DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN GHANA

Perceptions and Incidences among Ga (Women) Community

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this thesis is to present the perceptions of the Ga women of (Bukom and Chorkor) in Greater Accra, Ghana, on domestic violence. Also, the incidences of domestic violence among these women are explored.

The data was gathered through in-depth interviews with 20 participants, and the study is solely qualitative. The study was guided by sociological theories like feminist perspectives, the impact of culture and social status on domestic violence, patriarchy and many more. These theories are used to help understand domestic violence categorizing them by the respective perception of participants and the circumstance under which these incidences occur. What this thesis aims to achieve will not be possible if references are not made to specific sociological theories.

Majority of the participants had been victims of domestic violence, and their perception towards it varied from individual to individual. The main conclusion summed up to the notion that the women of Bukom and Chorkor continue to fall victims to domestic violence in their communities. The reasons the women fail to report incidences of abuse are because they were scared it will ruin their relationship with their partners. Though a law has been passed to stop domestic violence and a unit (DOVVSU) has been set up by the government of Ghana to handle domestic violence issues, there is still more to be done in that area.

This thesis demonstrates that setting up a temporary refuge home for domestic violence victims in all regions in Ghana would go a long way to help victims of domestic violence recover quickly and to use their time spent in the refuge homes to think of how to move on in life.

Keywords: Domestic violence or domestic abuse, victim, perpetrators, feminist theories, patriarchy, women subordination, men domination, cultural factors, cohabitation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Introduction……...1

1.1. Background and Aims of the study……..1

1.2. Statement of the problem…….……5

1.3. Objectives of the study……...….7

1.4. Research site…… ……..….8

1.5. Defining the main concepts……...12

1.6. Significance of the study……....17

1.7. Limitations of the study…….……20

1.8. Organization of the study…….…..21

2 Theoretical literature……...…...22

2.1. Culture and domestic violence……...……23

2.2. The Ecological framework…….29

3 Methodology……..……...…….40

3.6. Ethical Concerns…….……...47

4 Results……..…..49

4.1. Views of participants on domestic violen……..49

4.3 Socio-economic status and Domestic Violence…….54

4.4 Women's Autonomy……..57

4.5 Cultural Factors…… 59

4.6 Men's Domination……64

5 Discussion……..……...……66

5.1 Domestic Violence in Bukom and Chorkor……..66

5.2 Domestic Violence and Gendered Power……..68

5.3 Socio-economic Status ……70

5.4 Women subordination and Cultural Implications…… .72

6 Conclusions and Recommendations……..……....77

7 References and Appendices……..……...…….…….86

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Aims of the Study

Over time, violence towards women has proved to be a problem, crossing cultural, geographical, religious, social, health and economic boundaries (WHO, 2001). According to a United Nations (UN) report published by HuffPost[1] in 2018, the murder cases reported were found to be 87,000 in the previous year with about 50% of women being murdered by their intimate partners or family members. However, going by the figures released by the UN, it is evident that many women face homicide mostly in the continent of Africa.

Domestic abuse is considered an actual infringement of women's human rights with dangerous impact on women's sexual and conceptive wellbeing and established gender inequality in society (Ellsberg, 2006). According to the UN millennium goals as mentioned by Walby (2005), women harassment and violence is considered as an impairment for the achievement of "Millennium Development Goals" (MDG) therefore, regarding any attempt of decreasing brutality against women an achievement of the MDG.

In Canada, 46,918 incidents of spousal violence were reported to the Canadian police in 2009, and about 81% of these occurrences included violence perpetrated against females (Zhang et al., 2013). Ghana has a high rate of women's violence, as presented in the pioneering work of Ofei-Aboagye, (1994), where she makes clear that, women are categorized as belonging to the subordinate position.

[1] 1https://www.huffpost.com/entry/domestic-violence-most-common-killer-of-women-united nations_n_5bfbf61ee4b0eb6d931142ac

A review of some Ghanaian publications on domestic violence between the years 2010 and 2012, made evident 52 published articles of murders of spouses, 46 of those reported cases were registered against women (HRDA, 2012). These publications reinforce Ofei-Aboagye's, (1994) study in Ghana; his work on domestic violence revealed intimate partner violence as a pervasive social problem. Women's financial dependence on their companions is said to be a leading cause of marital violence. The UN has evaluated the different institutionalised factors related to socio-cultural practices which, not only induce but also reinforce women violence in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in the area of Ghana (UNICEF, 2000).

As a start, this thesis examines the perceptions and incidences of domestic violence among the Ga women of Bukom and Chorkor in Ghana. From the feminist point of view, marital violence is also one of the leading causes of gender inequality found in Ghana. There have been efforts to create awareness on domestic violence issues; however, there is still the need for the creation of precise awareness as the majority of women suffer from domestic violence, especially in Ghana. Majority of the women residents in the communities of Bukom and Chorkor who are the main participants for this thesis have a deficient level of education, so getting to know how well they understand and perceive domestic violence, would contribute immensely to the conclusion that would be drawn for this study. Most incidences of violence have not been reported to the police or the unit in charge for handling domestic violence issues and for that reason, there is the need to encourage women to ask for help in case of any incidence of violence. Here also comes into play the Ga women's acquaintance and opinions of facilities available to them and survivors of domestic violence, which will help in accomplishing one of the aims of the study. The question of how well their perception influences the utilization of support services will be not be ignored since Kedir & Admasachew

(2010); Liang, Goodman, Tummala-Nara, & Wientraub (2005); Ofei-Abogye (1994) have proved that ones understanding of intimate partner violence can influence their help-seeking behaviour.

