication and Media Studies, especially my Supervisor, Prof. Andy Ofori-Birikorang, thank you for the knowledge and life lessons learnt. They have, and continue to shape the course of my life and I appreciate it all.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of fathers and portrayal of gender roles in Father's Day posts on Facebook by Ghanaian users. Using a qualitative methodology, the researcher analysed 4,892 relevant posts from 2020-2022. Thematic analysis revealed three dominant themes: appreciation/gratitude for fathers (40.9% of posts), celebrating father figures (38.7%), and remembering deceased fathers (20.4%). These themes challenged the assumptions that Ghanaian fathers are peripheral or authoritarian figures. The representations shifted away from narrow traditional masculine norms by portraying fathers as capable of balancing nurturing care alongside providing financial support and moral guidance. However, the depictions of gender roles were conflicted. While some posts upheld masculine ideals like aggression and female domesticity, others championed caring masculinity and egalitarian co-parenting partnerships. This reflected evolving perspectives embracing more fluid parental responsibilities transcending rigid norms. The analysis concluded that although representations perpetuating patriarchal masculine conventions persisted, some posts promoted progressive conceptualisations aligning with theories of involved fathering's developmental benefits. Therefore, the study recommended the use of educational campaigns, workplace policies, and community programs to reinforce expansive caring fatherhood representations while providing skills training to enable men's hands-on engagement, overcoming systemic gender inequities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Most people's greatest pleasures and displeasures in life revolve around their interactions with other people (Baxter, 2019). A child's bond with their parents or caregivers can be one of the strongest of all human relationships (Waldron & Socha, 2020). Researches on parenting and child development have shown that the quality of children's interactions, especially with their parents, is a significant predictor of their psychosocial functioning and growth (Hardy, 2018; Macht, 2019; Morgenroth et al., 2020).

Fatherhood is an integral part of a child's growth (Morgenroth et al., 2020). Several studies, for example, have shown that positive father involvement is associated with higher academic achievement, greater emotional security, higher self-esteem, fewer behavioural problems, and greater social competence in comparison to children who do not have involved, caring fathers (Leach, 2019; Randles, 2018; Rilling & Mascaro, 2017). Other studies, on the other hand, have associated paternal absence with detrimental consequences on the well-being of their children (Glauber, 2019; Johansson & Andreasson, 2017). Glauber (2019) emphasised that fatherless children struggle with social adjustment and may build a swaggering, threatening demeanour to mask their underlying worries, resentments, anxiety, and misery.

The above findings have fuelled growing consensus in research, policy, and practice that the influence of fathers on their children's development is unique and cannot be overstated (Gatrell et al., 2021). Even while there is growing consensus that fathers have a substantial effect on a child's development, it is getting more challenging to define what a father in the 21st century is (Lancy, 2020; Maslauskaitė & Steinbach, 2021). Lancy

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(2020), for example, stresses that societal norms and family structures have changed significantly in recent years, making the definition of a "father" more complex. He asserts that with the rise of single-parent households, blended families, same-sex parent families, and other non-traditional family arrangements, the traditional notion of a father as the biological father living in the same household as his children has become less prevalent (Lancy, 2020). This has led to a broader understanding of fatherhood that includes non-biological fathers and father figures (Lancy, 2020).

Maslauskait and Steinbach (2021), who likewise allude to the increasing complication of the definition of fatherhood in recent years, mention the phenomenon of shared parenting and stay-at-home fathers as some of the causes of this complexity. On the issue of shared parenting, Maslauskait and Steinbach (2021) found that in some instances, biologically unrelated parents would share equal parental obligations. This has led to a more nuanced understanding of the role of fathers in child development, challenging the notion of the father as the sole provider and enforcer. On the issue of stay-at-home fathers, Maslauskait and Steinbach (2021) concluded that as more women have entered the workforce, the number of stay-at-home fathers has increased, challenging traditional gender roles and the notion of the father as the primary breadwinner. Maslauskait and Steinbach (2021) emphasised that this new phenomenon of stay-at-home fathers has helped shift perceptions of what a father is and how important their involvement is in children's lives.

The scholastic deliberations over the extent to which the definition of a father is evolving stem from the fact that the conventional definition of a father has broadened to include anyone who assumes or accepts the role of a father and acts as such toward another person at any given time (Lancy, 2020; Mari, 2017; Scheibling, 2018). Thus, a person, typically a man, can be a father to his wife, certain relatives, or anybody else (Mari, 2017;

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Scheibling, 2018). Additionally, a man can become a father through adoption, marriage, or cohabitation with someone who already has children (Scheibling, 2018). What is important to note here is that regardless of how one becomes a father, the notion of fatherhood entails the responsibility and privilege of caring for an individual and playing a significant role in their life. It is a lifelong commitment with both joys and challenges (Hewlett, 2017; Smith, 2020).

The mass media has had a significant impact on how society understands and views fathers (Bowles, 2020). Various authors have suggested that the mass media reflects society's values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours (Aufderheide, 2017; Garnham, 2021; Smith, 2020). One of the ways the mass media reflects society is through its representations (Moran et al., 2020). Media representation refers to how different groups, individuals, and issues are portrayed in the media (Moran et al., 2020). The media's representation of different groups, individuals, and issues can shape public perceptions and influence the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of those who consume it (Aufderheide, 2017; Moran et al. 2020). Positive representation in the media can have a positive impact on individuals and groups by promoting more accurate and diverse representations of different groups and promoting understanding and acceptance of those who are different (Smith, 2020). On the other hand, negative representation in the media can contribute to harmful stereotypes and prejudice, leading to further marginalisation and discrimination of certain groups (Garnham, 2021).

According to Woods (2018), the emergence of the mass media can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when new technologies and innovations in communication and transportation paved the way for the widespread dissemination of information. One of the earliest forms of mass media was the telegraph, which allowed

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for the rapid transmission of information over long distances (Woods, 2018). This was followed by the invention of the telephone, which made voice communication over long distances possible (Starker, 2017). These advancements, along with the growth of rail and sea transportation, made it possible for news and information to be distributed quickly and efficiently across vast distances (Meindl, 2021; Starker, 2017). Radio was the next form of mass media to emerge, with the first commercial radio station launching in 1920 (Meindl, 2021). Radio provided a new way for people to receive news and entertainment, and its reach was further expanded with the introduction of portable and car radios (Meindl, 2021).

Television emerged in the mid-20th century, revolutionising the way people received information and entertainment (Kowalski, 2020). Television sets became widespread in households, and television networks emerged to provide programming for audiences (Kowalski, 2020). The impact of television on society was profound, as it became a primary source of information, news, and entertainment for people around the world (Kowalski, 2020). The newspaper industry also underwent significant changes during this period, with the introduction of new printing technologies and the widespread use of the telegraph and telephone for gathering and distributing news (Dunaway & Graber, 2022). The newspaper became an important source of information for many people, and its reach was further expanded with the introduction of affordable subscriptions and home delivery (Dunaway & Graber, 2022).

The Internet emerged in the late 20th century, revolutionising the way people access and share information (Meeker & Wu, 2018). The World Wide Web, a system of interlinked hypertext documents, was invented in 1989, and the first web browsers were released in the early 1990s (Malamud, 2017). The Internet has since become a primary source of

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information and entertainment for millions of people around the world (Malamud, 2017; Meeker & Wu, 2018). One of the most significant aspects of the Internet is its ability to provide instant access to information (Meeker & Wu, 2018). With a few clicks of a mouse, people can access an incredible amount of knowledge and data on just about any topic (Meeker & Wu, 2018). This has led to a new era of learning and information sharing, where anyone can learn about virtually anything, anywhere, and at any time (Malamud, 2017; Meeker & Wu, 2018). The Internet has created a global library that is constantly growing, making it easier for people to stay informed, expand their knowledge, and connect with others (Malamud, 2017).

Another key aspect of the Internet is its ability to connect people. It has made it possible for people from all over the world to communicate with each other in real time, regardless of their physical location (Alaba et al., 2017). This has led to the creation of social media platforms, where people can share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences with others (Alaba et al., 2017; Greengard, 2021). It has also enabled remote work, which has made it possible for people to work from anywhere, at any time (Greengard, 2021). The Internet has created new opportunities for people to collaborate, build communities, and form relationships with others (Alaba et al., 2017; Greengard, 2021). In addition to connecting people and providing access to information, the Internet has also revolutionised the way businesses operate (Li et al., 2019). It has made it possible for companies to reach new markets and customers, streamline their operations, and lower their costs (Li et al., 2019). Online commerce has grown dramatically, with e-commerce sales expected to reach $18 trillion by 2025 (Magomedov, 2022). The Internet has created new opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses to succeed and has made it easier for consumers to purchase goods and services from the comfort of their own homes (Magomedov, 2022).

The widespread adoption of smartphones and other mobile devices has enabled people to stay connected through the Internet in contemporary times (Chen & Wang, 2017; Jenkins, 2019). As a result, social media has become the centre of the Internet in today's world, transforming the way people interact with each other, consume information, and form opinions (Auxier & Anderson, 2018; Chen & Wang, 2017). According to Auxier and Anderson (2018), the use of social media has become so prevalent in all facets of contemporary life that some scholars even believe that it is impossible to imagine life without it. The term "social media" refers to a collection of interactive media technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, and other forms of communication through virtual communities and networks (Jenkins, 2019). There are more than 4.5 billion users of social media platforms around the world (Auxier & Anderson, 2018).

The power of social media is its ability to allow users to co-create content, connect, and share information with anyone across the world (Jenkins, 2019). There are reportedly millions of web-based and mobile applications that allow for the co-creation of social media content and information (Welnar, 2021). According to Welnar (2021), the utilisation of a seemingly infinite number of websites and mobile applications that focus on providing a variety of curated experiences, thereby catering to a vast number of needs for their users, is what has made it possible for social media to evolve into an essential part of the lives of many people in the modern world (Welnar, 2021). Social media has become one of the most powerful forces in the world, changing the way people interact with each other, consume news, form opinions and even how different groups, individuals, and issues are portrayed in the media (Donadio, 2017; Kaya, 2020). As such, communication scholars have acknowledged that social media platforms not only enable

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their users to create, publish, and share their ideas and emotions about issues, but also reflect the users' attitudes, opinions, and beliefs (Dasgupta, 2020).

While social media allows its users to freely express themselves in any way they see fit and assume any identity they desire (Sabatier & Huveneers, 2019), the users can also share whatever opinions they have about others due to the unrestricted nature of the platform (Dasgupta, 2020). As a result, people are more inclined to say more on social media than in person (Sabatier & Huveneers, 2019). According to Wachs and Wright (2018), when people have the opportunity to decouple their actions from their real-world identity, they feel less vulnerable about revealing themselves. This phenomenon is known as the disinhibition effect (Wachs & Wright, 2018). The disinhibition effect refers to the lack of restraint one experiences when communicating online as opposed to face-to-face (Wachs & Wright, 2018). It illustrates how the absence of physical contact in online environments makes people more likely to share information (Wachs & Wright, 2018). Due to the anonymising effects of social media platforms, its users freely project their unique perspectives on societal issues, individuals, and events onto the content they either consume or share (Wachs & Wright, 2018; Sabatier & Huveneers, 2019).

How social media users represent real-world institutions, societal issues and people has led to a broader discussion on media representation, in general (Williams, 2019). That is because social media representations and traditional media representations are fundamentally different in their nature and purpose (Anzai, 2018; Hayes, 2020). Social media representations are user-generated and reflect the experiences of individuals, while traditional media representations are created by journalists and media organisations and are selected by gatekeepers who decide what stories are important to highlight (Anzai,

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2018; Hayes, 2020). These differences have important implications for the way people perceive the world and the events that take place in it (Hayes, 2020).

Social media representations reflect the experiences of users, who can create and share content about their lives, thoughts, and experiences with a global audience (Anzai, 2018; Moran et al. 2020). This has created a more diverse and representative view of the world, as people can share their perspectives and opinions on current events and issues (Anzai, 2018; Moran et al. 2020). In contrast, traditional media representations are the selected experiences chosen by gatekeepers to be highlighted (Moran et al. 2020; Williams, 2019). These gatekeepers, who may be journalists, editors, or media organisations, decide what stories are important and what perspectives are worthy of being heard (Williams, 2019). This has led to a situation where the news often reflects the interests and perspectives of the people in power, rather than the experiences of the people it purports to represent (Williams, 2019). This can lead to a narrow and biased view of the world, where certain perspectives are privileged and others are ignored (Moran et al. 2020; Williams, 2019).

The revolution in social media representations has challenged traditional media representations, as people are turning to social media as their primary source of information and entertainment (Bardici, 2021; Sabatier & Huveneers, 2019). Social media has created a more democratic and representative view of the world, as people can share their experiences and perspectives in real time (Sabatier & Huveneers, 2019). This has led to a situation where traditional media organisations are struggling to keep up, as they are facing increased competition from user-generated content and are losing their monopoly on information and entertainment (Bardici, 2021). Furthermore, some scholars have argued that the revolution of social media representations on traditional media representations, creating a more diverse and representative view of the world, necessitates

further critical examination because the full scope of social media representations and user-generated content is not yet fully comprehended (Luhr, 2020; Williams, 2019; Thetcher, 2021).

1.1 Father's Day Celebrations

Father's Day celebration is becoming increasingly popular in Ghana (Issahaku, 2020). Every year, an increasing number of people set aside this day to honour the men in their lives (Issahaku, 2020). It has evolved into a day for children to express gratitude to their fathers and father figures (Abdullah et al., 2019). It is also a day for adults to express their love and gratitude for their fathers' and husbands' sacrifices (Abdullah et al., 2019). Father's Day is observed on the third Sunday of June each year in many countries around the world, including Ghana (López et al., 2020).

The earliest documented Father's Day celebration happened on July 5, 1908, in Fairmont, West Virginia, following the deaths of hundreds of men in the deadliest mining accident in US history. A Sunday service was held that year to commemorate the people who had died (Jackson, 2016). A key figure in the earliest documented Father's Day celebration was Mrs. Grace Golden Clayton, the daughter of a dedicated reverend (Dahmer, 2019). While missing her dad in the mining disaster, Mrs Clayton wanted to pay tribute to the many fathers who had perished. Although the Fairmont service was the first known to honour fathers, it did not turn into an annual event, nor was the idea promoted (Dahmer, 2019).

Father's Day did not gain popularity until Mrs. Sonora Smart Dodd did so, igniting a chain of events that resulted in Father's Day being a federal holiday in the United States (Mayer, 2020). It began as she sat listening to a Mother's Day lecture in 1909 (Mayer,

2020). Mrs. Dodd thought that it might be nice to honour fathers as well. Her father, William Smart, had raised his six children alone on his farm in Washington when his wife died while giving birth (Mayer, 2020). Mrs Dodd proposed that Father's Day be observed by the Spokane Ministerial Association and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) (Mayer, 2020). The 5th of June was chosen because it was her father's birthday (Mayer, 2020). The proposal was well received, but the good pastors of Spokane requested that the date be changed to give them more time to write sermons on the unexplored subject of fathers (Mayer, 2020). The first Father's Day was commemorated on June 19, 1910 (the third Sunday in June) in Spokane, Washington, and it became an annual event thereafter. Soon, the celebrations spread to other towns and countries (Mayer, 2020).

During annual international days such as the International Day of Education, the World Day of Social Justice, International Women's Day, Mothers' Day, and Fathers' Day, among others, social media platforms have emerged as viable outlets for user experiences and interpretations of these global events (Abdullah et al., 2019). Social media has become a platform for people to express their emotions, opinions, and experiences, and it is not surprising to see a spike in activity related to these global events (Luhr, 2020). The content shared on social media on these days is often curated to present a celebratory outlook, as people want to express the experiences associated with the occasion (Luhr, 2020). Users express their experiences, emotions, and relationships with the occasion through a plethora of posts, comments, and images related to the day (López et al., 2020).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The proliferation of social media has led to a democratisation of the production and distribution of content, which has enabled users to more freely express their opinions than

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they were able to through face-to-face interactions (Wachs & Wright, 2019). In the context of family socialisation, this has opened up new possibilities for examining the depiction of parental interactions in the public domain (Hayes, 2020). It has also highlighted parent-child relationships and experiences in ways that may not have been possible, or at least prominent, before the widespread usage of social media (Williams, 2019). Over the last ten years, representations of parents have become increasingly common across various social media platforms (Dasgupta, 2020). These depictions of parents typically take place within the context of dominant contemporary discourses, which are, in many ways, about gender roles and parenting practices (Auxier & Anderson, 2018; Tankovska, 2020).

Auxier and Anderson (2018), for instance, analysed social networking site usage patterns among parents and found that mothers engage in online photo-sharing behaviours more frequently than fathers. What at first appeared to be a generic online parenting behaviour in terms of photo sharing is, in essence, gendered (Auxier & Anderson, 2018). The gendered nature of online parenting activities was emphasised even further by Mackenzie's (2021) study. Mackenzie (2021) investigated parents' online experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that the advent of the global pandemic in 2020, which necessitated the physical separation of families, made online communication a more practical option and intensified the gendered trends in parents' online activities significantly (Mackenzie, 2021).

According to Mackenzie (2021), although fathers predominantly used social media to stay in touch with physically distant friends and family members, mothers on the other hand, increasingly turned to sharing family-related content. It is important to note that these gendered online behaviours provided analysts and researchers insight into gender

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conceptions and how they are mediated in a neoliberal setting by the affordances of social media platforms (Auxier & Anderson, 2018; Mackenzie, 2021).

Ghana's situation has been no different (Adu-Gyamfi, 2018; Alhassan & Ridwan, 2021). However, there are two ways to look at Ghana's situation. First, Ghana's internet penetration rate and the number of registered internet users have been rapidly increasing over the past decade (Alhassan & Ridwan, 2021). According to Statista (2021), Ghana's internet penetration rate is currently at 53% (up from 45% in 2019), and in the third quarter of 2022, 89.9% of Ghanaians were connected to the internet, with Facebook accounting for nearly 62% of total internet usage. Second, research on family and parenting has been largely gendered (Adu-Gyamfi, 2018; Gbogbo, 2021; Hiadzi & Boafo, 2020), with little empirical assessment of how Ghana's increasing rate of social media adoption is influencing the online representation of family and parents (Gbogbo, 2021).

For example, Hiadzi and Boafo (2020) examined Ghana's family structures and child-rearing traditions among patrilineal and matrilineal systems. The study indicated that, as a result of the rural-to-urban migration-fueled changes in Ghana, women now play active roles in providing for their families. As a result, the male breadwinner ideal in Ghana, although still upheld, no longer reflects the lived experiences of all couples (Hiadzi & Boafo, 2020). In light of this shift, the conventional gender roles of the father and mother in Ghana's family system are also changing (Hiadzi & Boafo, 2020). To buttress what Hiadzi and Boafo (2020) found, Gbogbo (2021) looked into masculinity and social change in Ghana. The study found that gender roles and masculinity norms have undergone both modifications and continuity (Gbogbo, 2021). The study also found that, while the gendered division of economic and domestic chores is changing, little is known

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about its potential implications for how Ghanaian men, who are considered the family system's main pillars, understand and practise fatherhood in the 21st century (Gbogbo, 2021).