Though there is significant debate on domestic violence, experts recommend that women and men are equally capable of perpetrating severe violence against their partners, much attention has been given to violence committed against women because of the high rate of domestic violence among women and its fatal effects. Violence towards women is possibly the most inescapable kind of maltreatment, and it is an all-inclusive issue that rises above ethnicity, race, topography, religion and cast differences (Pickup et al., 2001). Heize (2004) also stated that the most recognized domestic violence towards women is violence executed by partners and their family members. The commonness of domestic violence at home profoundly affects the physical, sexual, regenerative, mental or social strength of women and it is a noteworthy reason for deadly results according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2005). As a result of this, a considerable number of women are harmed, and thousands are murdered each year because of domestic violence at home (Hattery, 2009).

In furtherance, Ofei-Aboagye, (1994) revealed that Ghanaian women's reaction, or lack thereof, to the problem was influenced through an absence of support systems, and their lack of awareness about the alternatives available to assist them properly navigate abusive situations. Today, there has been significant improvement in Ghana by providing support services as well as passing legislation that directly deals with domestic violence called "The Domestic Violence Act 732". According to Act 732 of the parliament of the Republic of Ghana, "abusive behaviour inside the family regardless of the relation of husband and wife, or from a perspective of a child, who witnessed his father beating his mother as a regular act, is influencing and motivating to lead to

such kind of behaviour in future, and the trend of practising domestic violence from generation to generation is very probable".

Moreover, abusive behaviour inside the family is liable to impact the physical, sexual, economic, passionate, verbal or mental maltreatment of women and future generations of the family. However, service providers, researchers, and gender advocates still condemn the underreporting of domestic violence cases in the nation, which is also a cause why domestic violence rate in Ghana keeps rising (Ampofo, Awotwi, & Dwamena-Aboagye, 2005). Besides, regardless of improvements in service provision, few researchers have emphasized the awareness of women regarding domestic violence in Ghana and about the knowledge and information of the "Domestic Violence Act 732" (HRDA, 2012).

Here, the most vital thing is not only to spread awareness but to implement the act and take strict actions against such people who disobey the law. Based on the aforementioned, the questions being raised here are; are perpetrators being punished according to the law for abusing individuals? Has anyone been punished accordingly for being violent towards another that, it scares others from indulging in the same act? If there is no implementation, then there would be no example set, and people would not believe in such strict actions against the violence of any kind. Admittedly, it is challenging to implement, but it has to be initiated from a point, and it could be from any point and any place, what is of utmost importance is to minimize the rate of domestic violence, and to provide grounds for a victim, where they can raise their voice. This and some few others that have been mentioned earlier in this section are what this thesis aims to establish.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Violence towards women continues to be a global issue, which rises above culture, geographic, religion, social, age, and financial limits (Kerr 1994; Osam 2004; Person et al. 2005; Dugar et al. 2006; Kishor and Johnson 2006). Ghana is also involved in the global crisis of intimate violence, and the advocates indicate that one out of three women in Ghana is a target of domestic violence and gets abused physically, economically, emotionally and sexually (Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018). There are health implications for violence that occurs in the home, and these implications were affirmed during the 1996 World health assembly. The assembly found that "violence against women" is a leading health issue (WHO 1998). Additionally, WHO (1998), presented that domestic violence in thirty-nine nations of the world reached base at similar ends, and violence influenced women and their quality of life making it extremely hard for them to partake informative exercises at families, schools, and community levels.

The disclosure of different academic resources in Ghana has recognized domestic violence as an act that is against the national policies and requires reforms against the provision of proper rights of women. For instance, it has been observed that the "Domestic Violence Act 732" and the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) that intervenes in domestic violence issues have been violated. Though domestic violence has been raised on the international and national level as a problem, it remains widespread in Ghana.

In the past 20 years, much of the information related to domestic violence has been extracted along with the connections of other societal problems. Though different tools related to civil justice and controlling of criminal behaviour have been initiated to eradicate domestic violence in communities, no tools have justified the situation to stop abuse against women in society. (Sartin, Hansen & Huss, 2006). As stated earlier, the perpetrators are often men and the victims are mostly

women. Women in Ghana are the victims of domestic violence due to their limited access to job opportunities, human rights and quality of life (UNICEF, 2000; Brent et al. 2000).

The thesis explores the pertinent issues confronting domestic violence in Ghana through the perceptions and incidences of violence in order to draw more attention to the cankerworm that is destroying the peace in homes. Earlier research by Anyemdu, Tenkorang and Dold (2017) centred on the perception of Ghanaian women's knowledge of services available to victims of intimate partner violence. Also, Adjah and Agbemafle (2016) studied the determinants of domestic violence against women in Ghana using secondary data analysis from a household survey. However, this thesis focuses on perceptions, in general, to bring to light the real situation of domestic violence and also to draw the attention of appropriate institutions set in place for domestic violence issues if not the attention of the government. The Ga women's knowledge and perceptions of services available to victims and survivors of domestic violence and how their perceptions influence the utilisation of support services would, however, not be ignored in this thesis. Although Ghana is a multicultural society composed of hundreds of ethnic groups, each ethnic group has its traditional value system, but they all have one thing in common, and that is the idea that their wives should automatically respect men as authoritative figures. If abused, it is usually blamed on the woman for not playing her role correctly as a good wife. Ghanaian women, even those with better economic conditions, are disadvantaged and live in a patriarchal society that hardly recognizes their rights. It is in line with the above mentioned that leads the study to these objectives.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the commonness and elements of threat-related with domestic violence in the Ga community against the women.
2. To point out the common forms of domestic violence.
3. To examine the Ga women's familiarity with domestic violence and their understanding of it.
4. Examine the mechanisms of redress for domestic violence.