Gbogbo (2021) therefore recommended that further studies have to be conducted on contemporary fatherhood conceptions and portrayals in Ghana to further understand the potential for appropriation of new norms by fathers and the contradictions between these norms and traditional ideals of masculinity. Furthermore, Gbogbo (2021) cited social media as a promising space for investigating contemporary fatherhood conceptions and portrayals in Ghana. His reasoning stems from other scholars' research, such as that of Auxier and Anderson (2018) and Chen and Wang (2017), who found that social media has become an essential tool for people in recent years to connect, share their experiences, and express their opinions on various social realities. Mackenzie (2021), in particular, indicated that social media has emerged as an effective platform for exploring social issues such as fatherhood.

While there has been some research on digital communication and family-centred content (some of which has been highlighted in the preceding instances), it is important to emphasise that the majority of these studies have focused on mothers (Capdevila et al., 2021; Gbogbo, 2021; Tankovska, 2020). For instance, Capdevila et al. (2021) found that Mother's Day festivities had progressively transitioned online. The authors discovered that Mother's Day generated more posts on Facebook than any other topic on a single day in 2020 (Capdevila et al., 2021). They also observed that the majority of postings were made by their children, while friends, relatives, and followers commented on them (Capdevila et al., 2021).

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Tankovska (2020) also looked at the ways in which social media facilitates mother-to-mother communication and support during pregnancy through practices like pregnancy tracking, app-based child development journaling, and mother-focused online forum interactions. Tankovska's (2021) study revealed that pregnant mothers tend to post content about their pregnancy. Tankovska (2021) noted that while this trend among expectant mothers may result in the indiscriminate sharing of pregnancy-related content, it also provides a forum for pregnant women to discuss their experiences and receive support and counsel from professionals and other pregnant women. In addition, Tankovska (2021) noted that while these results shed insight into how mothers communicate online, few comparable studies are focusing on fathers.

Given the foregoing, further research on the role of social media in contemporary fatherhood constructs and representations in Ghana will provide an empirical foundation on how Ghana's increasing rate of social media usage is shaping the representation of fatherhood (Gbogbo, 2021). It will also serve as a foundation for a critical evaluation of how the gendered division of the Ghanaian family structure is changing, as well as the cultural ramifications for how Ghanaians understand and practise fatherhood in the 21st century (Gbogbo, 2021). The current study, therefore, aimed to analyse Father's Day representation on social media to get a sense of how fathers are portrayed in contemporary Ghanaian society. The study focused on Father's Day posts shared on Facebook from 2020 to 2022.

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the foundation established by the statement of the problem, this study sought to:

1. Identify the dominant issues that emerged from the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians.

2. Examine how fathers were represented in the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians.

3. Determine how gender roles were portrayed in the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the dominant issues that emerged from the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians?

2. How were fathers represented in the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians?

3. How were gender roles portrayed in the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians?
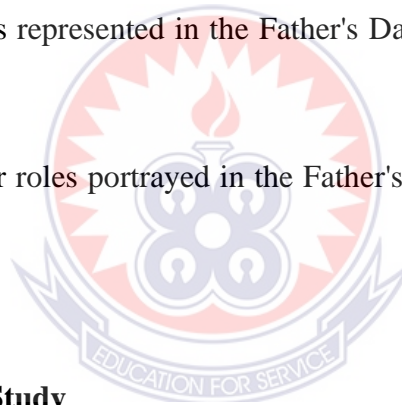
1.5 Significance of the Study

Since the advent of the internet in the early 1990s, the number of people all over the world who are connected to the internet has soared from millions to billions (Curran et al. 2019). During the same period, social media have become an integral component of worldwide public life, engaging a multitude of actors, including ordinary citizens, activists, nongovernmental organisations, telecommunications companies, software providers, and governments, among others (Chen & Wang, 2021). For this reason, social media remains a crucial and pervasive means of digital and virtual communication for billions of people all over the world, and as a result, its influence on virtually all facets of life is almost unmatched (Kaya, 2020). Researching the social media portrayal of fatherhood in

contemporary Ghanaian society is therefore beneficial to a wide range of stakeholders in several ways.

This study will, first and foremost, contribute new knowledge to the existing body of literature on the subject of social media and the gender dynamics of contemporary family life discourses. It will provide fresh perspectives on the changing roles and expectations of men within Ghanaian families in the 21st century (Thussu, 2020). Social media platforms, such as Facebook offer a unique opportunity for researchers to gain insights into the experiences and perspectives of individuals on a large scale. This will lead to a better understanding of how gender dynamics are being shaped and reshaped in response to contemporary social, cultural, and technological changes (Lechner, 2019). Additionally, this study will contribute to the understanding of how family dynamics are being impacted by technology and other emerging trends. It will also pave the way for additional research to be conducted on how contemporary representations of family bonds and expectations particularly, in developing nations, are shaped by online communication and technology.

Secondly, given that social media platforms are now at the forefront of both global communication and the consumption of news, having a basic understanding of how these platforms work is of the utmost significance in the contemporary world (Welnar, 2021). The degree to which a user has fully grasped the underpinnings of social media and his or her role in co-creating digital realities is directly correlated to the degree to which the user can be a critical thinker about posts on social media platforms (Welnar, 2021). The findings and recommendations of this study would be beneficial to users and enthusiasts of social media in general as it will help them understand their role in constructing gender

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and it will also help them to have a basic understanding of how these platforms facilitate their representations of parenting on international days such as Father's Day.

Last but not least, governments and civil society organisations focused on family life cannot sidestep their responsibilities to assist people in realising their full parental potential (Gatrell et al., 2021). The importance of parenting as a function of the State has increased dramatically from a rights viewpoint in social policy to commanding the ideological backing of several political parties in a considerable number of developing nations (Anzai, 2021). Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to assert that there is a national consensus in developing nations regarding the role of the State in assisting and regulating families in their efforts to raise children (Anzai, 2021). This study contributes to the discussion on the governance of families by focusing on how concerns about policing might help enable the influence of fathers on the development of their children. In addition, this research shed light on how fathers can be encouraged to participate in their children's upbringing so that they can reap the many benefits that come along with this type of involvement. In addition, the results of this research can be utilised by fathers as a very beneficial resource in their daily lives. It can provide them with a fundamental understanding of the expectations that their children and the public at large have of them.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was limited to Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians. This study focused exclusively on Father's Day posts shared from 2020 to 2022. This research did not take into account the comments or other interactions that took place in response to the Father's Day postings that were sampled for this study. The findings of the study were discussed solely in terms of the kinds of messages conveyed by the posts and how gender roles were portrayed.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

The study consists of five chapters. The first chapter serves as the introduction. It includes the study's background, objectives, research questions, significance, scope, and organisation of the study. The second chapter is devoted to a literature review. It also discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the study. The third chapter describes the data collection methods used for analysis. In addition, the third chapter outlines the research approach, research design, sample and sampling techniques, methods of data collection, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis. The findings and analyses of the data are discussed in the fourth chapter. Using the theories discussed in the second chapter, the findings were organised into themes and examined. The fifth chapter presents the summary and conclusion of the findings. It also highlights recommendations for further studies.
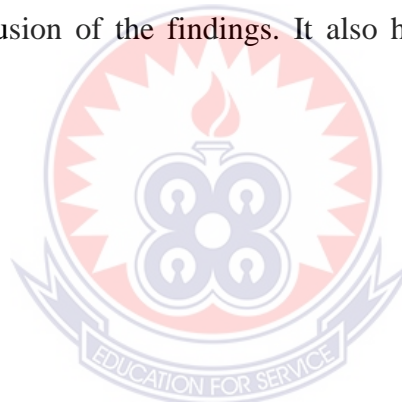
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed various studies related to social media usage and representations of paternal involvement and also discusses hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical framework for the study. These are intended to help situate the current research work in context.

2.1 Overview of Social Media

The origin of the term "social media" remains a contentious topic in many scholarly works (e.g., Aichner et al., 2019; Glover et al., 2021; Grieve et al. 2018). Despite this, Tsao et al. (2021) report that the expression "social media" was first introduced by Darrell Berry in Tokyo, Japan in 1994, during the development of Matisse, an online media platform. Throughout the years, there has been a significant increase in both the number of social media platforms and the number of individuals actively utilising them, thereby solidifying their position as one of the most important mass communication tools in the contemporary world (Aichner et al., 2019; Auxier & Anderson, 2021; Tsao et al., 2021). It is projected that the number of global social media users, which was estimated at 4.26 billion in 2021, will nearly double and reach close to six billion by 2027 (Statista, 2022).

Auxier and Anderson (2021) posit that social media has emerged as a highly sought-after means of mass communication in the contemporary age. This is due to its ability to facilitate the sharing of information and communication between businesses, organisations, and individuals with ease. This is especially important in today's rapidly evolving and interconnected world where information can be disseminated rapidly

through various social media platforms (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Social media platforms also allow people to connect with others who have similar interests, and to engage in discussions about various topics (Grieve et al. 2018). This can be especially useful for people who live in isolated areas, or who may not have access to traditional forms of mass communication such as television or radio (Grieve et al. 2018).

The utilisation of social media platforms as a means for promoting social change has become increasingly evident, particularly in the organisation of political movements and protests across the globe (Auter & Fine, 2017; Fuchs, 2021; Zhuravskaya & Petrova, 2020). According to Auter and Fine (2017), social media has proven to be an effective tool in raising awareness and mobilising individuals to address a multitude of issues. Auter and Fine (2017) explored how the U.S. Senate candidates utilise social media for mobilisation and fundraising. According to the study, nearly all candidates engage in some level of social media campaigning. This is because social media offers many advantages over traditional media tools (Auter & Fine, 2017). Auter and Fine (2017) indicated that the utilisation of social media by politicians enables them to circumvent the gatekeeping function of conventional media. This direct interaction with the public allows politicians to manage the content of their messages without the threat of journalistic distortion or manipulation from other forms of media.

According to Kaya (2020), social media has revolutionised how corporate and religious organisations conduct their daily operations. The author notes that these organisations have transitioned their projects and initiatives to social media platforms, demonstrating the profound impact of social media on modern-day business practices (Kaya, 2020). He highlights that the existence of organisations and users on social media platforms has resulted in a transformation of the way organisations interact with their target audience.

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This has allowed the audience to move beyond a passive role in their relationship with organisations (Kaya, 2020). Social media has facilitated audience engagement by allowing them to offer feedback, inquire about their concerns, and receive prompt and personalised responses to the challenges they encounter (Kaya, 2020). Due to the active role audiences play on social media, Kaplan and Haenlein (2015) argue the term "users" is more appropriate for social media audiences as they are active participants on the platform, rather than passive recipients. This shift in the audience's role has led businesses to re-evaluate their relationship with the market, recognising that end users can either be allies or adversaries, rather than simply being passive audiences (Kaya, 2020).

According to the study conducted by Valkenburg et al. (2020), the widespread use of social media platforms by businesses has proven to be a valuable tool for them in terms of disseminating information, updates and promotions to their followers. Additionally, can effectively reach specific demographics through targeted advertising. The authors noted that with the assistance of social media analytics, businesses can track the performance of marketing campaigns, analyse customer behaviour, and enhance their marketing strategy (Valkenburg et al., 2020). Social media analytics is the process of collecting, measuring, and analysing data from social media platforms to understand the performance of social media campaigns and the behaviour of social media users (Sivarajah, 2020; Valkenburg et al., 2020). This includes tracking metrics such as the number of likes, shares, and comments on social media posts, as well the number of clicks on links and calls to action (Sivarajah, 2020; Valkenburg et al., 2020).

Despite the numerous advantages that social media provides to society, the debate surrounding its definition continues to persist. Numerous experts have put forth differing definitions, with some emphasising the technology and platforms used such as websites and apps (Duggan & Smith, 2013; Lenhart et al., 2010), while others focus on the social

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interactions and connections established through these platforms (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Some definitions highlight the role of social media in facilitating communication and information exchange (DeVito, 2017), while others emphasise its use for marketing and advertising purposes (Duffett, 2017; Tuten & Solomon, 2017). In the context of this current study, the definition of social media encompasses a wide range of online platforms including blogs, business networks, collaborative projects, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, product reviews, social bookmarking, social gaming, video sharing, and virtual worlds (Roberti, 2018). These interactive Internet applications facilitate the creation, curation, and sharing of user-generated content (Roberti, 2018). The term "user-generated content" refers to any type of content published by the users of a website, social media platform, or online service, rather than by the service provider (Zhuravskaya & Petrova, 2020). This content may take various forms such as text, photos, videos, and other media (Zhuravskaya & Petrova, 2020).

Social media, as defined above, encompasses a vast array of platforms that share similar characteristics yet exhibit differences in their architecture, structure, norms, and user bases (Dasgupta, 2020). To better understand these differences, researchers have classified social media into subcategories, such as social networking sites and microblogging sites (Hayes, 2021; Sabatier & Huveneers, 2019). Social networking sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google+, allow users to create profiles, connect with friends or colleagues, and share content in the form of photos and updates (Sabatier & Huveneers, 2019). Conversely, microblogging sites, like Twitter, enable users to share brief updates or thoughts in the form of text or short videos (Sabatier & Huveneers, 2019). In his study, Hayes (2021) classified different types of online platforms into photo-sharing sites, video-sharing sites, and blogging platforms. Photo-sharing sites, such as

Instagram and Flickr, provide users with the ability to upload and view photographs, often with editing and filter options. Meanwhile, video-sharing sites like YouTube and Vimeo serve as online spaces for individuals and communities to upload and view videos. Lastly, blogging platforms like WordPress and Blogger allow users to create and publish their blog articles for personal or professional purposes.

Recently, other researchers have uncovered new classifications for social media platforms, including marketplaces, discussion forums, and review and rating websites (Dasgupta, 2020; Jain et al., 2019). These platforms offer unique features to users, allowing them to participate in various online activities. Review and rating websites, such as Yelp and TripAdvisor, allow users to provide feedback on businesses, products, and services, helping others make informed decisions (Jain et al., 2019). Discussion forums, like Reddit and Quora, provide a platform for online discussions and debates on a wide range of topics (Dasgupta, 2020). Electronic marketplaces, such as eBay, Amazon, and Tonaton in Ghana, allow users to buy and sell products and services (Ansong & Boateng, 2019; Dasgupta, 2020; Jain et al., 2019). These social media platforms serve as an innovative marketplace for consumers and businesses alike.

2.2 Overview of Facebook

The current study focuses on Facebook, which Sabatier and Huveneers (2019) categorise as a social networking site. Facebook is one of the largest online communities worldwide (Kujur & Singh, 2020). It was launched in 2004 and since then, it has transformed the way people communicate, share information and connect (Meier & Schäfer, 2018). Facebook provides a platform for users to create a personal profile, share posts and photos, join groups and connect with friends (Kujur & Singh, 2020; Meier & Schäfer, 2018). In the context of Ghana, Facebook has played a significant role in shaping the

country's online landscape. A recent study conducted by Ansong and Boateng (2019) found that Facebook is the most popular social media platform in Ghana with a user base of over 10 million people. This study also revealed that Facebook has been instrumental in connecting people from different regions, providing a platform for political discourse, and facilitating business opportunities for entrepreneurs (Ansong & Boateng, 2019). The study also highlighted the impact of Facebook on Ghanaian society (Ansong & Boateng, 2019). The platform has been a tool for spreading awareness, breaking news and fostering public discourse (Ansong & Boateng, 2019).

Additionally, Facebook has emerged as a vital tool for small businesses to expand their reach and promote their offerings, resulting in a boost in sales and prosperity (Ansong & Boateng, 2019; Sapei, 2021). Research further highlights that Facebook serves as a powerful means of online activism and advocacy, as it enables users to express their views and raise consciousness regarding crucial social matters (Ansong & Boateng, 2019; Sapei, 2021). However, like all other platforms, Facebook also has its drawbacks (Sapei, 2021). According to Sapei (2021), the platform has been a source of cyberbullying, the spreading of fake news, and data privacy issues. The author recommended that users need to be more discerning about the information they share and be aware of their privacy settings (Sapei, 2021).

Concerning this study, it is crucial to acknowledge the pervasiveness of social media, particularly Facebook, in contemporary life. The influence of these platforms extends to various aspects of society, ranging from personal relationships to public life. Hence, conducting a review on social media aids the current study to better understand the underlying mechanisms and societal impacts of these platforms, including the significant role they play in representing social reality. Furthermore, a review of social media posts

serves to enlighten the current research on the patterns and tendencies in social media usage. Similarly, an examination of existing research on the topic provides insight into the most prevalent features of Facebook, particularly regarding how users utilise it. This valuable knowledge can be applied to comprehending user interactions on the platform, their perception of Facebook's content, and their engagement with others.

2.3 The Ghanaian Social Media Landscape

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a United Nations agency that monitors the usage of the Internet and social media globally, reported that in 2021, the Internet penetration rate in Africa reached approximately 34% (ITU, 2021). This indicates that nearly one-third of the African population was able to access the Internet by the close of 2020 (ITU, 2021). Additionally, there has been a growing trend in the utilisation of social media in Africa in recent years (Nyagadza, 2021). According to recent estimates, approximately 45% of the African population utilised social media platforms in 2020 (Conroy-Krutz & Koné, 2021; Nyagadza, 2021). Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the level of Internet and social media utilisation in Africa can fluctuate significantly among nations (Conroy-Krutz & Koné, 2021). Some African countries have observed a substantial increase in Internet and social media usage, while others have not (Conroy-Krutz & Koné, 2021).

Ghana has made significant strides in Internet and social media usage, according to data from the ITU and World Bank. As of 2021, Ghana boasts an Internet penetration rate of 49.2%, surpassing the African average of 35% (ITU, 2021). Furthermore, Ghana ranks highly in social media usage, with a social media penetration rate of 63.2%, outpacing the African average of 43% (World Bank, 2021). A growing trend of social media utilisation has been noted in recent years, with 79% of internet users in Ghana engaging

in social media, predominantly through the top five platforms: Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter, as reported by the Pew Research Center in 2021.

Studies conducted by Adomako and Oppong (2018) and Manu et al. (2021) have delved into the reasons behind social media utilisation in Ghana. Adomako and Oppong's study, in particular, revealed that the most common reasons for social media usage in Ghana include entertainment, staying in touch with loved ones, and obtaining current news and information. Additionally, the study discovered that gender plays a role in social media usage, with women reporting higher usage for socialising and seeking information, while men reported higher usage for entertainment and leisure activities (Adomako & Oppong, 2018). Manu et al. (2021) also delved into the impact of social media on education in Ghana and found that it has several significant effects on the education system. For instance, it has improved communication and collaboration between students and teachers, providing a platform for the exchange of ideas, resources, and feedback in real time, thus enhancing the learning experience. Furthermore, social media provides students with an array of learning materials and resources and keeps them updated on recent events and advancements in their field of study (Manu et al., 2021).

Studies have shown that social media plays a crucial role in political engagement in Ghana. Agbakpe and Dzakpasu (2018) conducted research which revealed a strong correlation between social media usage and increased political participation. Participants in the study reported that they used social media as a source of political news and to engage in discussions about politics. This was echoed by Sulemana and Agyapong (2019) who also found significant impacts of social media on political engagement in Ghana. The study examined the correlation between social media usage and increased voter turnout in Ghana's 2016 presidential election. The authors found that social media has led

to an increase in political participation, amplified voices and improved transparency. These platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, provided a means for more individuals to become involved in the political process. They enable people to express their views, share information, and engage with political candidates. Furthermore, social media gave a voice to marginalised groups and individuals, who may not have had a platform to share their views in the past. This resulted in greater representation and diversity in political discourse (Sulemana & Agyapong, 2019).

The impact of social media on the business sector in Ghana has also been substantial. As demonstrated by a study conducted by Kuma and Ampadu (2017), the utilisation of social media has been linked to a rise in sales and revenue for small to medium-sized enterprises in the country. The study highlights the effectiveness of social media as a platform for businesses to establish connections with their customers and market their offerings (Kuma & Ampadu, 2017). Agyepong (2020) reported that social media has become a crucial tool for businesses in Ghana to tap into new customer bases and promote their products or services. This is particularly valuable for small to medium-sized enterprises that aim to expand their reach and clientele. According to a study by Bonsu (2018), businesses have leveraged the power of social media platforms to not only promote sales and special offers but also to keep their audience informed about new product and service offerings. This innovative marketing approach has enabled businesses to reach their desired audience with ease and has subsequently led to a significant increase in sales (Bonsu, 2018). The impact of social media on the marketing landscape in Ghana cannot be underestimated and has proven to be a game-changer for businesses looking to grow and succeed in today's competitive marketplace (Bonsu, 2018).

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In recent years, Facebook has become a ubiquitous presence in Ghana, with a growing number of individuals and businesses using the platform for personal and professional purposes (Ansah & Agyemang, 2020). As the current study focuses on the use of Facebook in Ghana and the implications it has on society, the following reviews will examine the vast body of literature and research conducted on the subject of Facebook usage in Ghana. This examination will provide insights into how Facebook has been embraced by the population and how it has become an integral part of their daily lives as well as gain a deeper understanding of how Facebook has affected the social and cultural fabric of Ghana, and what implications this has for the future. The use of Facebook in Ghana has been the subject of numerous studies in recent years, yielding a wealth of information about the impact of the social media giant on the West African country (Adomako, 2019; Amponsah & Boateng, 2020; Bonsu & Asare, 2019).

One area of interest is the use of Facebook for political engagement and activism. Studies have shown that Facebook is increasingly being used as a tool for organising political protests and movements, allowing individuals to mobilise and advocate for political change (Amponsah & Boateng, 2020). This has led to new forms of political engagement and activism, as well as the growth of political groups and movements that are using Facebook to raise awareness and mobilise support (Amponsah & Boateng, 2020). Another area of focus is the use of Facebook for business and economic development. Research has shown that Facebook is being used by a growing number of businesses in Ghana to promote their products and services, reach new customers, and increase sales (Bonsu & Asare, 2019). This has had a profound impact on the marketing landscape in Ghana, with businesses now able to reach a wider audience and target specific groups with tailored messaging (Bonsu & Asare, 2019).

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Another study by Adomako (2019) analysed the role of Facebook in shaping political opinions and attitudes in Ghana. The author found that Facebook has become an important platform for political discourse and that it has had a significant impact on the way that people in Ghana perceive and engage with political issues. The study also highlighted the importance of responsible use of Facebook for political discourse, as false information and hate speech can spread rapidly on the platform. Ansah and Agyemang (2020) focused on the impact of Facebook on relationships and communication in Ghana. The authors found that Facebook has changed the way that people in Ghana communicate with one another, making it easier for them to stay in touch with friends and family, even over long distances. However, the authors also noted that excessive use of Facebook can lead to relationship problems and decreased face-to-face communication.

In addition to these practical uses, Facebook is also having a significant impact on the social and cultural fabric of Ghanaian society. Studies have shown that Facebook is contributing to the development of new forms of social and cultural expression, as well as to the reinforcement of existing cultural norms and values (Dankwah & Adu-Amankwah, 2019). Despite these positive impacts, the increased use of Facebook in Ghana is also leading to new challenges and concerns. For example, there are growing concerns about privacy, cyberbullying, and the spread of misinformation and fake news (Asante & Amoako-Gyampah, 2021). These issues highlight the need for greater awareness and education about the responsible use of social media in Ghana as well as the further interrogation of how social media platforms like Facebook are contributing to the development of new forms of social and cultural expression amidst the reinforcement of existing cultural norms and values (Asante & Amoako-Gyampah, 2021; Dankwah & Adu-Amankwah, 2019; Gbogbo, 2021).

Taken together, the above studies provide a picture of the effects of these platforms. These studies demonstrate the profound transformation that has taken place in the way people in Ghana communicate and interact with each other, both in their personal and professional lives. The findings of these studies illustrate the positive impact of social media particularly Facebook in connecting people, promoting communication and building relationships. However, they also emphasise the need for responsible usage of these platforms to ensure positive outcomes and avoid potential negative consequences. In conclusion, the studies reviewed provide a comprehensive view of the effects of social media and Facebook in Ghana, highlighting the positive and negative aspects of these platforms. People must be mindful of how they use these platforms and take responsibility for promoting positive outcomes.

2.4 Fathers and Fatherhood

It is widely recognised that fatherhood is achieved through the biological act of impregnating a woman (Lancy, 2020). This viewpoint is based on the premise that fatherhood is solely determined by a biological event (Mari, 2017; Scheibling, 2018). However, this understanding has drawn criticism for several reasons. Firstly, advances in technology such as artificial insemination and other procedures have enabled human life to be created without the need for traditional impregnation (Wilson, 2021). This raises questions about the limitations of a biological definition of fatherhood. Therefore, it is essential to consider a broader perspective on what it means to be a father. The definition should go beyond the biological act of impregnation and encompass the emotional and practical responsibilities associated with raising a child. It is important to acknowledge that fatherhood is a multifaceted role that involves providing support, guidance, and love to a child. Thus, the definition of fatherhood should not be limited to a single criterion

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but should take into account the wide range of experiences and responsibilities that come with being a parent (Wilson, 2021).

To further the above questions about the limitations of a biological definition of fatherhood, research shows that the identity of a father is often determined by social and cultural norms rather than by biology. For example, Bigner and Jacobsen (2020) argue that fatherhood is more related to family relationships than to genetic paternity. Moreover, polyamorous relationships can complicate the issue of fatherhood, as the father's identity is often determined by the relationship with the mother or their willingness to be recognised as the father (Cano et al., 2019). An interesting case in point is the determination of fatherhood in the context of Aboriginal spirit children in Australia. According to Merlan (1986), as cited in Soubry (2018), the biological father is deemed so insignificant in this context that conception is believed to occur without sexual intercourse or the involvement of a man. This highlights the complex nature of fatherhood and the role that social and cultural norms play in shaping our understanding of this important relationship (Soubry, 2018).

Howe (2018) cautions against the notion that biology and procreation automatically equate to the concept of fatherhood. He draws on studies of masculinity that challenge the assumption that masculinity can be simply determined by physical attributes. According to Howe (2018), masculinity is not biologically predetermined or naturally occurring, but rather a socially constructed idea that can take on various forms and evolve. The notion of universal masculinity does not exist, as there are many culturally accepted ways to be a man (Howe, 2018). Masculinity is performed, as boys and men choose from a variety of cultural practices to determine their behaviour (Howe, 2018). However, these decisions are not always made freely, as the resources and traditions available to

individuals vary greatly, leading to unequal power dynamics among men (Connell, 1995 as cited in Howe, 2018). Factors such as physical ability, wealth, and social connections can influence the power dynamics among men (Connell, 1995 as cited in Howe, 2018).

Brown and Aytuglu (2020) shed light on the distinction between the terms "fatherhood" and "father". While the term "father" is commonly associated with biological fatherhood, it fails to capture the social and relational aspects of the role. On the other hand, "fatherhood" highlights the importance of social relationships and choice in the performance of the role (Brown & Aytuglu, 2020). The authors argue that fatherhood is a socially constructed and perceived role that can be assumed by individuals who are not necessarily the biological fathers of a child (Brown & Aytuglu, 2020). This distinction is crucial as it acknowledges the varying ways in which the role of a father can be performed (Brown & Aytuglu, 2020). The fatherhood role transcends biological ties and encompasses the social relationships and responsibilities that are assumed by individuals in this role (Brown & Aytuglu, 2020). The distinction between "fatherhood" and "father" presented by Brown and Aytuglu (2020) is of utmost relevance in the current study, as well as in understanding the concept of fatherhood in a broader context. This distinction provides a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the role of a father and underscores the significance of social relationships and personal choice in the execution of this role (Brown & Aytuglu, 2020). It is important to note that fatherhood is a socially constructed and perceived role that can be adopted by individuals who may not necessarily be the biological fathers of a child (Brown & Aytuglu, 2020). This distinction further enhances the comprehension of the complex nature of fatherhood and its portrayal.

In recent years, the distinction between "fatherhood" and "father" has become more noticeable, as the role of men in the upbringing and support of children has shifted. According to Onyeze-Joe and O'Neill (2020), the two most significant types of fathers in the emerging world are economic and social fathers. Economic fathers are men who provide financial support to their children, whereas social fathers are those who actively participate in the upbringing and care of children who are not biologically related to them (Onyeze-Joe & O'Neill, 2020). This may involve formal adoption, co-parenting with the children's mother, or assuming the role and responsibilities of a father within an extended family structure (Onyeze-Joe & O'Neill, 2020). For instance, in some families, a man's older brother may take on the responsibilities of a father figure when his sibling is unable to provide for their children. In this way, social fatherhood offers a unique and important form of support to children, regardless of biological ties (Amoo et al., 2018; Onyeze-Joe & O'Neill, 2020).

The role of fatherhood is not universally accepted among men, as demonstrated by various studies such as those conducted by Leopeng and Langa (2017) and Mukuna (2020). According to these studies, abandonment, flight, and denial are common ways in which men evade their responsibilities as fathers (Leopeng & Langa, 2017; Mukuna, 2020). A significant portion of the findings demonstrate the complexities of fatherhood and emphasise the necessity of addressing the reasons why men repudiate their roles (Leopeng & Langa, 2017; Mukuna, 2020). Abandonment refers to the act of physically or emotionally distancing oneself from the family and the responsibilities of fatherhood (Leopeng & Langa, 2017). Leopeng and Langa (2017) found that men who abandon their families often have poor communication skills, lack emotional intelligence, and exhibit a low sense of responsibility. Furthermore, these men may have a history of unstable relationships and a weak bond with the mother of the child.

The above findings suggest that abandonment is a coping mechanism used by men who have low levels of commitment and a fear of becoming a father (Leopeng & Langa, 2017). This fear is rooted in childhood experiences such as neglect or abuse, which can lead to a lack of trust and attachment issues (Leopeng & Langa, 2017). Denial is another coping mechanism used by men to avoid fatherhood (Mukuna, 2020). This refers to men who refuse to acknowledge their paternity and the responsibilities that come with it (Mukuna, 2020). Men who adopt this coping mechanism tend to have a low sense of responsibility, a lack of empathy, and a lack of understanding of the consequences of their actions (Mukuna, 2020). They may also have a history of substance abuse or mental health issues, making it difficult for them to accept their role as a father (Mukuna, 2020). Flight, on the other hand, refers to the act of emotionally withdrawing from the responsibilities of fatherhood (Fisher, 2018). This can mean that men do not provide emotional support to their families, and do not take an active role in the lives of their children (Fisher, 2018).

The role of fathers in the lives of their children has been the subject of numerous studies and research. The findings have shown that the positive involvement of fathers has a significant impact on the growth and development of their children. According to Leach (2019), Randles (2018), and Rilling and Mascaro (2017), children who have been brought up by involved and caring fathers exhibit higher academic achievement, greater emotional security, higher self-esteem, fewer behavioural problems, and greater social competence when compared to those who do not have such involvement. On the other hand, studies by Glauber (2019) and Johansson and Andreasson (2017) suggest that the absence of fathers can have a detrimental effect on the well-being of children. Children who grow up without fathers may struggle with social adjustment and may resort to

adopting a threatening demeanour to mask their underlying worries, resentments, anxiety, and misery.

The above discussion on the existing literature is particularly relevant to the current study for several reasons. Firstly, it provides a deeper understanding of fathers' role in their children's lives. This understanding is critical in determining the significance of the study and the impact that it can have. Secondly, the information obtained from the above discussion allows the researcher to understand the current knowledge on the subject and the various perspectives that exist. This information is essential to determine the scope of the study and the areas that need to be addressed. Moreover, this information is vital for contextualising and situating the study within the larger field of research. This is because it enables the researcher to understand the broader context in which the study is being conducted and the implications of the study for the larger field of research. In conclusion, the existing literature assisted the researcher in identifying a research gap that must be addressed. The available literature showed while the role of fathers in the lives of their children is well-researched and documented (e.g., Johansson & Andreasson, 2017; Leach, 2019; Randles, 2018), studies have been silent on the paternal experiences of children (Glauber, 2019). As such, this study attempts to provide context and analysis for Ghanaian fatherhood experiences published on social media.

2.5 Fatherhood and Masculinity in the Ghanaian Context

The concepts of fatherhood and masculinity hold significant importance as social constructs that shape the lives of individuals, families, and communities (Gyamfi, 2018). These constructs have far-reaching consequences and can play a vital role in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of those within society (Dery, 2019). Therefore, it is imperative to acknowledge and understand the complexities and nuances associated with these

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concepts and their impact on various aspects of life (Dery, 2019; Gyamfi, 2018). The research on fatherhood and masculinity in Ghana has garnered much attention over the years, as scholars aim to explore various aspects of the topic. The studies conducted thus far have delved into how fathers construct and negotiate their masculinity in Ghanaian society (Ampim, 2021; Darko, 2017). Furthermore, the impact of father involvement on children's well-being has also been explored (Testa & Jackson, 2018). Additionally, the responsibilities and duties of fathers have been the focus of several studies (Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2020; Sarfo et al., 2018). These studies have provided important insights into the dynamic relationship between fatherhood, masculinity, and Ghanaian society, and further research in this field is necessary to expand the understanding of these interrelated concepts.

Before delving into the prospects for further research in this domain, it is imperative to examine the existing research on the subject matter. Studies have indicated that fathers in Ghana tend to construct and negotiate their masculinity based on cultural norms and societal expectations (Ampim, 2021; Darko, 2017). These norms, however, may differ among various ethnic and regional groups within Ghana and can be impacted by factors such as religion, education, and socioeconomic status (Ampim, 2021). Literature has identified a crucial aspect that has a significant impact on the construction of masculinity in fathers, which is the presence of traditional masculinity ideals. These ideals, which encompass expectations of strength, independence, and authority, shape how fathers interact with their children, partners, and the community at large (Ampim, 2021; Darko, 2017).

In his study, Darko (2017) delved into the examination of traditional masculinity ideals and their impact on fatherhood and masculinity in Ghana. His research findings indicated

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that in both matrilineal and patrilineal societies in Ghana, men are typically portrayed as emotionally detached and disengaged from the responsibilities of child care. As a result, children tend to have a stronger emotional attachment to their mothers and a weaker connection with their fathers (Darko, 2017). Ghunney (2020) conducted a study and uncovered comparable results regarding the attitudes of men in Ghana towards their family responsibilities. The research revealed that these men hold a strong sense of obligation to support and safeguard their families, which is intertwined with their masculinity and identity as fathers. The findings indicate that the societal expectation for men to be financially prosperous to fulfil their duties as fathers and men creates significant pressure and stress for them (Ghunney, 2020).

The male breadwinner ideal in Ghana has driven many men to adopt unsafe working practices, such as excessive overtime or dangerous job positions, to fulfil their responsibilities as providers, meet societal expectations, and secure financial stability for their families (Ntow-Prempeh, 2019). This idea, though not entirely, is associated with men's prolonged absence from home and decreased paternal involvement in the upbringing of their children (Ntow-Prempeh, 2019). The cultural disposition of men to work tirelessly to secure resources for the preservation of their families can result in weakened bonds between fathers and children, as noted by Darko (2017). In their pursuit to care for their loved ones, men in Ghana face the challenge of balancing their work and family responsibilities (Darko, 2017; Ntow-Prempeh, 2019).

The study conducted by Testa and Jackson (2018) delves into the impact of father involvement on children's outcomes in Ghana. The findings of the study indicate that children with weaker father-child bonds are susceptible to emotional and psychological problems such as low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety (Testa & Jackson, 2018).

Additionally, these children face difficulties in forming and maintaining healthy relationships with their peers and other adults (Testa & Jackson, 2018). It is important to note that these findings are only a representation of some of the possible effects and that every child is unique in their way. Other factors can also play a role in shaping a child's development, and the bond between a child and their father is just one of many potential influences. Cultural norms and expectations have a significant impact on the level of involvement that fathers have in their children's lives, thereby determining the quality of the relationship between the father and child. That notwithstanding, Testa and Jackson's (2018) study provides a crucial insight into the impact of father involvement on children's outcomes in Ghana, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of the various factors that influence a child's development.

The cultural norms and social expectations in various ethnic groups in Ghana present risks to fatherhood and masculinity, as argued by scholars such as Dery (2019) and Gyamfi (2018). These cultural norms prescribe gendered roles and responsibilities which can limit a man's ability to adopt a nurturing and caring role in parenting (Dery, 2019; Gyamfi, 2018). According to Dery (2019), traditional gender norms position men as providers and protectors, while women are expected to take on the roles of caregiver and homemaker. This creates a challenge for men to embrace a more nurturing approach to parenting, as it may be perceived as deviating from traditional notions of masculinity (Dery, 2019). This is supported by previous research by Darko (2017), which highlights the impact of cultural norms on parenting roles and expectations. The societal pressure to conform to cultural norms can prevent men from fully engaging in the parenting process and hinder their ability to develop strong and healthy relationships with their children (Darko, 2017; Dery, 2019).

Gyamfi (2018) posits that cultural norms and social expectations perpetuate negative stereotypes, particularly regarding masculinity. The common portrayal of men as aggressive, dominant, and unempathetic creates a challenging environment for men to express their emotions and vulnerabilities, ultimately undermining their relationships with their children and spouses (Gyamfi, 2018). The perpetuation of such negative stereotypes not only reinforces harmful societal norms, but they limit the emotional intelligence and interpersonal capabilities of individuals as well (Gyamfi, 2018). Despite the attempts to challenge and deconstruct cultural norms and social expectations regarding fatherhood and masculinity, as highlighted in studies by Dery and Apusigah (2017) and Asamoah (2019), discrimination persists in Ghana. This discrimination affects both men and women, making it challenging for them to attain equal participation in both work and domestic responsibilities (Diabah, 2018; Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2021).

A study conducted by Diabah (2018) reveals that even women who have successfully entered the workforce face difficulties balancing their work and family responsibilities. This leads to feelings of exhaustion and stress as they are still expected to perform the same amount of household tasks as their non-working counterparts (Diabah, 2018). Gaisie and Adu-Gyamfi (2021) also found that women who worked outside the home in Ghana reported lower levels of decision-making power within the household, as they were often expected to prioritise domestic tasks over their career advancement. The above findings highlight the need for continued efforts to address the issues and promote equal treatment for all genders. To achieve this goal, it is imperative to not only improve the understanding of fatherhood, masculinity, and Ghanaian society but also to delve deeper into the root causes of discrimination and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society. In light of the above-mentioned studies, it becomes evident that there is a substantial amount of work still to be done to address the persistent issues of gender

inequality in Ghana. As previously discussed in the opening section of this sub-review, further research and efforts must be made to not only enhance our understanding of fatherhood, masculinity, and Ghanaian society but also to identify and address the underlying causes of discrimination. This is necessary to create a more equitable and inclusive society (Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2021).

In Ghanaian societies, patriarchal gender norms persistently exist; however, Agbemavi (2021) argues that these norms are no longer representative of the lived experiences of all Ghanaian men. An increasing number of men are becoming involved in child-rearing and household chores. According to Agbemavi (2021), this shift in cultural attitudes among some Ghanaian men is largely driven by two factors: improved education and knowledge, as well as changes in family dynamics. Agbemavi (2021) highlights that the trend among men in Ghana has shifted towards greater emphasis on education and the recognition of their role in the family and the upbringing of their children. This heightened awareness has driven them to actively seek out information and resources that will aid in their development as fathers. The result of these efforts has been a heightened involvement in their children's lives and a stronger bond with them. Improved education and an appreciation for the significance of their role as a father have been instrumental in facilitating this positive change (Agbemavi, 2021).