1.3.1 Research Questions

Based on the research study of domestic violence in Ghana, the study will attempt to give answers to the following questions:

1. What are the prevalence rate and experiences of domestic violence among Ga women?
2. What are the common forms of domestic violence in Ga society?
3. How do the Ga women (and men) understand domestic violence?
4. What social and cultural factors shape the perception of violence at home?

Concerning the above research questions, the study on domestic violence in Ghana among Ga's was carried out to evaluate the situation of women suffering from harm and ferocity in their homes and communities. The research further investigates the different perception of people on domestic violence. Does domestic violence exist at all to them? Or have they been abused multiple times so; they do not even recognize when being abused? Do they see it as love when beaten or abused by their partners? Do they deem it acceptable when men exercise their dominance over them just because they are heads of families? How do they feel when they fall victim to domestic violence? Do the women of Chorkor and Bukom know of the "Domestic Violence Act 732" that protects

fundamental human rights? Does their knowledge of the act influence their decisions to access or not access the help services available? Do they prefer to settle domestic violence issues formally or informally? Why do they choose to settle these issues informally? These questions and many others create a lot of loopholes and answers must be found to them.

1.4 Research Site

This research was conducted in two fishing communities "Bukom and Chorkor" in the "Greater Accra" region of Ghana. Ghana is situated in the western part of Africa and boarded on the south by the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. Ghana shares a land boundary with Cote d'Ivoire on the west, on the east with Togo and the north with Burkina Faso. Ghana was the first country in sub- Saharan Africa to gain its independence from the British on the 6th of March 1957. Ghana's capital is Greater Accra, which is one of the 16 regions in Ghana, located in the southern part of Ghana along the coastline. Ghana's climate is tropical, the climate changes from warm to comparatively dry along the southeast coast, hot to humid in the southwest and hot and dry in the north. The domestic economy centres around subsistence agriculture, which accounts for almost half of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Ghana recorded a population of over 24 million in the last census that took place in 2010 (Gbogbo, 2018). Ghana, as a country, is described as ethnically diverse. There are almost one hundred ethnic groups, and the largest one is Akan. Akan is the most widely spoken language in Ghana though we have our official language to be English. The family is an essential institution in the country as it forms the basis for understanding the Ghanaian social structure. In African societies, the notion of the family goes beyond the nuclear family to include siblings and relatives of both maternal and

paternal lineages. In Ghanaian, ethnic groups kinship may be a matrilineal, patrilineal, or dual reckoning. The Ewes and Ga's from southern Ghana are patrilineal together with people in the north of the country. All the Akans are from southern Ghana except for Akuapems and Nzemas who are matrilineal.

The people of Bukom and Chokor, who are the main participants for this thesis belong to the Ga ethnic group, and they are patrilineal. Bukom is a community where the Ga people are more dominated. The inhabitants of Bukom are fishermen and fishmongers and the most common food found there is kenkey (kenkey is a famous Ghanaian dough made from fermented maize and served with pepper sauce and fish or stew/soup. "Azumah, the Professor" Nelson, won three world labels in the 1980s and 90s, he is from Bukom and known as the greatest boxer to ever come from Africa, but Bukom as a community is considered poor, it can be assumed that poverty brings about many problems of which domestic violence can be part.

Chorkor had a resident of 45,379 people in the year 2002 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2002). Chorkor shares boundaries with Korle Gonno to the east, Agege to the west, Mamprobi to the North and the Atlantic Ocean washes its southern boundary. Chorkor is an area which is highly populated with its people possessing low income (Gyan, 2013). However, Ga-Dangme is one of the major ethnic groups in the region of Chorkor, along with the Akan (Owusu & Agyei-Mensah, 2010). Chorkor is also labelled as a poorly planned community with the bulk of its inhabitants having very little exposure to education. The men in Chorkor are also fishermen while their women are mostly fishmongers.

Chorkor lacks the most basic infrastructure, the community has a weak drainage system and sanitary condition, and most of the houses dating from the pre-colonial era are built with bricks and mud. Chorkor is famous for its locally manufactured ovens used for smoking large quantities

of fish. Chorkor and Bukom have some similarities, their men and women have the same livelihood, which is fishing and fishmongers respectively, and their predominant food is kenkey. Both communities have major housing problems as the composition and structure of the housing system does not reflect the population in the area. Research shows that many of the houses in Chorkor are overcrowded with at least five to seven people in each room (WHO, 1993). This explains why slums are seen all over.

These living conditions pose a serious threat to their health, wellbeing and social relations, and it raises questions like these; can their poor living conditions increase the occurrence of domestic violence? When people do not have a place to sleep, does social life become problematic? Their poor living conditions are of much concern since it can significantly influence the rate of occurrence of domestic violence. As the research progresses, it will unravel all the doubts and assumptions outlined in the initial stages of this research. In the future research done on these areas will contribute immensely to academics.

Many reasons account for the choice of this research site, having heard on National tv from a famous boxer who beats his wives and girlfriends and is not even bothered whether he gets arrested by police or not, out of curiosity to know more about the social life of the Ga's mainly in the boxers own neighbourhood. This boxer grew up in the neighbourhood of Bukom, where boxing is built into their culture, and it is said that, when two boys or men are quarrelling on the street, witnesses tell them: "there is no need to argue, stop the argument and just fight". This statement affirms what one of the interviewees answered, he said he is the second 'Bukom Banku' (a famous boxer), he is quick-tempered so when his wife insults him, he gives her some blows.

Bukom and Chorkor are not sites the researcher is familiar with, but the language they speak is very well understood by the researcher.