In recent decades, the traditional family structure in Ghana has undergone significant transformations, leading to a shift in the role of fathers in their children's development (Agbemavi, 2021). The increase in women's participation in the workforce has resulted in a heightened responsibility for fathers to take on more duties and responsibilities at home (Agbemavi, 2021). This shift has led to a change in the conventional gender roles, as fathers become increasingly involved in child care and domestic tasks (Agbemavi,

2021). Additionally, there has been a growing recognition of the significance of fathers in children's development, leading to a wider awareness of their vital role in the emotional, social, and cognitive growth of their children. This has led to a greater number of fathers actively participating in the upbringing of their children, as opposed to leaving it solely to the mother or other female family members. (Agbemavi, 2021).

The study conducted by Agbemavi (2021) is of significant importance as it highlights the positive impact of men taking an active role in parenting and household responsibilities. The findings reveal that children with involved fathers tend to exhibit better academic performance and emotional and behavioural development (Agbemavi, 2021; Testa & Jackson, 2018). Furthermore, fathers who take part in parenting and household chores tend to have better relationships with their partners and exhibit lower rates of depression and other mental health issues (Buchanan, 2019; Rizzo & Whitman, 2019). One of the key benefits of this shift is the subversion of traditional gender roles. By breaking free from societal expectations, men can experience greater fulfilment and feel less constrained (Buchanan, 2019). This shift also has a positive impact on their relationships with their partners, who may feel more supported and relieved of the traditional gender role burdens (Buchanan, 2019).

Furthermore, when fathers actively participate in the upbringing of children and household management, it has the potential to alter societal norms surrounding parenting and gender roles (Rizzo & Whitman, 2019). The increased visibility of fathers in these roles influences others, leading to a gradual normalisation of shared caregiving responsibilities among all parents. This can contribute to a more equitable division of labour within the household (Rizzo & Whitman, 2019). However, it is important to recognise that every family is unique and there is no one-size-fits-all solution for dividing

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parenting and household duties (Shafer et al., 2021). Ultimately, it is up to each family to determine what works best for them (Shafer et al., 2021).

The studies referred to above have consistently demonstrated that fatherhood and masculinity are important subjects in all cultural environments, including Ghana. The research studies also highlight that cultural factors such as societal norms and expectations pose a threat to fatherhood and male gender roles, as well as the overall societal framework. The above research works contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the depiction of men in the current study. Furthermore, as social media, similar to all media platforms, emphasises the cultural and societal perspectives of its users, these studies serve as a window into investigating the social realities of Ghanaian societies. The current study focuses on Father's Day celebrations, and a better understanding of cultural norms that influence fatherhood can provide context for social media representations of fathers and highlight the different ways in which fathers are acknowledged in Ghana. Additionally, having an understanding of cultural norms can aid in identifying the numerous ways fathers play an instrumental role in their families and communities, including serving as mentors, caretakers, and providers. This comprehension acknowledges the diversity of experiences and responsibilities that fathers have and helps to facilitate a comprehensive evaluation of fathers on Father's Day in Ghana.

2.6 Representations of Paternal Involvement

Prinsloo (2017) suggests that media plays a crucial role in shaping the everyday reality of individuals. The media influences how individuals perceive and interpret the world around them by presenting singular and multiple representations of everyday life (Prinsloo, 2017). These representations provide a reference point for individuals to

understand and navigate the world, and play a crucial role in the production and maintenance of common sense (Schmitz, 2019). The media can filter and frame the everyday reality of individuals, making it one of the most significant sources of influence in the mundane world (Schmitz, 2019). While it is generally acknowledged that the media do not necessarily reflect society in its entirety due to the filters and frames they apply to everyday reality, they do provide a repertoire of roles and images that media content consumers encounter and engage with (Osgerby, 2020). Some of the roles and images the media presents are the way fathers are represented (Woods, 2018).

The way fathers are represented in media has a significant impact on the public perception of their role in the family and can affect how fathers perceive themselves and their responsibilities (Bowles, 2020; Osgerby, 2020; Woods, 2018). Bowles (2020) analysed popular depictions of fatherhood in selected U.S. parenting periodicals. According to Bowles (2020), the media's portrayals of paternal involvement can be significant for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the media plays a significant role in shaping societal attitudes and beliefs. What people see in the media can influence how they view the world and the roles that people play in it (Bowles, 2020). This means that media representations of paternal involvement can have an impact on how society views and values the role of fathers (Bowles, 2020). Secondly, media representations can also influence how individuals view themselves and their roles. For example, the study showed that if fathers are consistently depicted in a negative light in the media, this could lead some fathers to feel discouraged or discouraged about being involved in their children's lives (Bowles, 2020).

Vivienne (2018) also observed that one of the most prominent forms of representation of fathers is in children's books. According to the author, in many children's books, fathers

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are portrayed as strong, protective, and responsible figures (Vivienne, 2018). The author cited books like "The Cat in the Hat" by Dr. Seuss and "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle. In "The Cat in the Hat" by Dr. Seuss, Vivienne (2018) argued that the father is portrayed as a loving and responsible figure who takes care of his children, even when they are mischievous. Similarly, in "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle, the father is depicted as nurturing and supportive, always there to help his child through the ups and downs of life (Vivienne, 2018). The study by Vivienne (2018) underlines that the portrayal of fathers in children's literature has a substantial effect on children's perceptions of parenthood and male role models. Children can understand better and value the fathers' role in their lives and society if they are exposed to positive and diverse images of fathers (Vivienne, 2018).

Television shows are another category of media representation of fathers that is often regarded as having a significant impact on audiences due to its audio-visual advantage (Fink et al., 2020; Ward et al., 2021). Fink et al. (2020) conducted a study of the portrayal of fathers in popular television shows from 1975 to 2015. The results showed that there has been an increase in the number of television shows featuring fathers who are actively involved in childcare and household tasks. Furthermore, the amount of screen time devoted to these types of fathers has also increased. This shift in representation is a reflection of changing societal norms and expectations of fatherhood (Fink et al., 2020). Similarly, Ward et al. (2021) conducted a study of the portrayal of fathers in advertising. The goal of the study was to uncover the role that television commercials play in perpetuating or challenging traditional gender roles. The study found that there has been an increase in the portrayal of fathers as actively involved in childcare and household tasks, as well as a decrease in the portrayal of fathers as breadwinners and providers.

Furthermore, fathers were more likely to be portrayed as competent and capable, rather than bumbling or incompetent (Ward et al., 2021).

Other studies have also explored how paternal involvement is portrayed in the media, particularly in films (Johnson & Jancewicz, 2019; Williams et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2021). Johnson and Jancewicz (2019), for example, analysed the frequency of paternal representations in top-grossing films from 1990 to 2015. The authors found that while the frequency of paternal representations in films increased over time, the quality of these representations remained largely stereotypical, with fathers often portrayed as bumbling or absent figures (Johnson & Jancewicz, 2019). The authors argued that this limited representation of fathers in films reinforces negative cultural stereotypes about fatherhood and perpetuates the notion that fathers are not central to family life (Johnson & Jancewicz, 2019). Another study by Williams et al. (2020) focused on the impact of media representations of paternal involvement on young adults' perceptions of fatherhood. The authors found that young adults who were exposed to positive and nuanced representations of fathers in films were more likely to view fatherhood as an important and fulfilling role (Williams et al., 2020). Conversely, those who were exposed to negative or stereotypical representations of fathers were less likely to view fatherhood as a desirable or important role (Williams et al., 2020).

Media representation of paternal involvement in Ghana has equally been the subject of numerous studies in recent years (Adinkra, 2017; Akoto, 2019; Boateng, 2020). For example, Adinkra (2017) analysed the representation of fathers in Ghanaian television dramas. The study found that fathers were often portrayed as passive and absent figures, with little to no involvement in the upbringing of their children (Adinkra, 2017). Adinkra argues that this negative representation reinforces harmful stereotypes and perpetuates

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the idea that fatherhood is a secondary role, rather than a crucial aspect of family life (Adinkra, 2017). Akoto (2019) on the other hand, analysed the representation of fathers in Ghanaian print media, specifically focusing on newspapers and magazines. The study found that while fathers were present in many of the articles and advertisements, they were often portrayed as providers rather than nurturers (Akoto, 2019). Akoto suggests that this limited representation of fathers reinforces traditional gender roles and reinforces the idea that women are primarily responsible for child-rearing (Akoto, 2019). A similar study by Boateng (2020) analysed the representation of fathers in Ghanaian music videos. The study found that fathers were often portrayed as irresponsible and absent, with little to no involvement in their children's lives. Boateng (2020) argues that this negative representation contributes to the normalisation of absentee fatherhood and reinforces harmful gender stereotypes.

In contrast to these negative representations, a study by Darko (2018) explored the representation of involved and engaged fathers in Ghanaian media. The study found that while these positive representations were rare, they were present in certain genres, such as children's books and educational television programs (Darko, 2018). Darko (2018) argues that these positive representations are important because they can help to shift cultural attitudes and promote a more nuanced and diverse understanding of fatherhood. Similarly, a study by Amofa (2018) looked at the representation of fatherhood in popular Ghanaian soap operas and found that there was a growing trend towards depicting involved and engaged fathers. The study observed that these fathers were shown as being present in the lives of their children, providing emotional support, and playing an active role in their upbringing. This was a significant departure from previous representations of fathers in the media which often portrayed them as absent or uninvolved (Amofa, 2018).

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2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 The Theory of Hegemonic Masculinity

Sociologist R.W. Connell introduced the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" in his 1995 book "Masculinities" (Yang, 2020). "Hegemonic" refers to a belief or idea that holds the most influence in a given society or cultural group (Yang, 2020). In gender studies, "hegemonic masculinity" refers to the cultural ideal of masculinity that is perceived as dominant and influential in shaping expectations for men's attitudes and behaviours. This ideal emphasises certain traits and behaviours, such as physical strength, emotional restraint, being the primary breadwinner, and competitiveness, while marginalising and devaluing other forms of masculinity and femininity (Yang, 2020). Connell (1995) suggests that hegemonic masculinity occupies the highest position in the hierarchy of masculinity and highlights how men sustain their dominant roles in society over time.

Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity has garnered widespread attention and critical analysis among scholars, leading to a proliferation of related research and studies (Hunter & Riggs, 2017; Kostas, 2021). One notable contribution to this field of research is the study conducted by Connell (1995) and Messerschmidt (2005), which offers a valuable insight into the intricate interplay between masculinity, power, and social structures. The authors argue that hegemonic masculinity is not solely concerned with individual men, but also encompasses the mechanisms and processes through which power is organised and maintained within society (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Similarly, Messner and Jeff Hearn's (2015) research examines the organisation and preservation of power within society through the lens of hegemonic masculinity. Their analysis underscores the notion that masculinity is not an immutable trait, but rather a socially constructed concept that is continuously being negotiated and redefined by individuals and groups within society. The study then proceeds to analyse how hegemonic masculinity is negotiated through

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different social institutions, such as the family, education, and the workplace. Furthermore, the authors highlight the role of the media in shaping public perception and reinforcing cultural norms through its extensive reach, thereby acting as a powerful instrument in maintaining and negotiating hegemonic masculinity (Messner & Jeff Hearn, 2015).

Ryan and Johnson (2018) conducted a research investigation on the effects of media on the formation and reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity in society. The scope of the study included an extensive range of prevalent media sources, such as television programs, films, and advertisements, to comprehend how masculinity is portrayed and its part in the construction and perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity. The outcomes of the investigation disclosed that media depictions of masculinity are frequently utilised to legitimise and bolster societal norms of dominance and aggressiveness, which consequently contributes to the generation and maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. In addition, the research revealed that media representations of men commonly reinforce gender stereotypes and promote the notion that men should strive for strength, authority, and control (Ryan & Johnson, 2018). In the same vein, empirical research indicates that portrayals of masculinity in African and Ghanaian cultures through media outlets wield significant influence in upholding traditional gender roles and expectations (Adepoju, 2017; Asare, 2019; Oluwatosin and Olatunji, 2018). Adepoju (2017) investigated the impact of media on the reinforcement of conventional gender roles in Nigeria, revealing that depictions of men in Nigerian media strengthen the notion of men embodying physical power, aggression, and dominance, thereby perpetuating the dominance of hegemonic masculinity. Correspondingly, Oluwatosin and Olatunji (2018) explored the effects of media on perpetuating hegemonic masculinity in South Africa, revealing that

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representations of men in South African media reinforce societal norms of male dominance and aggression, thereby perpetuating hegemonic masculinity.

Research has been conducted concerning the impact of media on the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity in Ghanaian society. Asare's (2019) investigation delved into the role of media in shaping gender norms and expectations in Ghana, revealing that media portrayals of men in Ghana frequently endorse the notion that men should exhibit dominance and aggression, thereby contributing to the reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity. Another study by Adjei (2018) examined the influence of media on gender norms and expectations in Ghana and found that media portrayals of men in Ghana reinforce societal norms of male dominance and aggression, further perpetuating hegemonic masculinity. Recent studies, such as those by Liyana (2020) and Trott (2021), have delved into the influence of hegemonic masculinity with particular attention to its impact on fatherhood. Liyana (2020) emphasised that hegemonic forms of masculinity have historically contributed to the portrayal of fathers as authoritarian, disinterested, absent, and emotionally distant. Additionally, hegemonic masculinity has influenced the belief that fathers should be the primary financial providers, leading to the construction of father identities based on their financial contributions (Trott, 2021). Consequently, fathers have assumed a dominant role within the context of a heterosexual, nuclear family, as it reinforces traditional notions of fathers as symbols of power, authority, and status (Liyana, 2020; Trott, 2021).

It is imperative to recognise that not all men conform to the stereotypical characteristics of the conventional father, even if they may aspire to embody this ideal through various means. A recent investigation carried out by Agbemavi (2021) corroborates this contention. Fatherhood takes on different forms, and there exist several men who have

assumed the role of father figures to children through adoption, foster care, or mentorship programs (Agbemavi, 2021). As per Agbemavi's (2021) findings, these men may not share a biological connection with the children they are caring for, but they provide indispensable love, support, and guidance that are essential to the children's well-being and development. Other scholarly works have also demonstrated that there is a shift in the conventional gender roles and expectations, with an increasing number of men becoming actively involved in child-rearing and household duties (Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2020; Testa & Jackson, 2018). This trend is widely referred to as the "involved father" (Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2020, p.23), which represents a significant departure from the conventional image of the father as the primary breadwinner, with limited engagement in child-rearing and household responsibilities (Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2020; Testa & Jackson, 2018).

Considering a widely accepted academic argument that the conventional concept of fatherhood emphasises the economic contributions of fathers at the expense of other forms of child care and involvement, Messerschmidt (2020) posits that such assertions are unfounded. To substantiate his standpoint, Messerschmidt (2020) observes that a prevalent notion exists that a good father should financially provide for his family, and this financial provider model continues to be the predominant definition of fatherhood. However, while mothers often assume significant decision-making roles, particularly concerning child-rearing, fathers' primary financial support endows them with the position of the "head of the family," conferring them with additional authority as the primary decision-maker (Ampim, 2021; Darko, 2017). It is noteworthy to recognise that financial support can be construed as a form of care, as it is commonly viewed as a patriarchal or masculine way of exhibiting care (Messerschmidt, 2020). Thus, Messerschmidt (2020) contests the notion that the conventional view of fatherhood

prioritises fathers' financial contributions over other childcare forms and disregards their involvement in child-rearing.

Similar to Messerschmidt (2020), Pieters (2021) proffers a discerning perspective regarding the application of the concept of hegemonic masculinity in the exploration of fatherhood. Pieters (2021) posits that fatherhood is a complex and multi-faceted concept that cannot be fully encapsulated by any single stereotype or portrayal. The customary portrayal of a father as the head of the household, accountable for providing for the family, safeguarding them, and imposing discipline, is not a universally acknowledged notion of fatherhood and is encountering mounting opposition due to shifting social and cultural norms (Pieters, 2021). Fatherhood can adopt an array of identities, including single fathers, co-parenting fathers, gay fathers, and trans fathers (Pieters, 2021). The emergence of varied fatherhood identities challenges the traditional ideal and signifies a burgeoning trend away from conventional gender roles, with a growing number of men actively participating in child-rearing and domestic duties (Pieters, 2021).

Drawing upon the aforementioned research studies, the theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity presents a systematic approach to comprehending diverse facets of masculinity and fatherhood across cultures (Yang, 2020). Primarily, it elucidates the mechanisms through which societal institutions, including the media, family, education, and religion, act as agents in shaping the social construction of masculinity and fatherhood (Messner & Jeff Hearn, 2015). Given the widespread reach of the media, academic research has paid substantial attention to its role in perpetuating and negotiating hegemonic masculinity (Ryan & Johnson, 2018). A significant body of scholarship underscores the media's potential to sustain and reinforce traditional gender norms and power dynamics associated with masculinity (Adepoju, 2017; Asare, 2019; Oluwatosin

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and Olatunji, 2018). As societal and cultural norms have transformed, the understanding of masculinity and fatherhood has evolved accordingly (Messerschmidt, 2020). Similarly, the utilisation of hegemonic masculinity theory in defining and negotiating the role and identity of men has also undergone modifications (Messerschmidt, 2020).

Scholarly research has employed the hegemonic masculinity theory as a framework to investigate the evolving societal and cultural norms, particularly regarding the emerging trend of fathers serving as primary caregivers (Messerschmidt, 2020; Pieters, 2021). These fathers are challenging conventional gender roles and expectations related to fatherhood and masculinity by actively engaging in childcare and household tasks (Messerschmidt, 2020; Pieters, 2021). The studies provide an alternative perspective on fatherhood and scrutinise conventional perceptions of masculinity. By taking on the primary caregiving role, these fathers demonstrate that masculinity is not limited to prevailing cultural norms and expectations and that fathers can possess qualities such as nurturing and care (Messerschmidt, 2020; Pieters, 2021).

The application of the hegemonic masculinity theory has also been employed to investigate gender representation on social media in various ways. Some studies have concentrated on the role of social media platforms in perpetuating and consolidating traditional masculinity as the dominant form of masculinity, resulting from their structure and algorithms that curate and prioritise content. Research conducted by Dinh (2018) and Silvestro & Venuti (2021) has shown that social media platforms tend to prioritise masculine-associated traits such as assertiveness and dominance over feminine-associated traits like kindness and cooperation. Additionally, other research has examined the methods through which social media users reproduce and reinforce hegemonic masculinity through their online interactions and self-presentation. For example, Hunte

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(2019) discovered that men often engage in "performative" forms of masculinity on social media, wherein they exhibit their physical strength and sexual experiences. Similarly, Liu and Lin (2021) observed that men who deviate from traditional masculine ideals frequently become victims of online bullying and harassment. However, research has also demonstrated that hegemonic masculinity can be challenged or resisted on social media. For instance, Lee and Lee's (2018) study discovered that feminist hashtags and alternative forms of masculinity, such as being a stay-at-home dad, are presented on social media.

The phenomenon of social media is widely perceived to exert a multifaceted influence on the formation and perpetuation of gender norms and identities, particularly with regard to the traditional notions of masculinity (Dinh, 2018; Silvestro & Venuti, 2021). Empirical research has underscored the intricate nature of social media's role in shaping gender identities and norms, particularly about the dominance of traditional masculinity. The application of the hegemonic masculinity theory to the examination of gender representation on social media aligns with the long-standing tradition of such inquiry. Specifically, in the realm of fatherhood on social media, the theory offers valuable insights into how paternity is depicted and fortified through the dissemination and endorsement of certain visual and textual content. Furthermore, the theory of hegemonic masculinity elucidates the manner in which fathers are portrayed and expected to conduct themselves, thus facilitating a nuanced comprehension of the current portrayal of masculinity and fatherhood. Ultimately, the theory of hegemonic masculinity is germane to the portrayal of fathers on social media, as it illuminates the selective promotion and reinforcement of certain types of masculinity, whilst excluding or devaluing others.

In the present study, the theory of hegemonic masculinity has been applied to investigate the dominant issues that emerged from Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians. This analytical approach proved to be fruitful in providing a framework for

the systematic analysis of the data. In the context of the present study, the application of the theory of hegemonic masculinity allowed for an exploration of how this idealised form of masculinity manifests in the online discourse surrounding Father's Day in Ghana. This analytical lens helped to identify the dominant themes and issues that arose in these conversations and provided insights into how these themes are perpetuated and reinforced in Ghanaian society. By using this theoretical framework, the study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the cultural and social construction of masculinity in Ghana and how it is enacted and reinforced through online communication. This is because the celebration of Father's Day is often intertwined with cultural expectations and assumptions about what it means to be a "good" father, which are often rooted in the ideal of hegemonic masculinity.

Similarly, the theory of hegemonic masculinity provided a useful framework for examining how fathers were represented in Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians. The social and cultural dispositions of individuals are significant factors that influence their outlook towards human interactions. This is because people's overall perspective towards social interactions is shaped by the larger framework of realities that are informed by their socio-cultural dispositions. Such dispositions can include cultural beliefs, values, and practices that inform how individuals perceive and engage with others in social contexts (Baafo & Sitso, 2019). The theory of hegemonic masculinity shapes our cultural understandings of what it means to be a father, and how fathers are expected to behave and be portrayed (Messner & Jeff Hearn, 2015).

In exploring the representation of fathers in Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians, the researcher employed the theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity to discern patterns in how fathers were portrayed. The premise underlying this analytical

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approach is that the portrayal of fathers in these posts may be indicative of the cultural expectations and norms associated with hegemonic masculinity. If the portrayal of fathers in these posts aligns with the traits and attributes that are commonly associated with hegemonic masculinity, it may suggest that the cultural norms surrounding fatherhood in Ghana are shaped by this ideal. Conversely, if the posts challenge or subvert these representations and instead depict fathers embodying different or more diverse qualities, it may suggest a shift in cultural values around fatherhood. This methodological approach enables a systematic analysis of the data to identify and explore the underlying cultural and social factors that shape representations of fatherhood in Ghana.

Furthermore, the present study employed the theory of hegemonic masculinity as an analytical framework to investigate the portrayal of gender roles in Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians. This is because the theory of hegemonic masculinity asserts that cultural ideals prioritise men and masculinities over women and femininities, thereby reinforcing traditional gender roles. Thus, representations of gender in cultural narratives, such as Father's Day posts, often perpetuate or challenge these roles. By utilising the theory of hegemonic masculinity, the researcher aims to identify how traditional gender roles are represented in Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians. This analytical approach enables a systematic exploration of the gendered discourses that emerge in these online conversations, providing insight into how cultural norms and values shape gender relations and expectations in Ghanaian society.

Furthermore, the use of the theory of hegemonic masculinity contributes to a broader understanding of the cultural and social construction of masculinity and femininity in Ghana and how gender roles are perpetuated and reinforced through online communication. Through this exploration, the study seeks to shed light on how online

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discourse can be leveraged to challenge harmful gender norms and promote gender equity and equality in Ghanaian society.

2.8 Summary

This chapter aimed to provide a review of relevant literature on social media usage and depictions of paternal involvement. According to the current literature, issues of fatherhood and paternal involvement are shaped by cultural norms that position men and fathers as providers and protectors, and women as caregivers and homemakers. Nonetheless, there appears to be a growing tendency in all cultural contexts, including Ghana, for more males to actively assist in childrearing and home maintenance. Media has a significant impact on how individuals view themselves and their place in society. However, the emergence of social media as a significant platform for mass communication has raised concerns about the role of user representations in shaping paternal representations. The relationship between parents and children is a critical aspect of human life, and social media has provided a unique context for exploring this relationship. The review also examined how the theory of hegemonic masculinity assists in grasping how paternity is portrayed and reinforced through the messages that are promoted and shared on social media.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This section describes the methods and strategies used in data collection and analysis. It also discusses the principles and assumptions that underpin procedures, as well as the rationale for their selection. The section addresses specifically the study's approach, design, sample size and sampling strategy, data collection methods, and data collection and analysis procedure.

3.1   Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. One key assumption of qualitative research is that there is a subjective reality that is socially constructed and cannot be objectively measured or observed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). This means that the researcher acknowledges that the world is complex and that it is impossible to reduce it to simple, objective measures (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). As such, there are multiple subjective interpretations of reality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Another key assumption of qualitative research is that knowledge is subjective and context-dependent and that it is constructed through social interaction and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). This means that the researcher recognises that knowledge is shaped by subjective experiences, biases, and beliefs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative researchers emphasise the importance of understanding the perspectives and experiences of research participants in the research process. This is because research participants' knowledge of the phenomenon being

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studied is shaped by their subjective experiences, biases, and beliefs and as such may differ from person to person (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017).

The philosophical assumptions of qualitative research are particularly relevant to this study which sought to understand the meanings ascribed to fatherhood through an examination of Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians. This study recognises that there is a subjective reality that is socially constructed and that cannot be objectively measured or observed. The researcher acknowledges that the meanings and interpretations of fatherhood are shaped by cultural and social contexts, as well as by individual experiences and perspectives. Therefore, the study sought to explore the subjective experiences of Ghanaian Facebook users and the meanings they ascribe to fatherhood, rather than assuming a universal or objective definition of fatherhood.

The study acknowledges that knowledge is a subjective and context-dependent phenomenon, which is constructed through social interaction and interpretation. The researcher acknowledges that the meanings ascribed to fatherhood by Ghanaian Facebook users are shaped by their own subjective experiences, biases, and beliefs and that these may differ from person to person. As such, the researcher would aim to understand the diverse perspectives and experiences of Ghanaian Facebook users to construct a more complete picture of the meanings ascribed to fatherhood.

Based on the philosophical assumptions of the qualitative research approach, some principles have been established by qualitative research scholars. These principles serve as guidelines for conducting qualitative research. One principle of qualitative research is the in-depth examination of phenomena without mathematical or statistical computations (Agbemavi, 2021; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Qualitative research, as explained by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), involves a thorough exploration of the attitudes, actions, and perceptions of people within a social setting and the meanings they attach to these actions. This process aims to understand the complexity and nuances of a phenomenon through a detailed examination of data collected from participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative research is therefore about gaining a deep understanding of a subject matter, rather than simply resorting to quantitative analysis techniques such as descriptive and inferential statistics (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This principle is closely tied to the subjective reality assumption of qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lindlof & Taylor, 2017).

Likewise, this study did not apply mathematical or statistical computations to the meanings Ghanaians ascribed to fatherhood in their Facebook posts. Rather, a "thick description" of how Facebook posts portrayed fathers was employed to generate a vivid and comprehensive image of the phenomenon. Thick description is a term coined by anthropologist Clifford Geertz to describe how qualitative researchers provide detailed and rich accounts of social phenomena (Geertz, 2008 as cited by Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). Creswell and Creswell (2018) emphasised that adopting detailed and nuanced accounts of the social phenomena being studied provides a comprehensive understanding of the context, setting, and participants involved in the study. They also help to convey the complexity and richness of the research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Another principle of qualitative research is the collection of data from participants in their natural context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This means that the researcher aims to observe and collect data from participants in their everyday settings, rather than in a laboratory or controlled environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This is consistent with Hancock (2002), who also stated that qualitative research describes social events as

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they occur naturally, whereas experimental quantitative research attempts to influence the context under study. This principle is closely tied to the epistemological assumption that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and interpretation and that the context in which data is collected plays a critical role in shaping the meanings and interpretations that emerge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lindlof & Taylor, 2017).

In line with the above, to conduct the qualitative research for this study, the researcher collected data from social media users in their natural context. This signifies that the content and context of the data were produced independently of the researcher, and the researcher did not seek to modify or alter the substance of the data in any manner. This is significant because it enabled the study to capture the complexity and variety of Ghanaian fatherhood experiences and behaviours in their natural context and to focus on their meaning and significance, as opposed to simply measuring their prevalence or intensity, as might be the case in quantitative research (Hancock, 2002).

3.2   Research Design

A research design is a strategy or plan for carrying out a research study (Yin, 2017). It specifies the procedures and techniques that will be utilised to gather and analyse data, as well as the processes that will be followed to carry out the research rigorously and validly (Yin, 2017). Research designs can vary widely depending on the nature of the research, the research problem and questions, and the type of audience for the study (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018; Yin, 2017). Research designs vary widely because different studies have different goals, research questions, and methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018). Among the research designs, particularly in qualitative circles, are phenomenology, ethnography, case studies, qualitative content analysis and narrative research (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018).

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This study employed qualitative content analysis as its research design. Qualitative content analysis is a method used to analyse and interpret text-based data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2018). A text may be presented as a written word or a visual image (Hsieh & Shannon, 2018). Originally, content analysis was designed for the quantitative research approach, since it is used by researchers to describe and analyse the frequency or quantity of text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2018). Over time, however, content analysis has been incorporated into the methodology of qualitative research to analyse and assess the quality or meaning of texts, extending beyond the frequency of text occurrences (Hsieh & Shannon, 2018). Since social media posts typically consist of written text and/or images, they can be classified as texts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2018).

According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2005), qualitative content analysis enables the researcher to gain a subjective yet objective understanding of social reality by looking at the meanings and patterns that may be overt or covert in a text. It entails seeing trends, patterns, and classifications in the data and figuring out what they mean (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005). As a result, the qualitative content analysis approach was used for this study since it enabled the comprehension of the patterns and meanings present in the Father's Day-related Facebook posts shared by Ghanaians. It also allowed the researcher to develop subjective yet empirical interpretations of fatherhood representations by analysing the meanings and patterns that may be explicit or implicit in the recovered Facebook posts.

For this study, a total of 4,892 posts from Facebook were retrieved. The posts varied in length, ranging from a minimum of three words to a maximum of 120 words. In this study, a post was considered to be the basic text unit. The basic text unit used in content analysis is referred to as the unit of analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005). This study's

choice of a post as the unit of analysis is significant because it establishes the level of detail and depth of the analysis as well as the specific themes and patterns that will be discovered (Shaw, 2017). Moreover, this approach enabled the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the constituent elements present in the Facebook posts that were retrieved, and how these elements could potentially impact the overall significance of communication being conveyed. This method aligns with the views of Chenail (2019), who posited that utilising a social media post as a unit of analysis in a qualitative content analysis permits a more sophisticated examination of the post since the researcher can concentrate on particular aspects concerning the diverse forms that a post may assume, whether in written or pictorial form, including even the use of emojis.

Overall, the use of qualitative content analysis in this study was crucial because it provided the strategy, plan, and structure that defined this research project. In addition, qualitative content analysis offered the required logical link between the data that had to be gathered and the responses to the research questions (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018; Yin, 2017). Furthermore, because qualitative content analysis entails identifying patterns, themes, and meanings in text-based data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2018), the interpretations derived were arrived at after vigorously having read and reverting slowly to and from the posts. The volume of data was then organised into the most important patterns and meanings. In-depth explanations of the shared posts' latent meanings were also emphasised (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005).

3.3   Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Research sampling technique refers to the method used to select a subset of individuals or elements from a larger population to participate in a research study to study and analyse their experiences, beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours (Lindelof & Taylor, 2017). The goal

of sampling in qualitative research is to select participants who are representative of the population of interest and who can provide valuable insights and information about the research topic (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; Lindelof & Taylor, 2017). In qualitative research, several sample approaches can be utilised, such as convenience sampling, snowball sampling, and purposeful or purposive sampling, among others (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; Lindelof & Taylor, 2017).

Purposive sampling was used for this study. Purposive sampling is a technique used in qualitative research to select participants or a subpopulation for a study based on specific criteria that are relevant to the research question or topic (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). The purpose of this method is to guarantee that the sample is representative of the population of interest and will provide valuable insights for the research project (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). According to Lindlof and Taylor (2017), qualitative researchers are unable to capture every occurrence in real-time. Consequently, it is necessary to select a specific source of data or subpopulation for the study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). The appropriate selection of a sample permits researchers to make meaningful systematic contacts with the data location with minimal wasted effort (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017).

In adherence to the aforementioned assertions, this study sampled Father's Day posts on Facebook as the source of data for a variety of reasons. Facebook is a highly prevalent social media platform in Ghana, boasting a vast assemblage of user-generated posts, rendering it an invaluable resource for scholars seeking to scrutinise social media depictions of societal constructs and actualities (Manovich, 2017). In this context, Facebook posts are regarded as a medium for self-expression, capable of divulging the cultural and societal conventions and expectations surrounding the users' lived experiences (Manovich, 2017). To this end, this inquiry opted to focus on the Father's Day posts on Facebook, which provided the researcher with valuable insights into how

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fatherhood is apprehended and depicted in contemporary Ghanaian societies. Additionally, the examination of Father's Day posts on Facebook enabled the researcher to comprehend how Ghanaian Facebook users choose to depict their relationships with their fathers (Howe, 2018).

The decision to focus predominantly on Father's Day posts disseminated from 2020 to 2022 was consistent with the overarching aim of this study. According to Amoako (2023), while Mother's Day is widely recognised globally, Father's Day tends to receive less attention. However, in Ghana, Father's Day has experienced increased recognition and participation, particularly from 2020 to 2022. Each year during this period has seen a growth in engagement compared to the preceding year, indicating a rising trend in observance of the occasion in Ghana (Amoako, 2023). This suggests that the period between 2020 and 2022 marked the most widely recognised Father's Day festivities in the past decade. Furthermore, this period was selected also based on preliminary data collection, which revealed that the two-year period had the highest level of engagement on Facebook related to Father's Day in Ghana. To be able to answer all research questions comprehensively, it was essential to cover the two years with the highest engagement on Facebook regarding Father's Day in Ghana.

Overall, by purposefully focusing on Father's Day posts shared on Facebook between the period 2020 to 2022, this study was able to better understand how paternal representations on social media exist within the framework of prevalent current discourses that are, in many ways, prescriptive of parenting and gender. It also aided the study to understand how the increasing patronage of fatherhood corresponds to an evolving interplay of how social media is empowering users to be contributing members of socio-cultural narratives as well as how fatherhood in general is shifting to meet the changing demands of the time.

The researcher collected a total of 4,892 Facebook posts spanning the years 2020 to 2022 to analyse for this research. Posts were defined specifically as any original textual or visual content shared directly by Facebook users. This included the written text and images that users posted on the platform. Other types of Facebook activity such as videos, emojis, comments, reactions, and shares were not included in the analysis. Analysing every single type of Facebook activity would have broadened the scope of the research beyond what was feasible given practical constraints around resources and analyst capacity (Valkenburg et al., 2020). Developing a detailed coding scheme capable of making sense of videos, emojis, and secondary communication like comments presents challenges and complications that the researcher consciously chose to avoid (Valkenburg et al., 2020). By limiting the dataset to the 4,892 textual and visual posts, the researcher enabled deeper qualitative analysis of this focused type of social media content in alignment with the research aims. The longest post collected was 120 words and comprised a written tribute to the user's father. The shortest post collected was four words; a hashtag #HappyFathersDayGH.

3.4 Data Collection Method

Data collection for qualitative research typically involves a variety of methods, such as conducting interviews, observation, and analysing documents (Spencer & Snape, 2003). The choice of data collection method is determined by the research goal and the phenomenon under investigation (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). To collect data for this study and answer the research questions, document analysis was used as a data collection method.

Document analysis is a method of collecting data by analysing written or recorded materials such as reports, transcripts, letters, diaries, social media posts and other forms of text (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). The goal of document analysis is to understand the perspectives, experiences, and meanings of the people who produced or are represented in the documents (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). A wide range of social media studies that aimed to understand the perspectives, experiences, and meanings that users construct through their posts employed document analysis (Duguay, 2020; Huang & Su, 2018; Manovich, 2017; Kruk et al., 2019). For example, Kruk et al. (2019) sought to determine multimodal document intent in Facebook posts. According to Kruk et al. (2019), Facebook offers a large and diverse user base, which can provide a wide range of perspectives on user-generated content. These contents, which often take the form of a written word and/or picture, provide a wealth of data that can be analysed for meaning and context (Kruk et al., 2019).

Similarly, Duguay (2020) examined queer women's experiences of patchwork platform governance on Tinder, Instagram, and Facebook. Although Duguay's (2020) study highlights the seemingly contradictory governance practices of social media platforms, it also demonstrated that document analysis as a data collection method can serve the purpose of providing a glimpse into people's life experiences, perspectives, personalities, sexual preferences, and other forms of intersectionality, which can be useful for understanding the complexities of any socio-cultural subject. According to Huang and Su (2018), it is also possible to treat the social media posts in document analysis as an "interview," where the researcher uses the social media posts as a source of information and solicits answers to the research questions by interpreting the data in the social media posts. This approach is based on the idea that social media posts can provide insight into

the perspectives, experiences, and meanings of the users who are generating these posts (Huang & Su, 2018).

On the basis of the preceding assertions, the Facebook posts were treated as documents in this study. Document analysis entails identifying the posts that are pertinent to the research questions and organising the data into themes or categories (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). The researcher therefore read and re-read the document, looking for themes, patterns, and insights that relate to the research questions. The researcher coded the data to identify different themes, concepts, or categories that emerged from the document. This process is similar to the way an interviewer would ask questions and elicit responses from a participant as noted by Huang and Su (2018). This approach helped this study to better understand the perspectives, experiences, and meanings expressed by Facebook users concerning fatherhood.

3.5   Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure is an overview of the stages, strategies, and tools that the researcher utilised to gather the necessary information for the research project (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The purpose of the data collection procedure as a whole is to amass a wealth of information that is comprehensive, specific, and in-depth, with the intention of better understanding the phenomenon that is the subject of the investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2019). For this study, the data collection procedure described the stages, strategies, and tools that the researcher followed to acquire data from Facebook on how Ghanaians portrayed fathers during the 2020 to 2022 Father's Day celebrations.

The data collection procedure began with the researcher establishing his presence on Facebook. The researcher created a pseudonym Facebook account to collect data for the

study. This is consistent with Huang and Su (2018), who recommended that creating a pseudonym social media account for research purposes is a useful strategy for gathering data from social media platforms without linking the data collection activities to the researcher's account. The researcher utilised web scraping and manual data collection to compile a sample of Facebook posts relevant to the research questions. The researcher used hashtags such as #FathersDayGH and #HappyFathersDayGH to find Father's Day-related Facebook posts. Several postings appeared during the search. Therefore, the researcher downloaded all the Father's Day-themed posts that were published from 2020 to 2022 by Ghanaian users.