Bukom and Chorkor were chosen as research sites because they suit the conditions for evaluating the assumptions concerning domestic violence, its perceptions, incidences and reasons they occur. Two coastal settings with its inhabitants having a low level of education, densely populated, high rate of teenage pregnancy and comparatively little researched, Bukom and Chorkor were places where the rate of domestic violence was likely to be high and worth studying. A significant part of the field material is collected from these sites as primary data; besides, preceding research on domestic violence in Ghana were thoroughly read to help make some conclusions and suggestions in this study. The study focused mainly on women, although some men were a consideration.



Figure 1Denotes the globe showing Ghana in green



Figure 2 shows the 16 regions of Ghana

1.5 Defining the main concepts

The following concepts domestic violence, intimate partner violence, gender, victims, patriarchy, women subordination, cultural factors and cohabitation – are central to this study and are used regularly throughout the thesis. For the sake of clarity, their working definitions are provided. It should also be noted that domestic abuse and domestic violence are used interchangeably throughout the study.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence has no single definition and might be seen from multiple points of view, for example, spouse battering, kicking, assault, torment, constrained prostitution, marriage and the

rest (Human Rights Dialog, 2003). Goldstein (2007), stated domestic violence as an attitude that needs to be controlled. Moreover, it includes threats, stalking, annoyance, sexual intercourse, hitting and thus, all these leading to death.

In 1993, the United Nations Declaration on the abolition of "violence against women" disclosed that:

Violence against women may refer to any act of gender-based violence that has the propensity to cause psychological, sexual or physical harm or suffering to women. This may include threats such as arbitrary deprivation of liberty or coercion, whether occurring in public or private life. (UN, 1993, A/RES/48/104).

It also states that violence against women encompasses, but is not limited to, the following:

a. *Psychological, sexual and physical abuse that occurs in the family ranges from sexual abuse of female children in the household, assaults, dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation and some traditional practices dangerous to women, non-spousal violence and violence associated to oppression.*
b. *Common within a community is physical, sexual and psychological violence, which includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and other places, trafficking in women and mandatory prostitution.*
c. *Irrespective of where it occurs physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or overlooked by the state.* (UN, 1993, A/RES/48/104)

While the definition of domestic violence spans across physical, cultural to psychological and the setting in which it occurs is broad or too general for the purpose of this thesis; UNICEF offers

another definition that moves closer. It conceptualizes domestic violence as involving acts of "physical abuse such as beating, slapping, arms twisting, strangling, stabbing, burning, kicking, choking, murder, and threats with a weapon or object." From this standpoint, UNICEF's couched definition will be more relevant in the context of this study. UNICEF (2000)

Intimate partner violence

When a father beats a daughter, it is not considered as intimate violence. Intimate partner violence focuses on more restricted violence between partners in a sexual, marital or romantic relationship (Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018). In this study, the researcher did not come across violence of any kind against the girl child, though the subject of interest, domestic abuse embraces violence against the girl child. More so, the focus was not on that but rather on violence among sexual, marital or romantic partners.

Gender

The roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women as well as the relations between men and women, both perceptual and material are social constructs. They are not determined by biological sexual characteristics of either men or women. (WHO, 2013).

Victims

In scholarly work, a victim is defined as anyone who has experienced domestic violence.

Patriarchy

The patriarchal system teaches both men and women from infancy how to conduct themselves, and it socializes women into cliched roles of submissiveness. Patriarchy prescribes roles and power within the domestic setting and authorizes and legitimizes the use of violence (Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018). According to Becker (1999), patriarchy pressurizes men to seek for safety, a particular social position, and other rewards through dominance; men also fear other men's dominance over them and their ability to harm them; men regard being in control as both their best security against loss and embarrassment and the surest path to what they need and desire.

Women's subordination

Other scholars have written on women subordination, and it is assumed in their discussion that, women subordination is so profound. Around the world, there have been women movements based on the agenda, to spread the awareness of domestic violence. These kinds of movements have been successful in attaining the level of attention from the world towards the topic. The many groups fighting for the rights of women indirectly tell of the existence of some cultural and societal values that infringe on the rights of women. Violence against women was recognised as a leading scope for research in Ghana in 1997 because of some woeful account of Ghanaian women being violated in various forms, but there was no evidence to prove these stories (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2000).

Cultural Factors

There are some cultural practices believed to affect the prevalence of domestic violence in Ghana. They range from; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), trokosi, widowhood rite to child marriage. FGM is a traditional cutting of some part of the genital area performed on women and girls. Trokosi, on the other hand, is the enslavement of young female virgins given away by families to

shrines to compensate for crimes that were supposed to have been committed by family members. Widowhood rite, which is also a cultural practise stems from the belief that the dead spouse's ghost needs to be pacified so it can depart forever. Women might be required to shave their heads and bear the use of pepper in their eyes. At times the women are made to engage in sexual relations with a stranger in order to finish the widowhood rites. Child marriage can be defined as children forced into marriage. Some men force their children into marriage with other men in payment of their debt.

The traditional Ghanaian values nurture women to be submissive to men; unlike in Europe and in western cultures where women are not tied to any traditional values. Religion is a belief, and it is categorized under culture, Gyekye (1996) argued that religion enters all parts of African life so completely that, it can hardly be separated. The arrival of Christianity added to the beliefs and perceptions that women are subordinate to men due to wrong interpretation of the Bible.

Cohabitation

Hiekel et al. (2014) define cohabitation as a phase in the marriage process, i.e. an introduction to marriage, a testing marriage, cohabitation for financial reasons, plan to marry, in the face of adverse attitude towards the institution of marriage. In this thesis, I was able to define cohabitation as a new living arrangement to family formation recognised by families of the man and woman who are cohabiting.

1.6 Significance of the study

In the UN report published by HuffPost, the UN secretary-general recounted violence as a global problem. As the HuffPost said in their news report on UN's figures on domestic violence in the world, there is the need to reduce the problem since it is regarded as a significant obstacle to inclusive, equitable and sustainable development[2]

Violence can be explained as an epidemic because of its high prevalence in women. In Ghana, 23% of women suffer from physical or sexual violence (Kimani, 2012). Although many occurrences of domestic violence are not disclosed, in a country with a population of 194 million, 23% is still a tremendously large number. For that matter, not just Ghana but throughout the Sahara, 22.3% of women among the ages of 15 and 49 suffered domestic violence and intimate violence within a year (Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018).

It is relevant for all to be aware of the negative impact of violence on society so we can together work towards eradicating it due to the high quota of violence towards women. There is a need to reduce the prevalence drastically since it is regarded as a crucial factor that can create hindrance in equitable and inclusive sustainable development. It is required to spread the awareness that violence is an act that needs to be punished, whether it is a father or a husband, or even a mother to her children. The awareness of domestic violence can help women, as they are prone to be the victims who suffer from the act the most, know that, there are professionals who will listen to them and protect them. Expressing dislike about something to a loved one does not mean they do not respect them, and men, especially in Sub Saharan Africa, should understand that there is no harm when women express their feeling about something towards them toward, whether negative or

[2] https://www.huffpost.com/entry/domestic-violence-most-common-killer-of-women-united-nations_n_5bfbf61ee4b0eb6d931142ac

positive. It is very likely for humans in general to have different opinions concerning something, and it is the same among partners.

When it happens like that, men should not assume it is an attack or a challenge of authority but as human nature. Violence of any kind to anyone is not justified but would not be punished if there are no complaints about it.

For instance, in December 1998, a Kenyan police officer reached home late and asked for dinner, and he was unable to find anyone in the house. He got angry, and in anger, he beat his wife. She had a brain injury and paralyzed, she died on her 28th birthday, within five months (Kimani, 2012). Reading about this prompts one to think about what some women go through at home, and it felt like something was not right. The argument raised here is, the case of the Kenyan policeman might not be the first, and it is possible several women have been violated in similar situations but did not make headlines because no one got paralyzed or died.

Worldwide domestic violence continues to make headlines, and generally, women fall victim to domestic violence. Other scholars have carried out studies on domestic violence extensively. In Ghana, research has been done on domestic violence. However, it is still an area that needs more research to be done on, and this is evident in Ofei-Aboagye (1994) study as she stated clearly the challenging concepts that she identifies and discuss in the article result from the very rudimentary nature of research done on domestic abuse in Ghana. Among the Ga's, studies have not been done, or if even studies have been done, recent studies on domestic violence need to be done to bring out the current picture of domestic violence among them. More so, when we know what happens among the Ga's, the findings can be used as a step to lessen the incidence of domestic violence among them.

Additionally, the study would shed light on the intensity of domestic violence among the Ga's, and the findings can be used as a guideline to study domestic violence in other communities. As the study uncovers the thoughts of the Ga women on intimate partner violence and their living experiences, as well as the reasons they decide to seek for help from families, rather than the institutions put in place to solve domestic violence issues, a way towards recounting their encounters unfurls and enlightens readers on the reasons women leave or stay in their homes, giving clarification of explicit parts of the procedure that had any effect for the women. Thus, adding up to a progressive step of an all-inclusive picture of intimate partner violence among Ghanaian women.

This study's interest in researching domestic violence was germinated by a statement by one of Ghana's famous boxers on national television. His words were "if you misbehave, I punch you, if you disrespect me, I beat you. I do not mind if I am taken to the police, I have been there a number of times, but I always come back home". Being an unknown and silent feminist, I sympathize with women who fall victims to domestic violence; I firmly believe misunderstandings in relationships should be resolved mutually and peacefully rather than it resulting in the throwing of fist and exchange of unpleasant words and sometimes even death or serious injuries. Why do men see their authority as being challenged when women express their opinions or say no to sex or their other demands?

The author is a Ghanaian living in Finland and believes in gender equality, Finland has also been described as the best place to become a student or a mother, and to become a female politician (Hopkins et al., 2013). The researcher for this study has witnessed the freedom women enjoy in Finland, and would have loved that gender equality would be promoted in Ghana as well rather than male dominance being practised by all the different ethnic groups.

Nonetheless, the determinants of domestic violence would be discovered and make women and the general public know when they become victims of domestic violence their rights are being infringed upon and become knowledgeable on where to seek for help when they fall victims to such acts. This research would be one of the distinctive writing for more studies on the impacts of domestic violence towards women wellbeing.

This study will add to the body of knowledge regarding gender studies, exclusively in the areas of the Ga community. In furtherance, the study will be significant as it will help in coming up with certain significant suggestions and if possible, steps to minimize incidences of domestic violence confronting women in the study area (Gyan, 2013). Finally, this research will also provide the Ghanaian government with the essential data to react to this threat and other related issues of women victimization in society. What is more tragic is that in a society where the legal system is not perfect, women are more afraid of being abandoned by their husbands than fear of domestic violence. According to Interpol, the capital of Ghana is where most women are sexually abused worldwide (Gyan, 2013).