All of the recovered posts were saved in a Microsoft Word document. The researcher subsequently converted the Word document into PDF files to prevent accidental data modifications. To begin the analysis, he printed out the document and then continued with the analysis. This strategy adheres to Altheide and Schneider's (2013) recommendation to save the collected data more safely, so that the researcher can return to it at any point during the study. Altheide and Schneider (2013) added that converting social media posts to PDF files and printing them out allows the researcher to physically mark up and annotate the data, making it easier to identify patterns, themes, and relationships. This can be especially useful if the researcher is using a code-and-sort approach, where he assigns codes or labels to different themes, concepts, or categories that emerge from the data. The latter recommendation by Altheide and Schneider (2013) was especially valuable for the data analysis procedure of this study.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis in research refers to the process of systematically examining and interpreting data to extract useful information and insights (Braun & Clarke, 2019;

Creswell & Cresswell, 2018). This can include organising data, identifying patterns and trends, and making inferences (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Creswell & Cresswell, 2018). The goal of data analysis in research is to help researchers understand their data and draw meaningful conclusions from it (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018). The data for this study were analysed using thematic analysis procedures. The purpose of thematic analysis is to derive classifications and themes from a variety of data interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The study specifically utilised the manual thematic analysis procedure. Manual thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within data (Roberson et al., 2021). The researcher reads through the data multiple times to identify patterns and codes the data into themes, which are then organised and analysed to draw conclusions and insights about the research question (Roberson et al., 2021). The study analysed how Ghanaian Facebook users interpreted fatherhood based on the posts they shared on Father's Day. This allowed the study to establish associations in the analysis and to determine how distinct themes recurred throughout the analysis. The thematic analysis also helped the study to gain an in-depth understanding of potential issues (Marks & Yardley, 2004). This allowed the study to compare the issues raised with the available literature.

Manual thematic analysis is a flexible and widely used method for analysing qualitative data (Ashmore et al., 2020; Roberson et al., 2021). The process is typically done manually, rather than using software, which allows for greater flexibility and the ability to interpret the data in a more subjective and interpretive manner (Ashmore et al., 2020; Roberson et al., 2021). Numerous scholars have formulated notions on how to conduct a manual thematic analysis (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2019; Creswell & Cresswell, 2018;

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Crawford et al., 2008). Nonetheless, this study employed the procedures recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) and adopted by Alhojailan (2012) and Roberson et al. (2021). This model outlined three stages to conducting a thematic analysis. These are the data reduction stage, the display of data level and data drawing which outlines the issues for validation of the extracted themes.

The first step the researcher took was to reduce the data collected from the Facebook posts on Father's Day. This required sifting them and removing the irrelevant posts (Roberson et al., 2021). After sorting out the data and retrieving the part that is relevant to the study, the researcher considered creating a three columned table with the raw data in one column, themes generated in another and the third column containing general commentary on the data (Roberson et al., 2021). The researcher read the data on three occasions (Ashmore et al., 2020) before attempting to generate themes from them. Reading the text thrice before the analysis itself gave the researcher a clearer understanding of the issues (Roberson et al., 2021). He applied Bernard's (2000) ocular scan method to search for themes, obtain the full picture of the data, and to draw connections between the messages conveyed by the users.

Bernard's (2000) ocular scan method is a specific technique within manual thematic analysis that is used to identify patterns and themes within qualitative data. The method involves reading through the data multiple times, with each pass focused on a specific aspect of the data. The first pass, or ocular scan, was a general overview of the data, where the researcher looked for any overarching themes or patterns in the data. The second pass focused on identifying specific themes or categories within the data. This was typically done by coding or highlighting specific phrases or sentences that are relevant to the theme. The third pass was focused on identifying sub-themes or

subcategories within the themes that had been identified in the previous pass. Finally, the fourth pass focused on refining and consolidating the themes and subthemes and identifying any potential relationships or connections between them. The researcher analysed and interpreted the data to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Even though a great deal of care was taken in analysing the data, it was essential to validate the themes' dependability. The themes were validated by an independent reviewer. It was the responsibility of the independent reviewer to thoroughly examine the data and establish his themes. Then, the generated themes were compared to the researcher's themes to determine similarities and differences. Themes that did not accord with one another were reworked. The idea behind this process was to have highly reliable themes through the inter-coder analysis (Roberson et al., 2021). The researcher gained a better understanding of the themes as a result of the independent reviewer's contribution.

3.7   Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are necessary for qualitative research to ensure that the rights and well-being of study participants are safeguarded and that the research is done honestly and fairly (Arthur, 2019). Since there were no study participants in the current research, the emphasis was on ensuring that the selection and analysis of data from the social media posts displayed objectivity (striving to portray the research material honestly) and sensitivity (responding to even subtle clues of meaning). In conducting online research studies such as this current study, Wimmer and Dominick (2011) advise researchers to be ethically conscientious regarding the usage of private individuals' comments and posts. However, if the website is designed for the general public, the material may be freely analysed and quoted to the extent necessary for the research without the author's permission (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). As Facebook is a public communication

medium and postings published on the platform are public, this study did not require the permission of the authors of the posts retrieved for the analysis, as suggested by Wimmer and Dominick (2011).

Vanclay, Baines, and Taylor (2013) also mention that a research study must fully disclose all methods and analytical procedures used for the study to allow replication of the research work by another researcher, to enable peer review of the adequacy and ethics of the methodology, and to encourage critical self-reflection on the limitations of the methodology and any implications for the results and conclusions. Given the ethical principle espoused by Vanclay et al (2013), this research work fully outlines all the various steps, ways, and means through which the data collection was done and applied. It chronicles in full, the methods and procedures used in the collection and analysis of the data on the issues that emerged from the posts shared on Father's Day on Facebook by Ghanaian users between the period 2020 and 2022. Likewise, it covers the underlying principles and assumptions of the methods and procedures, as well as the rationale for their selection.

3.8   Summary

In this chapter, the research process and data analysis method are delineated. The researcher employed a qualitative content analysis technique to examine the themes that surfaced from the Facebook posts made by Ghanaian users during the Father's Day celebrations spanning the years 2020 to 2022. To collect the data required for this study, the researcher relied on document analysis, which enabled the retrieval of a total of 4,892 Facebook posts. The fact that the posts were publicly accessible obviated the need for the researcher to obtain ethical clearance or seek participants' consent before their utilisation

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in the study. Finally, the following outline was applied to the entire chapter: research approach; research design; sampling techniques; data collection methods and procedures; and ethical issues.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians from 2020 to 2022. The findings and analysis provide details on the content of these posts. The aim is to give insight into how fathers were portrayed on Father's Day during the period. This helps address the research questions guiding the study. The data collected was organised into themes and analysed using the literature and theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two. The first research question was answered using a table to visually present the data. This made it possible to identify the main topics in the posts and ascertain which ones came up most often. Organising and summarising the data this way helped provide a better understanding of the research question being examined.

4.1   RQ1. What are the dominant issues that emerged from the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians?

Undoubtedly, social media has become an integral part of modern society, allowing users all over the world to connect and share their thoughts and perspectives on various topics and events. Social media platforms like Facebook give users the ability to share their thoughts and perspectives on prevailing issues within communities.

This research question sought to examine Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians from 2020 to 2022 to identify the dominant issues that emerged from the views expressed. As social media usage continues to grow in Ghana, analysing the content posted around this annual holiday presented an opportunity to gain an understanding of

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how fathers are portrayed and which themes relating to fatherhood resonated most prominently with social media users in the country during the specified period.

In the pursuit of answering the above research question, it became evident that the dominant issues that emerged from the Father's Day photos shared on Facebook by Ghanaians predominantly focused on three overarching themes: appreciation and gratitude; celebrating father figures; and remembering lost fathers.

Table 1 as shown below visually presents the data collected from the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook. It shows the percentage breakdown of the different themes that emerged from the analysis. This visual representation of the data in Table 1 indicates which theme came up most commonly within the social media posts related to Father's Day.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Social Media Posts Related to Father's Day

Themes	Frequency	Percentage
Appreciation and gratitude	1,182	40.9
Celebrating father figures	1,120	38.7
Remembering lost fathers	590	20.4
Total	2,892	**100**

The percentage distribution of themes from Father's Day posts on Facebook in Table 1 above, provides valuable insight into how Ghanaians portrayed and engaged with the concept of fatherhood through social media. As shown above, the most prominent theme was "Appreciation and Gratitude" which accounted for 40.9% of all posts analysed. This suggests that over two-fifths of Facebook users in Ghana chose to express thanks and acknowledge the positive impact of fathers in their lives on this day. The second most

referenced theme was "Celebrating Father Figures" at 38.7%, indicating many also opted to honour paternal role models.

Taken together, these top two categories comprised nearly four-fifths of the total posts and highlight how Ghanaians predominantly used Father's Day on social media as an opportunity to show love, and respect and celebrate the fathers in their community. This positive framing of fatherhood promotes the important role that fathers play and encourages recognising their contributions, especially in a cultural context where paternal figures are greatly valued.

The remaining theme, "Remembering Lost Fathers," received a sizable lower percentage of 20.4%. However, its prominence still among the themes suggests Father's Day also served as a chance for some Ghanaians to reflect and pay tribute to departed fathers. This memorialising aspect, while not as widespread as appreciation or celebration posts, demonstrated social media could provide a platform for remembrance and support during a day that may stir difficult emotions for those who have lost their fathers.

4.1.1 Appreciation and Gratitude

The theme of "Appreciation and Gratitude" refers to expressions of thanks, acknowledgement and admiration for fathers and the role they play. Many of the posts that fell under this theme directly conveyed messages of gratitude for fathers. Common phrases included "Thank you for all you do" and "We appreciate you." Some posts highlighted specific ways in which fathers had supported and cared for their children or other family members.

One of the posts, shown in Figure 1, provided an example of expressing appreciation and gratitude. In this post, the user thanked his father for corrections, teachings, and prayers.

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Further details were given that described the father as a "destiny helper" who provided shelter and guidance through life. The post went into more specifics, recounting how the father had helped and influenced the user. By including these extra details about the father's supportive role, the user effectively demonstrated the theme of appreciating paternal figures on Father's Day through their social media message.
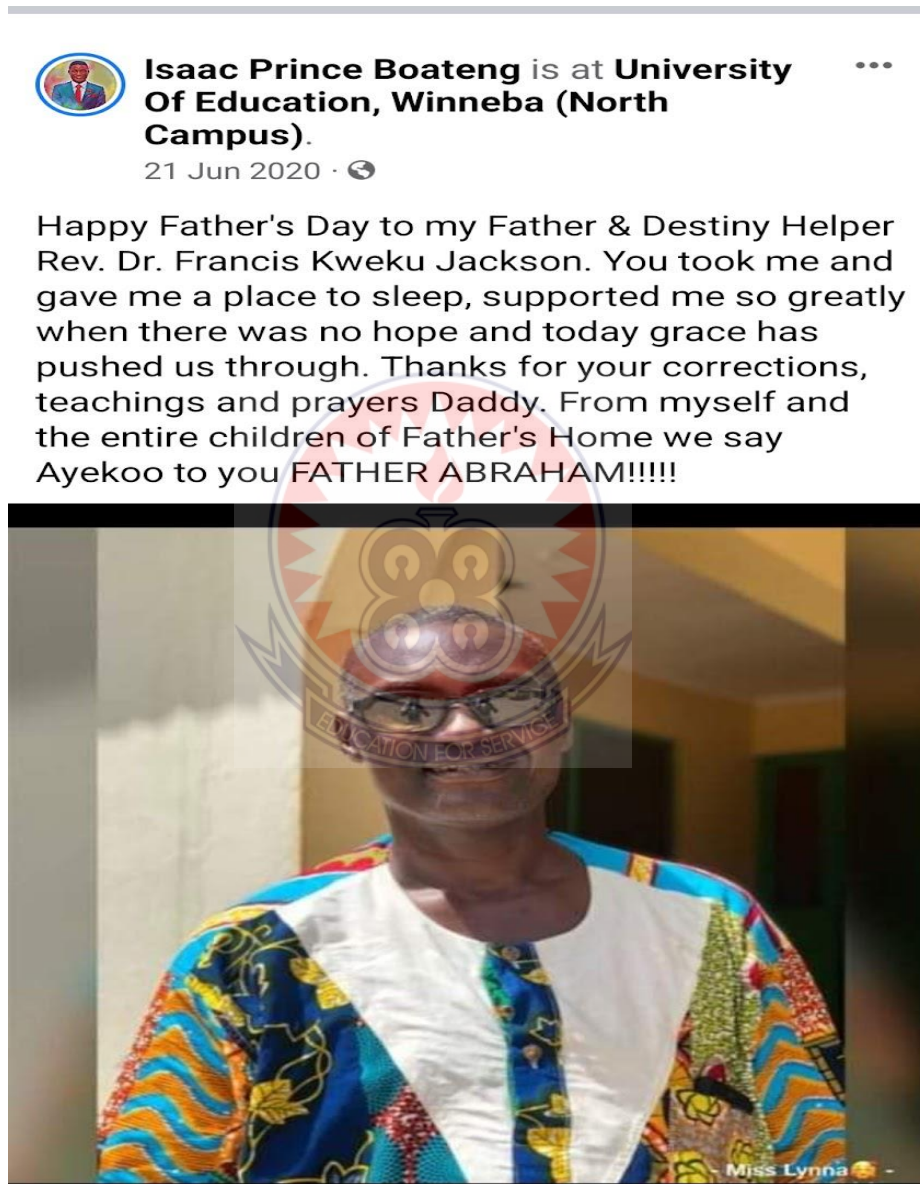
Fig. 1: Father's Prayers and Life Lessons Recounted in Son's Post

Another Father's Day post conveyed deep appreciation for a father's contributions. The user noted that due to the immense impact and support provided by his father in his own

life as well as their siblings', failing to acknowledge the father would constitute profound ingratitude. He went on to reflect thoughtfully on how different his life circumstances may have been in the absence of their father's involvement and guidance. Through this message, the user effectively highlighted the theme of showing gratitude, questioning rhetorically what their experience would have been without the role their father fulfilled. Thus, emphasising the importance of acknowledging paternal figures on Father's Day.

Figure 2: A User Pays Tribute to Father's Immeasurable Impact

As well as written messages, the posts contained important visual components that reinforced the theme of "Appreciation and Gratitude" for fathers. As depicted in *Figures 1* through *2*, many posts included photos of fathers alongside phrases wishing them a "Happy Father's Day." The inclusion of such images personalises the messages and provides specific examples of paternal figures being honoured. By pairing photos with celebratory greetings, the posts allowed family members to publicly showcase the fathers in their lives to whom they are expressing gratitude. This helped strengthen the sentiment of appreciation by putting faces to the online tributes. The visual elements served to make the Father's Day messages more personal and impactful compared to text-only.

The above findings present some noteworthy ways in which Ghanaians' online representations of fatherhood compare to and diverge from prior studies on paternal portrayals within African contexts. Existing literature often depicts fatherhood in more traditional and provider-centric terms, with fathers being viewed primarily as disciplinarians, breadwinners and heads of household (Leopeng & Langa, 2017; Mukuna, 2020).

However, the dominant theme of "Appreciation and Gratitude" from the social media posts indicates Ghanaians also emphasise fathers' emotional roles and impacts. This diverges from the literature that solely emphasises fathers' economic responsibilities and authority (Darko, 2017). By specifically recounting ways fathers supported and influenced them, posts acknowledged paternal figures' involvement in children's lives beyond just financial provision. This presents a more holistic and nuanced portrayal of fatherhood than some prior research (e.g., Ampim, 2021; Darko, 2017).

Additionally, prior studies from Western contexts found fathers more marginalised in family representations (Liyana, 2020; Trott, 2021). In contrast, the prevalence of father-child photos and tributes positioning fathers centrally suggests a more inclusive conceptualisation of paternal identity on social media. This challenges perspectives of African fatherhood as more peripheral (Ampim, 2021).

The inclusion of visual elements also personalises representations, moving beyond simplistic textual portrayals. Photos allow fathers to be recognised as individuals rather than abstract concepts. This subverts literature depicting fatherhood in broader generalised terms (Agbemavi, 2021). By utilising social media as a platform for public gratitude, Ghanaians' representations emphasise the relational aspects of fatherhood rather than fathers' roles in isolation. This presents a more holistic perspective that enriches understandings of African fatherhood beyond narrow functional characterisations (Adinkra, 2017). The findings therefore add nuance to existing literature by revealing a more rounded conceptualisation of fatherhood that balances traditional responsibilities with emotional dimensions and relational impacts. They challenge perspectives that marginalise African fathers or reduce their identities to singular roles.

4.1.2 Celebrating Father Figures

The theme of "Celebrating Father Figures" refers to social media posts honouring and recognising important male role models who fulfil paternal roles in children's lives, whether biologically related or not. The posts acknowledged how these father figures from diverse backgrounds play vital guidance roles in children's upbringings and development. The messages expressed appreciation for father figures in various capacities, including biological fathers as well as spiritual, mentorship, and political fathers for their impacts. For instance, in one post by Abdul (as shown in *Figure 3* below),

he celebrated his elder brother on Father's Day. While not a biological father, Abdul's post suggests the senior brother fulfilled an important fatherly function and deserved recognition on a special day.

Additionally, Halidu's post (as shown in *Figure 4* below) thanked the member of parliament and deputy minister Dr John Ampontuah Kumah Esq for his "untiring efforts to see the continuous progress and development of Halidu's people." By celebrating a dedicated political leader on Father's Day, Halidu's post holds relevance as a way to honour Dr. John Ampontuah Kumah Esq for his paternal guidance of the community in a civic rather than a familial context.

Figure 3: Abdul Appreciates His Brother on Father's Day.

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Figure 4: Halidu Thanks Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister

As evidenced in *Figure 5* below, other posts acknowledged spiritual fathers, expressing deep gratitude for how these individuals have been a divine blessing throughout their presence in their lives. In well-crafted reflections, these posts conveyed appreciation for the care, support, and pivotal roles their spiritual fathers have played with thoughtful consideration. Not only did the posts express appreciation for how spiritual fathers have served as a gift from God, but they also recognised the religious mentorship provided.

Figure 5: Celebrating Spiritual Fathers

The theme of "Celebrating Father Figures" presented in the social media posts aligns with several findings from previous research on fatherhood representations in African media and popular culture (Dery, 2019; Gyamfi, 2018). While biological fathers typically play the central paternal role, research has shown that communities in Africa often rely on an extended network of male mentors and leaders to help guide and support children's development (Gyamfi, 2018).

The posts described celebrating not just biological fathers but also elder brothers, spiritual fathers, and political leaders who took on important paternal functions. This reflects the cultural value placed on a broader definition of fatherhood beyond just the nuclear family

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(Diabah, 2018). Various studies have found that the non-parental contributions of mentors, elders and civic leaders are vital in many African communities to pass on wisdom and advocate for children's well-being (Diabah, 2018; Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2021).

The appreciation shown for these diverse types of "father figures" also corresponds with prior findings on the flexible and communal nature of fatherhood in African societies (Agbemavi, 2021; Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2021). While Western media often focuses solely on the biological parent-child relationship, the theme of these social media posts aligns with a more holistic perspective found in African cultures - that many caring individuals beyond just a biological parent can fulfil important guidance roles in children's lives (Agbemavi, 2021). The recognition of spiritual fathers and political leaders as paternal figures especially demonstrates the integration of familial and civic responsibilities seen as important in African contexts (Agbemavi, 2021).