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Limitations are factors in research that affect results, and it is very important for these limitations to be identified and acknowledged by the researcher. In this regard, it would have been ideal to have the inputs of other more participants and DOVVSU in this thesis, since DOVVSU is the only unit in Ghana in charge of domestic violence cases. Unfortunately, since the research was conducted in Ghana, the time frame was quite short for all contacts to be made. Nonetheless, the researcher for this study contacted DOVVSU, and the procedure to go through before being

granted permission for some interviews with their officials would have taken more than a month. Input from DOVVSU would have enriched the thesis; nonetheless, this would not take anything meaningful away from this study since similar research by other scholars is taken into account throughout the research. More so, given that this research is qualitative, much importance is placed on how petty issues light up fundamental attributes of social life rather than sample representativeness (Neuman, 2007). Therefore, the sample size is not representing all the women of the Ga community of Accra, but enough material to give meaningful information on domestic violence was collected.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study is structured into six chapters. Chapter One gives an introduction to the study, it centres on the background and aim of the study, defining the problem, the objectives of this thesis, research questions, research site, the definition of concepts, limitations of the study and the organization of the study. Chapter Two presents the literature review on domestic violence: the concept of domestic violence or abuse is broadly reviewed with an objective of providing a conceptual framework for the study, and these are worked out with theories. Chapter Three is devoted to the discussion of the methods used for data collection and the measures followed in the gathering of primary data and method of analysis. Chapter Four discusses the results, and Chapter Five is for discussion. Chapter Six presents the conclusion and the recommendations arising thereof from the study.

2 THEORETICAL LITERATURE

In this thesis, certain sociological theories are used to explain individual experiences of violence. Violence in society continues to make headlines which tell of its commonness. Violence has been studied by different scholars in their various field of expertise to understand its nature as well as its causes. Some theories have been used by Sociologist to explain violence as a consequence of social structures and systems. Violence towards women is seen as a sign of verifiable uneven power between women and men. Regarding the fact that men consider themselves dominated creatures and would want to control women, it has negatively affected the progress of women in society. (UNICEF, 2000).

Ardayfio-Schandorf (2005) argued that violence has now become a reality for an appreciable number of women; violence is used as an excuse to humiliate women, just to show how people are substantiating the act. It must be noted that different societies with diverse cultures have interconnected the act of violence to several other factors such as inequality and making women subjects of domination. For example, in the Akan society, there is a clear distinction between inequality and differences; the distinction is clear in women's rights, their respect, their access to knowledge, and inequalities in their duties and responsibilities (Crentsil, 2014). Women's deprivation of economic resources, access to education and other socio-economic advantages reflects aspects of gender inequality and norms regarding access to traditional knowledge and customs (Crentsil, 2014). As progression is made to explain explicitly on the other theories, it is obvious that the structures of society allow and endorses processes that promote domestic violence.

2.1 Culture and Domestic Violence

The phenomenon of domestic violence within Ghana is deemed as a social phenomenon. Many works by scholars' points to culture having an impact on Domestic Violence. Browne (2011) writes on different cultures on different continents and how their culture forces women to be submissive and play subordinate roles. She focuses mainly on the different cultural practices of the people in order to defend their clients in court; the cultural defence works to mitigate the criminal responsibility of the defendant. She does not write about the perceptions or incidences of the victims, which is of much importance to my study.

Browne (2011) describes culture as the air we breathe, it is, to a large extent, concealed, and yet we are dependent on it for our very being. The author writes about Asian society with great emphasis on "keeping face", which can be explained as a discouragement of many interventions in case of violence. Regardless of self-respect towards oneself, women place the respect of their family prior to theirs and keep any act of violence against them a secret in society, because of society's perception about the victim. In Browne's work, he gives examples of different living conditions for women in different countries, in India, a husband and wife live with the husbands' entire family, which in some circumstances results in violence being carried out by both the husband and in-laws. Arab-American women are expected by their community to be with their husbands no matter what. Women are expected to endure all forms of maltreatment and abuse rather than break up the family. The question raised here is, is the gender female prized as valuable at all? This normalized notion of women having to make all these difficult sacrifices must be dealt with to some extent.

Alhassan (2008) wrote on domestic violence in Saban Gari Area of Kano State, Nigeria. He reports that the notion of domestic violence entails a societal practice referred to as “Kulle ", which secluded females and disclosed hostility on women in the confines of the family. Of the 160 women, all of them had been victims of “kulle” (female seclusion). “Kulle " meant the mandatory restriction of women to stay only inside the household for a given length within which she is supposedly refined to be an amazing housewife. One would ask, are men ever confined and nurtured to become good husbands? Alhassan’s research showed a positive association between the cultural practice “Kulle " and the mental disorder such as extreme nervousness and fear as well as mental misery and anxiety. Hence its social insinuation is that women who experience this practice have challenges in getting along and socializing with others who do not form part of the household.

Kambarami (2006) also described the Shona culture in Zimbabwe, in his work he outlined that, when a girl reaches her puberty stage, most of the training she receives is directed at satisfying her future husband and not to herself. She is taught to use her sexuality to please her future husband. These and many other cultural practices promote a dependency syndrome which instils in most African women the need to depend greatly on their husbands for support.

Mikkola (2018) mentions in her work on Mythical rape talk that the main goal to fight against violence is not to combat with the power that a group hold, but against the form of the power. Being a victim of abuse is a fear, which is a sort of power men hold against women; it can be applied in the daily life of women who face abuse every day in one way or the other. It can also be said that it is linked to the people's identity and their feelings and emotion, what they feel towards a certain object. It is a truth that strengthens the form of power; it imposes a law of the truth, that a person is dependent on others and controlled by others. Foucault (1982 as mentioned

in Mikkola 2018) categorizes the three different power struggles: struggle against the structure of domination, against the structure of exploitation; and struggles contra repression, types of subjectivity and submission. Women's struggle against domination, submission and exploitation is not different from the power that Foucault describes.