4.1.3 Remembering Lost Fathers

The theme of "Remembering lost fathers" captures the sentimental manner in which Ghanaian Facebook users utilised Father's Day to memorialise and pay tribute to their deceased fathers. The posts categorised under this theme varied in their approach to commemorating departed fathers. Some users shared archival photographs of their late fathers alongside emotive captions conveying a profound sense of loss and longing that their fathers could still be present for Father's Day. Meanwhile, others also shared messages dedicated to fathers across the globe who have passed away, suggesting that Father's Day elicits complicated emotions amongst those mourning the absence of their paternal bonds.

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For example, one user named Obed (as shown below) took the opportunity to eulogise his deceased biological father for providing care until he reached 18 years of age before his passing.

Figure 6: Obed Eulogises His Deceased Dad

Additionally, a user known as Alhassan posted that although his father has died, he remains unforgotten in spirit.
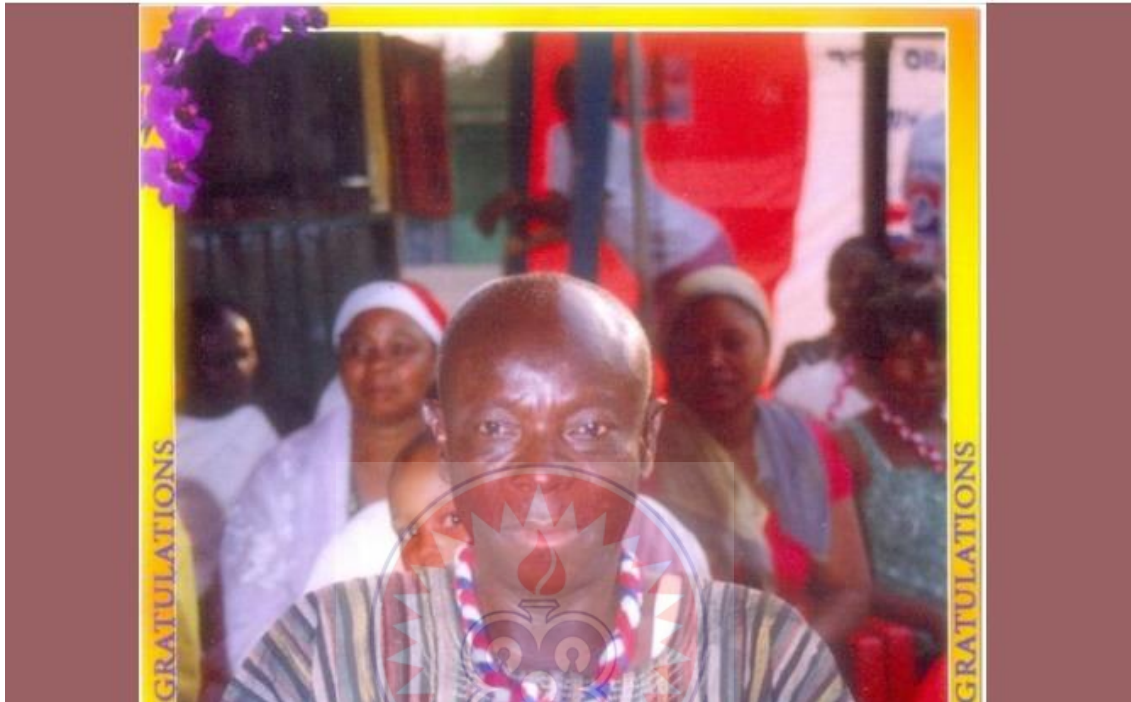
Figure 7: Alhassan Pays Tribute to His Deceased Dad

In the cases of both Obed and Alhassan, the users explicitly emphasise the loss of their biological fathers over other paternal figures. This suggests a profound emotional impact from the death of one's biological father, who represents an irreplaceable and formative biological connection. However, for the user called Peace, his post seems to memorialise and pay tribute to deceased fathers in a more general sense. His post, as shown below, specifically mentions "Happy Father's Day to all fathers in the rest of the world" and "rest in peace to our lost (even though he uses the word "lose" rather than "lost") fathers".

Figure 8: Peace Pays Tribute to All Deceased Fathers

The sentimental memorialisation of deceased fathers observed in these Facebook posts is consistent with literature highlighting the emotional bonds between fathers and children in Ghana. For example, Adinkra (2017) found that some Ghanaians of Akan ethnicity describe paternal love using the concept of selfless caring deeply tied to children's well-being. This lifelong fatherly commitment, even after death, resonates with the grieving expressed in the Facebook posts.

Additionally, the emphasis on biological fathers aligns with Boateng's (2020) quantitative study showing 90% of Ghanaian survey respondents disagreeing that a stepfather-child bond is identical to a biological one. Boateng (2020) argues that evolutionary psychology underlies an ineffable biological paternal bond. Thus, the

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Facebook posts reflect the irreplaceable emotional weight ascribed to deceased biological fathers.

However, Peace's more generalised tribute is consistent with literature on shifting family structures. Akoto (2019) found that 60% of Ghanaian adolescents are growing up with alternate father figures as migration has led to family separation. As disrupted paternal connections become more common, more complex father-child bonds emerge, which may relate to the Facebook message.

The findings reveal complex alignments and tensions with the theory of hegemonic masculinity across the three themes. This theory posits that most societies like the Ghanaian society promote an idealised construction of masculinity that values attributes like authority, economic provision, and leadership (Yang, 2020). According to the theory, achieving this hegemonic masculinity allows males to wield greater social power and influence (Kostas, 2021). However, the conceptualisations of fatherhood revealed across the three themes simultaneously align with and diverge from the constrained expectations of hegemonic masculinity in complex ways.

On one hand, the appreciation for fathers' emotional support and life guidance aligns with masculine ideals of serving as respected mentors and leaders within families (Messner & Jeff Hearn, 2015). Similarly, the celebration of diverse father figures who provide wisdom and advocacy in communal roles resonates with hegemonic constructions of men as responsible for directing and socialising children (Kostas, 2021). Additionally, the profound grief over deceased biological fathers connects to essentialist assumptions that paternal bonds are irreplaceable (Hunter & Riggs, 2017).

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Yet, the recognition of fathers' nurturance and holistic impacts beyond just disciplinarian and economic provision reveals alternative perspectives. The inclusion of political and spiritual fathers also signifies more fluid definitions of fatherhood in Ghanaian society. Finally, the commemoration of all fathers hints at shifting family structures are diversifying in Ghana as well. Several studies have shown that ideas about parenting roles are shifting in many modern societies (e.g., Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2021; Testa & Jackson, 2018).

For example, Leopeng and Langa (2017) found that providing emotional support and life guidance is just as important as financial provision in their roles as fathers in contemporary Ghana. Broader definitions of "fathering" roles could carry meaningful social implications (Agbemavi, 2021; Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2021). As rigid gender stereotypes related to parenting relax, it may enable more equitable sharing of domestic duties between men and women (Agbemavi, 2021). The incorporation of extended networks and role models beyond just biological fathers could also better provide psychosocial support essential to child development (Agbemavi, 2021). Ultimately, acknowledging more fluid conceptualisations of fatherhood allows for appreciating the diversity of positive impacts various father figures can have in contemporary families and communities.

4.2   RQ2. How were fathers represented in the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians?

This research question sought to examine how fathers were portrayed and described in Father's Day social media posts made by Ghanaians on Facebook. In analysing the Facebook posts to answer this question, three major themes emerged in how fathers were

represented: fathers as admirable examples, fathers as caring and loving, and fathers as complex paternal figures.

4.2.1 Fathers as Admirable Examples

The theme of "Fathers as Admirable Examples" encapsulates the overwhelmingly positive manner in which users portrayed the fathers in their lives as admirable role models and examples worth celebrating on Father's Day.

The posts categorised under this theme vary in the specific qualities and attributes of fathers that were portrayed, but they coalesce around presenting fathers as worthy of honour and respect. Some users, as seen in *Figure 9*, on *page 91* emphasised fathers' leadership and guidance, praising them as the leader of their families who offers sage advice to them as children even into adulthood. These posts focused more on fathers as dedicated teachers and coaches, highlighting how their instruction shaped their talents, education, and worldviews in an enduring way.

Additionally, some posts like the example in *Figure 10* as shown on *page 92* hailed fathers for the act of grooming children itself, suggesting users specifically appreciated the care, time, and intentional effort fathers put into raising and moulding offspring. Captions conveyed admiration for fathers gracefully balancing roles as providers, protectors, and nurturers. A few users even extended the admirable representation beyond just their fathers, sharing general tributes applauding all fathers for the critical function they serve in family units and society.

For example, in his post pictured above in *Figure 4*, Halidu described Ghanaian Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister Dr. John Ampontuah Kumah as a "father of the

nation." While likely an exaggeration given Dr Kumah does not have a direct or indirect paternal relationship with all Ghanaian citizens, Halidu's representation aligns with patterns within the larger theme of portraying certain fathers as admirable examples. His post captures the tendency of some Ghanaian Facebook users to extend praise of admirable fathers even to prominent men like politicians who exhibit what they view as effectively "fathering" the nation through their governmental leadership and authority.

Figure 9: User Highlight Fathers' Leadership and Guidance

Figure 10: *User Extending Admiration beyond Personal Experiences*

The findings on Ghanaian Facebook users portraying fathers as admirable examples and role models align with existing literature emphasising the importance of positive paternal involvement and the benefits it offers children. Research has consistently shown that warm, supportive fathers who are actively engaged in their children's lives promote better socioemotional, behavioural, and cognitive outcomes (Glauber, 2019; Johansson & Andreasson, 2017). Children with involved fathers exhibit higher self-esteem, better peer relationships, better academic achievement, and lower rates of delinquency (Randles, 2018).

The posts celebrating admirable fathers for qualities like guidance, leadership, and intentional nurturing reflect dimensions of positive paternal involvement tied to these benefits. Providing structure, imparting wisdom, coaching talents, and grooming children encapsulate what Mukuna (2000) dubbed the "responsibility" and "accessibility"

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components of father involvement (p. 12). Fathers serve an instrumental role in child development by being available and investing time, care, and effort (Leopeng & Langa, 2017; Mukuna, 2020).

So, posts highlighting admirable fathers as dedicated teachers and caregivers align with the literature on paternal involvement being critical for healthy child outcomes (Glauber, 2019). Representing them as role models captures the importance of children identifying with the competency of strong male figures early in life (Johansson & Andreasson, 2017). So, in line with these users posts, it suggests that Ghanaian fathers' admirable reputation has been positively impacting children.

4.2.2 Fathers as Caring and Loving

A notable theme that emerged from the analysis of Father's Day Facebook posts by Ghanaians was the characterisation of fathers as caring and loving. This theme encompasses posts that depicted fathers as affectionate, nurturing, and actively involved in their children's lives. The posts that encompassed this theme generally conveyed emotions about fathers' love, care, and emotional accessibility. For example, many posts directly referenced the love their father shows them or times when their father demonstrated affection, concern, or support. Others emphasised their father making sacrifices, providing comfort during difficult situations, or always being present when needed.

In the post labelled *Figure 11* on *page 94*, Nana Sarfo Kantanka shares how his father's unconditional love and support uplifts him. Attached to the post is a photo of his father. Nana describes how his father hugs him affectionately, accepting him without judgment. According to Nana's post, his father's affection for him remains constant despite moments of youthful mistakes. The post highlights the vulnerability of human nature and

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underscores the role of a committed father in helping one rise above setbacks. The user, Nana, expresses his gratitude for the gift of an unwavering paternal presence that has supported him through the highs and lows of life.

Nana Sarfo Kantanka is 🏷 celebrating **Fathers' Day** with **Anthony Yorke** and **2 others** ...
at **Akim Manso**.
20 June 2021 · Akim Oda · 🌐

Happy Father's day to my one and my only Big Daddy. Opayin SARFO KANTANKA. A.K.A. Oluman Kantanka. Daddy, I do not know that what type of love it is that you have for us. Oluman Kantanka, your love is everything for me, you encourage me in every situation, You teach me how to be bold as a man, you hug me and smile at me even if I lies to you, Daddy you are always there for me no matter what happens, I love you Dad, long life and healthy is your portion. Wo mmanom nyinaa ne wo nananom nyinaa s3!, y3 ma wo Ayekooo!. May God bless you immensely, Oluman S.K.

Figure 11: **Nana Sarfo Kantanka Shares Father's Unconditional Love**

In a post labelled *Figure 12* on *page 95*, Facebook user Alhassan Yakubu also shares how his life has been positively impacted by the love and support of his father. He reflects on his childhood, teenage years, and adult life, acknowledging that without his father's guidance and care, his life may have taken a different and less successful path.

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Figure 12: **Alhassan Yakubu Credits Father's Love and Support on Life Journey**

The findings depicting Ghanaian fathers as caring and loving align well with existing literature emphasising the immense developmental benefits for children of having affectionate and nurturing fathers.

Research demonstrates that paternal warmth, responsiveness, and emotional availability facilitate socioemotional, behavioural, cognitive, and physical child outcomes (Leach, 2019; Randles, 2018). Children with sensitive, supportive fathers exhibit higher self-esteem, better self-regulation, more prosocial behaviour, lower anxiety and aggression, better physical health, and greater academic achievement (Rilling & Mascaro, 2017).

So posts highlighting fathers as affectionate and unconditionally loving like Nana's in *Figure 11* capture meaningful dimensions of positive father involvement. Descriptions

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of fathers providing comfort align with accessibility, which facilitates child attachment (Randles, 2018). The posts also underscore how feeling loved by fathers impacts youth outcomes, as children internalise paternal warmth as acceptance and support (Johansson & Andreasson, 2017). Even into adulthood, research shows perceptions of non-rejecting fathers predict well-being (Glauber, 2019). So Alhassan's reflections in *Figure 13* demonstrate the lasting imprint caring fathers have. In capturing these markers of sensitive support tied to a range of benefits, these posts illustrate some Ghanaian fathers positively contributing to developmental trajectories, in line with global fatherhood literature.

4.2.3 Complex Paternal Figures

The theme of "Complex Paternal Figures" that emerged from the analysis of Father's Day Facebook posts by Ghanaians refers to the finding that fathers were often portrayed in a nuanced, multi-dimensional manner. Rather than being depicted as purely positive or negative, the fathers represented in these posts came across as complicated people trying their best under challenging circumstances.

The posts categorised under this theme suggested that while fathers may not always be perfect and their methods may not always be agreed with, they tend to have good intentions and display strength and care for their families. There was a recognition that fathers are complex human beings with a mix of virtues and flaws, strengths and weaknesses. The posts avoided showing fathers neither as superheroes nor villains, but rather as ordinary men navigating the difficult role of parenthood as best they can. Even in posts that critiqued or expressed frustration with fathers' approaches, there was generally an underlying current of appreciation for fathers' efforts and care. A good example is the post labelled *Figure 13* on *page 97*.

Ernest Mamonbe is with **Anthony Frank** and **12 others** at **E. P College Of Education.Bimbilla**.
20 June 2021 · Saboba · 🌐

This is my father, Mr. Joseph Mamonbe. We don't agree on so many things because of our generational differences, but there are so many things that I am today because he gave me the opportunity to become. First of all is giving birth to me which gave me the opportunity to even disagree with him.
When he was a Christinan some 10 years ago, he would cross a river over 5 miles from my village with a canoe 🛶 to Bejamse where his church Christ Kingdom Apostolic church was. I grew up to hear him every dawn praying aloud for the family. My father is a very hardworking man, and was very responsible as a parent until he stopped going to church. My very big problem with him is; what he has left as unprofitable to him is what his son has come to pick up with.
Join me as I celebrate my father today for bringing up a champion like me and my siblings. Also, help me pray for his salvation once again, that he will come back to the light of the Gospel.
Happy Father's Day Dad!
I love you ❤️

I reserve the rest for next year.

Figure 13: **A Post Acknowledging A Father's Complexities**

The findings depicting Ghanaian fathers as complex paternal figures align with literature recognising the multidimensionality of fatherhood and highlighting the nuances of paternal involvement. For example, research demonstrates parenting and father engagement occur along a continuum and in multiple domains, rather than in absolutes (Maslauskaitė & Steinbach, 2021). According to Lancy (2020), fathers are responsible for balancing numerous duties such as providing, protecting, caregiving, offering guidance, and engaging in play activities with their children. Therefore, children can perceive their fathers as complex individuals with a blend of positive and negative traits, strengths, and limitations, as the posts indicate. These complex representations likely capture varying dimensions of paternal involvement across moral, social, emotional,

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ethical and practical domains that cultivate child development (Mari, 2017; Scheibling, 2018). The finding that shortcomings coexist with loving intentions mirrors literature on how even less sensitive fathers still positively contribute to children's trajectories (Scheibling, 2018).

So these posts recognising the complexity of paternal roles reflect scholarly emphases on nuance over narrow good/bad binaries in fatherhood. They align with calls to consider how systemic factors like socioeconomics shape paternal involvement, leading to heterogeneity in how men father their children (Lancy, 2020; Maslauskaitė & Steinbach, 2021). Given contexts like financial adversity that often necessitate migrant work or long work hours, fragments of involvement may be the reality for many Ghanaian fathers (Agbemavi, 2021). However, the positive tone that underlies even critical posts is a clear indication of the maturity with which some Ghanaians view fatherhood. This is a demonstration of realistic expectations, empathy, and gratitude for paternal efforts. Such balanced paternal representations in Ghanaian families and discourse are in line with international fatherhood research, highlighting the complexity of this topic. There is an awareness that being a good father involves much more than conforming to culture-bound ideals.

Relating the three themes from the Facebook posts to the theory of hegemonic masculinity shows areas of alignment and disagreement. For example, the theme of "fathers as admirable examples" aligns with aspects of hegemonic masculinity theory which emphasises men as leaders, providers, and role models displaying competence and authority (Messner & Jeff Hearn, 2015). Praise for fathers' guidance, leadership, coaching talents, and grooming children reinforces masculine norms of men steering families and

imparting wisdom (Ryan & Johnson, 2018). The extension of admiration to politicians also perpetuates associations between leadership, power, and revered manhood.

Additionally, aspects of the "caring and loving" theme portraying fathers as nurturing align with emerging "caring masculinities" that still largely operate within hegemonic frameworks emphasising men's family responsibilities (Oluwatosin and Olatunji, 2018). Descriptions of fathers providing, sacrificing, and supporting during challenges depict masculine norms of reliability and children depending on fathers' emotional and material care (Oluwatosin and Olatunji, 2018). However, counter to stereotypical hegemonic masculinity, fathers were also represented as affectionate caregivers, nurturers, and sources of emotional support who display vulnerability. The unconditional acceptance and non-judgment described go beyond stern authoritarian manhood archetypes (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Such sensitivity and emotional availability diverge from constraints of self-reliance and toughness in hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Additionally, the complex, nuanced paternal depictions avoid simplistic good/bad binaries about fathers and directly contradict masculine ideals purporting men as perfect providers and protectors. Capturing shortcomings and flaws contradicts paternal competence notions in hegemonic masculinity (Kostas, 2021). The empathy and contextual considerations of challenges facing fathers further separate the representations from rigid, uncompromising masculine norms (Oluwatosin and Olatunji, 2018). So while providing admiration and acknowledging responsibility as leaders and caregivers aligns with aspects of hegemonic masculinity, the emotional sensitivity, vulnerability, imperfections and complexity revealed a departure from idealised stereotypical masculine norms of fathers. The multi-dimensionality defies the expectations espoused

in dominant Ghanaian cultural constructions of fatherhood (Gaisie & Adu-Gyamfi, 2020; Testa & Jackson, 2018).