In the Ghanaian culture, children are trained in ways expected of them by parents and other family members. Domestic roles are separated right from childhood with regards to girls' roles and boys' roles. In certain societies, girls are placed in the kitchen while the boys are educated. It is basic in the Ghanaian culture to see a boy playing football while his sister is in the kitchen with the mother cooking due to the wrong perception that cooking is not done by men but women. Mostly, the boy child is preferred to the girl child in some ethnic groups in Ghana and Africa due to the notion that the girl child will one day be married to a different family. The belief in relation to the male child is that he will surely stay in the family, marry and give birth which will increase the size of his extended family hence maintaining the family name (Human Rights Monitor, 2001). The female child is always seen as the youngest even if the girl child is biologically the eldest in the household while the male child becomes the eldest in most African nations (Kambarami, 2006). This speaks volumes in that the gender “female” is defined right from birth.

Kambarami (2004) “The male child is mostly automatically considered as the head as well as the leader of the households and has the responsibility to protect and care for the sisters” (p.3). Sometimes the toys that are bought for children by parents and relatives also reinforces the interaction process of children in society. Most often parents buy dolls or cooking utensils for the girl child to play with whilst cars, games that require the use of intuition and toys that need energy or intellectual capability are given to the male child (p.4). These practices nurture the girl child to become a mother, flexible, emotionally responsive, and to exhibit all motherhood attributes. Girls

are gentle from childhood because they are taught to be, and they are as well submissive, and passive, whereas boys are taught to be energetic, and breadwinners. According to Charvet (1982), the significance of such separation is the reason why women have been perceived by society as sex objects instead of human beings.

In some African nations, marriage is perceived as a scary institution, and it is with regards to this that, married women are treated with respect in some communities they live in. A man can have many women as wives in his life and can also have marital affairs, in situations like these, their characters are perceived as a result of women negligence towards their duties. Older women in the communities pass comments like “all men are the same " to make women see infidelity as something that has existed from time immemorial and thus nothing can be done about it. On the contrary, it is a taboo for married women to have an extramarital affair with other men, women who have extramarital affairs are accused and as a consequence deserve to be divorced. Moreover, it is expected of women to be submissive sexually to their partners, with the men being expected to initiate sex and setting the rules and encounter for sex (Kambarami, 2006).

Sexual relation contributes essentially to this study as it gives the platform where most domestic violence issues occur especially in Ghana, most studies have established that the most common type of violence against women is attempted by their partners. It is therefore not surprising as it is also indicated by Messer (2004 that, it seems like a marriage contract that, women ought to agree on whatever the demands of their life partners are (Leclerc-Madlala, 2000). It also leads to HIV and Aids, as women being submissive cannot ask for safer intercourse, nor can they take safer measures (Kambarami, 2006).

Another factor is religion, which can be seen as a personal reality. Religion teaches a significant concept of living in society. As stated earlier, Gyekye (1996) elaborates that religion enters all parts of African life so completely that, it can hardly be separated and as a result has affected the traditions and norms of society. Several religions support male dominance over women and until date, some Christian marriages may be based on a formal recognition that the husband rules the household and the wife is submissive to him. Through the Bible, there are quotations that seem to accept men domineering women; these quotations have been wrongly interpreted that men are superior to women.

"*Wives be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of´ the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands* (Ephesians 5.22-24 NRSV)".

Most often, battered women are counselled by religious institutions to continue living in slanderous relationships and try to be a better wife. Women are advised to forget what their husbands are doing since they were born that way and respect the men in their lives no matter how unfaithful they would be.

On the other hand, it is just not that, but also men have been made to understand that, they are the better version of human, and they hold the complete right of supremacy over their women because their acts are justified (Fortune & Enger, 2005). In Genesis chapter 2 and 3 which is found in the bible, it reads that *"woman is a creature made from the rib of a man"*, and this statement is used to represent woman as a submissive version of human. Women are seen not equal to the "best creature" which in this sense is the man. 1st Corinthians chapter 11, verses 7-9 which is also from

the Bible indicates that "*for a man indeed ought not to cover his head, for as much as he is the glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man"* which was wrongly interpreted. This and many other quotations found in the bible makes some men agree to Christianity as a way of controlling the lives of their wives and think that women were created because of them.