4.3   RQ3. How were gender roles portrayed in the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians?

This research question sought to examine how gender roles were portrayed in the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians. In analysing the posts to answer this question, two major themes emerged: conflicting portrayals of gender roles and celebrating father-mother partnerships.

4.3.1 Conflicting Portrayals of Gender Roles

The theme of "Conflicting Portrayals of Gender Roles" signifies the presence of conflicting portrayals of gender roles in how gender roles were portrayed in the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians. The Facebook posts revealed complex and sometimes contradictory depictions of masculinity and fatherhood. On one hand, some posts celebrated men as strong, stoic providers and leaders of their families. Yet other posts challenged more traditional stereotypes by highlighting men's nurturing, caring, and expressive sides as fathers.

For instance, some social media posts portrayed fathers as warriors who are strong and unbreakable, while other posts showed fathers as loving, caring and nurturing. Specifically, one post celebrated a father for being a warrior (as illustrated in *Figure 15*). In contrast, another post featured an image of a shirtless man carrying two infants, one on his back and one at his side, with the caption "Happy Father's Day to all responsible men" (as shown in *Figure 16*).

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Figure 14: A Post Describing A Father As A Warrior

Figure 14 above shows a critical view of fathers as aggressive and dominant "warriors." The language of "warrior" promotes gender stereotypes of men as harsh, violent protectors and providers for their families (Wilson, 2021). Describing fathers mainly in this hypermasculine warrior role suggests a limited expectation of men's place in family structures and caretaking capacities (Howe, 2018). In contrast, *Figure 15* on *page 102* offers a sensitive counterpoint through its "Happy Father's Day" message praising responsible and nurturing father figures. The man pictured gently cradling infants contradicts stereotypes. Instead, he models emotional availability, vulnerability, tenderness, and hands-on caregiving. This post expands concepts of positive masculinity

to include classically "feminine" qualities like loving attentiveness to children's basic needs (Dery, 2019).

Figure 15: A Post Acknowledging a father as Nurturing

Thus, while *Figure 15* emphasises masculine gender performance to the point of promoting rigidity and aggression, *Figure 16* counterbalances by highlighting men's abilities to nurture, support, and connect emotionally with their children. The posts present opposing perspectives on whether paternal devotion manifests through provision and protection alone, or by integrating conventionally "feminine" nurturing qualities as well. Their contrast invites debates over gender assumptions in fatherhood.

4.3.2 Celebrating Father-Mother Partnerships

The theme "Celebrating Father-Mother Partnerships" refers to Facebook posts highlighting cooperative and supportive relationships between husbands and wives in their roles as parents. Specifically, many posts categorised under this theme were made by wives expressing appreciation and gratitude for their husbands' involvement in parenting and family life.

The posts reflect an acknowledgement of parenting as a shared endeavour between mothers and fathers, with several wives commending their husbands for being present, engaged, and willing fathers to their children. For example, as illustrated in *Figure 16* as evidenced on *page 104*, one specific user thanks her husband for stepping up as the father of her children. She goes on to wish that they will be blessed with long lives to positively impact their generation – together. This suggests the wife views childrearing as a joint, lifelong commitment requiring teamwork.

Similarly, the post from *Figure 17* depicts a wife so satisfied with the parenting collaboration she shares with her husband that she engages in some playful humour. She writes that she wishes to get pregnant repeatedly because her husband so reliably shoulders cooking, cleaning and other domestic duties as her partner.

The posts in *Figures 16* and *17* highlight wives publicly recognising and uplifting the teamwork approach they share with husbands in raising children. The cooperative partnerships reflect a move beyond lone parenting roles towards more of a complementary, joint caregiver model between mothers and fathers.

Kwal Liya is with **Iliasu Salifu** and **5 others** at **Nima Post Office**.
19 June 2022 · Accra · 🌐

Happy Father's Day to the man of my heart💕, the father of my children 👪,
The love of my life 💃❤️ ❤️❤️☀️
Together we live long to bless our generation 👪👪👪👪👪 Inshaa Allah 🙏🙏🙏Ameen
And to all Father's around the Globe 🌍
I wish you a Happy Father's Day 👳 🥰🤚

Figure 16: **A User Expresses Gratitude and Emphasises The Importance of Teamwork.**

Gadabsi Zee Suhuyini is with **Shaharan Suhuyini** at **Tamale South**.
19 June 2022 · Tamale · 🌐

I wish to be pregnant all the time. No cooking, no cleaning because you believe in partnership and always remind me of emulating the Holy Prophet (SAW). All I do is to order all my cravings from the Shaharan's kitchen. When Wunpini finally arrived, I remember you telling me you are ready to take care of baby Shasha all night so I can have enough sleep....you never stopped supporting me whenever you came to Tamale till date. Sometimes you even have to take baby out for me to have enough rest.
Happy Fathers Day best daddy.
We love you ❤️.

Figure 17: **A Woman Acknowledges Her Husband's Supportive Role**

The findings highlighting cooperative partnerships between Ghanaian mothers and fathers align well with a growing body of literature emphasising the benefits of an egalitarian approach to parenting over traditional gender roles. Research increasingly demonstrates that equitable co-parenting, with both mothers and fathers sharing caregiving responsibilities, facilitates positive outcomes for children and parents (e.g., Johansson & Andreasson, 2017; Leach, 2019; Randles, 2018). More balanced involvement and domestic collaboration between parents are tied to women's greater relationship and life satisfaction as well as men's increased caregiver skills and father-child bonding (Randles, 2018).

So posts like *Figure 17* that commend engaged fathering and view childrearing as a joint marital endeavour reinforce scholarly conclusions on the developmental advantages of shared parenting. The playful tone in *Figure 18* suggests equitable domestic duties underlie genuine co-parenting teamwork. This aligns with literature linking the division of labour to parental compatibility and partnership longevity (Leach, 2019). Furthermore, public acknowledgement and praise for fathers' domestic and caregiving efforts align with research showing social support increases paternal involvement and co-parenting (Johansson & Andreasson, 2017). These posts may therefore encourage ongoing father engagement.

The themes of "conflicting portrayals of gender roles" and "celebrating father-mother partnerships" provide interesting insights when considered through the lens of hegemonic masculinity theory. The theme of conflicting gender role portrayals directly connects to debates within hegemonic masculinity theory over men's capacities to exhibit conventionally "feminine" qualities related to nurturance and caregiving (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The Facebook post describing fathers as aggressive "warriors"

aligns with hegemonic masculinity ideals emphasising male domination, toughness, and profound separation from feminine qualities (Hunter & Riggs, 2017; Kostas, 2021). However, the counter-post showcasing paternal nurture and tenderness relates to emerging masculinity theories allowing more room for men's emotional sensitivity and involved parenting (Dery, 2019).

Similarly, the theme of celebrating father-mother cooperative partnerships in childrearing aligns with scholarship challenging hegemonic masculinity by demonstrating that equitable, interdependent co-parenting enables both positive child and parent outcomes (e.g. Leach, 2019). Hegemonic masculinity theory has been critiqued for narrowly conceptualising masculinity in ways that constrain men's identities and family roles (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In contrast, the posts highlighting supportive co-parenting reflect social progress toward balancing masculine and feminine spheres.

In conclusion, while some Facebook posts perpetuated masculine gender role assumptions, others resisted hegemonic stereotypes by showcasing men's nurturing capacities and emphasising the importance of parental collaboration. The conflicting gender portrayals theme connects directly to theoretical debates over the costs of hegemonic masculinity, while the partnership theme relates to research advocating more gender-equitable parenting approaches.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings on the representation of fathers in Facebook posts by Ghanaians on Father's Day. It also draws conclusions based on the analysis of how fathers were portrayed through the major themes that emerged. Recommendations are made on how social media could be leveraged to promote more positive and equitable representations of fathers and parenting roles in Ghana. The limitations of focusing solely on Facebook posts for Father's Day are discussed. Finally, suggestions are provided for further research to gain deeper insights into how media representations shape cultural perceptions of fatherhood and family dynamics in modern Ghanaian society.

5.1 Summary

This study sought to examine Father's Day-related posts on Facebook by Ghanaian users to identify dominant emergent themes, gain insight into how fathers were represented. It also analysed the portrayal of gender roles. An extensive review of scholarly literature established strong foundations on multiple concepts relevant to the research aims and context, spanning social media communication patterns and impacts, evolving definitions of fatherhood and masculinity, the significance of paternal involvement in child development, gender stereotypes and constraints around parenting, as well as the explanatory theory of hegemonic masculinity and related critiques.

A qualitative methodology was adopted based on a subjective, socially constructed philosophy of knowledge that aligned interpretively with investigating users' meanings

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and perspectives related to fatherhood on Facebook. Purposive sampling targeted 4,892 relevant posts from 2020-2022 containing text and visuals related to Father's Day in Ghana. Data gathering relied on manual collection and document analysis oriented to the individual posts as the units of analysis. Systematic manual thematic analysis utilising multiple reading passes and validation techniques facilitated the coding and categorisation of the post content into meaningful patterns and themes responsive to the research questions.

5.2 Main Findings and Conclusions

In examining the portrayal of fathers through Facebook posts, the predominant themes discovered across the three research questions provided revelatory conclusions on shifting gender conceptions.

The first research question sought to identify the dominant issues that emerged from the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians. In examining the content of posts, three themes emerged: appreciation and gratitude; celebrating father figures; and remembering lost fathers. Specifically, appreciation and gratitude represented 40.9% of posts, demonstrating that expressing thanks and positive sentiments were the most predominant way users engaged with the topic of fathers. Meanwhile, 38.7% of posts fell under celebrating father figures, signifying commemorating admirable paternal mentors and role models as another key focus. Finally, 20.4% of posts centred around grieving deceased fathers, highlighting Father's Day triggering painful emotions for those mourning profound paternal losses.

The prevalence of appreciation and gratitude posts implies Father's Day prompted users to acknowledge fathers for playing a meaningful nurturing role tied to positive

developmental outcomes, beyond just serving as disciplinarians or financial providers. This challenges prevalent literature that paints Ghanaian fathers as more peripheral or authoritarian figures compared to mothers as caregivers. Furthermore, the expansive celebration of diverse paternal figures reflects the significance placed in Ghanaian culture more broadly on guidance from a communal network of role models, not just biological fathers. However, intense grieving sentiments toward deceased fathers' irreplaceable bonds do align with research emphasising the singular lifelong emotional connection conferred through biological paternity.

When analysed through the lens of hegemonic masculinity theory emphasising male power and dominance, the dominant issues that emerged from the Father's Day posts shared on Facebook by Ghanaians largely diverge from and challenge the constraints of traditional hegemonic ideals restricting fathers to stern providers and protectors. Descriptions of fathers showing care, affection and vulnerability defy conventions of self-reliance and emotional restraint. However, the emphasis across posts on fathers' guidance and leadership roles does connect to long-standing masculine norms around directing and socialising children. Social media tributes applauding male community leaders' positive impacts on children's welfare perpetuate broader cultural associations drawn between public reverence and authority being conferred to dominant masculine figures. Finally, the acute sense of irreplaceable loss expressed toward deceased fathers essentialises paternal ties in a manner that closely aligns with criticisms of hegemonic masculinity assumptions biologically equating reproduction with indispensable fatherhood status.

The second research question sought to uncover how fathers themselves were represented in the Father's Day Facebook posts made by Ghanaians. In examining the sample of posts, the following three themes emerged: Fathers as admirable examples; Fathers as caring

and loving; and Complex paternal figures. The first two themes imply fathers are widely revered for capably balancing conventionally masculine qualities like competency, leadership and provision alongside more classically feminine traits like emotional availability and nurturing care. However, the theme of complexity injects nuance by capturing how systemic constraints may prevent fathers from achieving consistent positive engagement.

Specifically, analysis of the discourse around admirable examples reveals paternal figures upheld as role models for qualities like wisdom, guidance, talent development and the graceful mastery of parenting responsibilities. This suggests fathers are positively impacting children by actively filling conventionally masculine mentoring roles. Meanwhile, loving caring representations diverge from prevalent scholarly assumptions of African fathers as universally distant disciplinarians by underscoring men's capacities for emotional sensitivity. However, complex depictions reconcile shortcomings with an understanding of the structural and cultural barriers that can limit paternal involvement.

When interpreted through the theoretical lens of hegemonic masculinity, the theme of fathers as admirable examples contains clear elements aligning with conventions of masculine norms. Descriptions praising fathers for guidance, leadership and grooming abilities reinforce longstanding expectations of men capably steering family units and socialising children. However, caring representations depicting sensitivity and unconditional acceptance contest conventions of masculine strength and stoicism which discourage vulnerability. Furthermore, nuanced complex portrayals exposing fathers' flaws and limitations defy the competent protector and provider assumptions embedded in stereotypical paternal ideals. So, while some posts perpetuate assumptions, others unpack masculine constraints.

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Lastly, the third research question sought to uncover how gender roles were depicted in the Father's Day Facebook posts made by Ghanaians. Analysing gender dynamics provides critical insight into evolving societal attitudes and assumptions regarding family gender norms and parental responsibilities. In examining the posts, two main themes emerged: conflicting portrayals of gender roles; and celebrating father-mother partnerships. The presence of conflicting gender role portrayals points to complex, unresolved tensions between upholding conventional masculine qualities and evolving caring masculinities that incorporate classically feminine traits. This suggests potential generational divides regarding the expectations of fathers. Meanwhile, posts celebrating cooperative father-mother pairs imply a shift away from more segregated parenting duties traditionally divided along gender lines.

Taken together, the themes indicate that while some Facebook posts continue to perpetuate outdated assumptions equating responsible fatherhood solely with conventionally masculine qualities like financial provision, moral leadership and domination, other posts actively contest these constraints by showcasing fathers' emotional sensitivity and caring capacities. Additionally, posts highlighting mutually supportive co-parenting relationships promote a collaborative approach that diverges from the archetype of the stoic male breadwinner and doting female caregiver.

Reinforcing scholarship on the impacts of involved, egalitarian fathering, these shifting representations both likely reflect and reinforce expanding conceptualisations of positive masculinity and endorse more fluid, equitable parental partnerships. However, the conflicting gender role portrayals simultaneously underscore how enduring cultural

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notions of manhood and fatherhood rooted in patriarchy and gender role segregation persist in shaping societal attitudes.

Viewed through the lens of hegemonic masculinity theory, the theme emphasising strong masculine traits such as being a warrior reflects hypermasculine characteristics like aggression and protection. This aligns with the theory's idea of male dominance and the clear distinction from traditionally feminine roles. However, there are also representations of fathers showing emotional sensitivity, vulnerability, and caregiving, which challenge the notion of detached and self-reliant fatherhood often associated with narrow masculine ideals. Additionally, posts highlighting cooperative parenting between spouses reflect a shift towards balancing masculine and feminine responsibilities. While conflicting gender portrayals reflect ongoing debates within hegemonic masculinity theory, representations of egalitarian partnerships diverge from and challenge long-standing masculine norms.
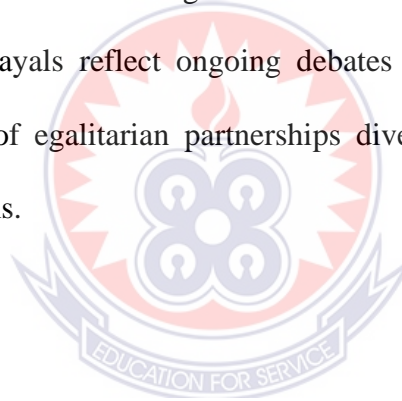
5.3 Limitations

While this study makes valuable contributions, there are certain limitations to acknowledge. Firstly, the manual extraction of thousands of Facebook posts proved extremely time-intensive. The absence of computational automation increased reliance on the researcher's qualitative judgements, introducing risks of selectivity biases in filtering and sampling. Practical data management difficulties also emerged in archiving, converting and printing such a substantial volume of posts for systematic coding and analysis. These feasibility issues posed barriers to gathering an even broader, more representative dataset.

Furthermore, the decision to concentrate solely on textual and visual posts presented analytical limitations, as coding multimedia elements like video requires an advanced skillset and was implausible given the timeline and resource constraints. Thus, the exclusion of audiovisual content omitted symbolically meaningful vernacular expressions. Conversation dynamics in comments and reactions also could not be captured. So relationship-building, endorsement and amplification behaviours offering additional insights were necessarily disregarded.

Additionally, the inability to segment content by variables like ethnicity, locale or gender prevented assessing differences in paternal representations across groups. Similarly, the exclusive focus within celebratory Father's Day-related discourse risked overlooking alternative paternal portrayals in every day, neglectful or critical contexts. Thus, claims of representativeness had to be cautiously qualified.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study opens up several promising directions for future research to build upon the insights gained into representations of fatherhood and masculinity revealed through Ghanaian social media engagement around Father's Day.

As the analysis was limited to publicly available Facebook posts, examining comparable content from other social media platforms could offer a wider or more nuanced understanding of how Ghanaian users portray and discuss fathers and fatherhood roles online. Researchers could also expand beyond Father's Day-specific posts to investigate everyday social media discourse on parenting and gender dynamics.

More targeted qualitative studies recruiting Ghanaian fathers as research participants could deepen interpretations of how concepts of masculinity and paternal responsibilities

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are constructed, embodied, and negotiated both online and in daily lived experiences within families and communities. In-depth interviews or focus group discussions may allow more complex personal perspectives and social expectations to emerge.

The visual and linguistic techniques that users leverage to portray fathers are another rich area for finer-grained multimodal discourse analysis. As images and captions often creatively interacted within the studied posts, further deconstruction of those intersemiotic connections could reveal additional insights around gender, identity and cultural meanings.

As this research took an initial step in examining social media content on fatherhood, expanded studies across wider demographic and geographic boundaries within Ghana and Africa may uncover valuable comparative understandings of how father roles and masculine norms are shifting across generations, social groups, and domestic environments. Further application and testing of theoretical concepts like hegemonic masculinity could be undertaken.

5.5 Recommendations

The shifting representations and attitudes revealed in this study of Ghanaian social media engagement around Father's Day warrant several recommendations aimed at better supporting involved, caring fatherhood and promoting more progressive, egalitarian conceptualisations of parenting responsibilities.

First, public health campaigns and community programs should positively showcase diverse examples of fathers displaying emotional availability, nurturance and cooperative co-parenting partnerships to help destigmatise masculinities transcending the constrained

archetypes of stern authoritarian or peripheral weekend fathers. Representational shifts matter for cementing progressive social change.

Additionally, civic and religious institutions should emphasise messages and policies valuing expansive definitions of family while being inclusive toward non-traditional and non-biological father figures who often play profoundly influential mentoring roles, especially when biological fathers are absent.

Furthermore, resources and training programs helping fathers develop caregiving skills and family work-life balance techniques could empower more hands-on paternal involvement. Employers implementing paternity leave policies can enable this engagement. Providing pathways for fathers to confidently expand domestic duties beyond just financial provision combats assumptions that caretaking is solely a feminine obligation.

Finally, national educational curricula should integrate lessons affirming men's capacities for emotional sensitivity and unconditional acceptance to socialise youth into embracing caring masculinities and fluid parental responsibilities not narrowly restricted by gender. Promoting involved fatherhood ideals from an early age can have multiplier effects over generations.

While the study suggested powerful cultural shifts expanding concepts of positive masculinity and endorsing egalitarian co-parenting, recommendations must remain cognizant of persistent inequitable social structures and traditional gender role assumptions that continue shaping societal attitudes. Sustained public policy and community engagement efforts are vital for cementing progressive representations and lived realities of balancing nurturance, guidance and provision in fatherhood.

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