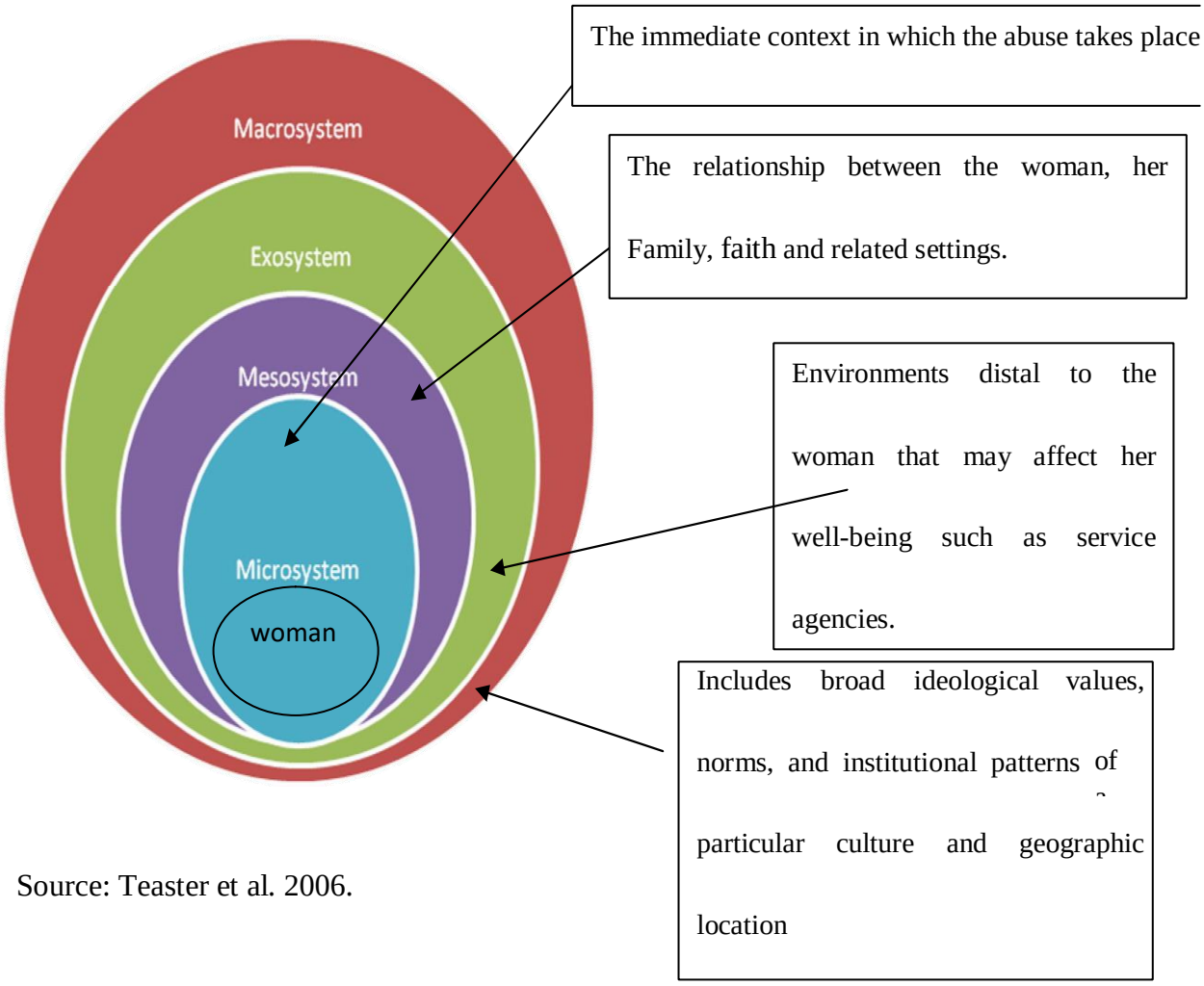
Carol Smart (1995, as mentioned in Mikkola, 2018) came up with the term 'gendering strategies' by citing Butler's theory on the performative nature of gender. The theory elaborates on the nature of humans. Butler thinks gender came into existence because of a certain way of their doings (Butler, 1993). By gendering strategies, it is believed that individuals, social and institutional practice indicate what a woman or a man is and in what manner both genders should think. Regarding the fact that one is not born to think in a manner of women, but their upbringing and societal norms change them to think in a mundane manner. It is a culture practised in theory according to Butler (1993) and to put it into perspective, women realise and think in a mundane way of their performative nature, but in general concept, they are not a creature to be dominated by other creatures who are born strong physically. It is well known in society and has come to be a normal routine for human beings. Individuals associate their lives to the same pattern of thinking as a society, and they do not want to change because they are incapable of thinking in a different pattern.

2.2 The Ecological Framework

Teaster et al. (2006) drew a diagram to explain clearly the effect of microframeworks in the lives of women. The study by Teaster et al. looks at women in intimate relationships and their perceptions about domestic violence which is slightly related to my study but does not give any highlights on the incidences of domestic violence which my study does. They outlined the importance of personal history, family relationship and furthermore social and historical settings as impacting the lives of women. They described that individual assets, for example, education, employment (income), age, family and different connections, mix into a clarification of the experience of physical violence. According to them, when individuals in the community relate, inter-relate, mingle, work together and give common help (which incorporates social help standards, social controls) it directs conduct, communication designs and the systems that work in a community.

The framework further clarifies that individuals in a community share similar norms that oversee their behaviours and desires, and this can be accommodated by both legal and unlawful exercise. In any case, a few activities which are viewed as inadmissible by the overall public may be more tolerable among specific subgroups of people. Specific statistical qualities might embody these subgroups, for example, geographical location and by psychographic characteristics such as gender, beliefs about others, and so forth.

The variety and multifaceted nature of the social organisation are reflected in the structure and procedures or activities occupied by its individuals and families. Although poverty has a great impact on most people in Ghana, it has a major impact on women, as more than 22% of them between the ages of 25 and 34 are living in extreme poverty with men (Kimani, 2012). Many women within Ghana from the middle class have tolerated years of domestic violence.



Source: Teaster et al. 2006.

Fig 3. An Ecological Community Organization Model of Intimate Partner Violence

2.3 Social status and Domestic Violence

Closely linked to the occurrence of Domestic Violence are social statuses, though there have been difficulties in establishing precisely the impact of class on domestic violence. As social statuses reflect one's position in the society or the types of societal divisions based on age, sex, education, income and what have you, it is argued that domestic violence happens irrespective of class category, with victimization occurring in all corners of society. According to Renzetti (2009), domestic violence advocates have emphasized that intimate partner violence is a problem faced by all people irrespective of their social rank and racial or ethnic groups, no one is secured by the class or race they belong to. On February 2009, a famous American singer assaulted his girlfriend, the news of the assault made headlines, and the issue of intimate partner violence became a spotlight for the media.

In reference to the two famous singers, extensive national surveys found that black-skinned women have a higher risk of being violently abused by their sexual partners than white-skinned women though, the greatest of this violence falls on poor women (Renzetti, 2009). For this study, the class categories focused on were education and economic status because these two were what the majority of my participants lacked. In some cases, where the women complained to their family members that their husbands abused them, the family would feel that the woman had done something wrong that led to the husband disrespecting the wife. Although Ghana is a multicultural society composed of hundreds of ethnic groups, each ethnic group can be identified by its own traditional value system, but they all have one thing in common, and that is the idea that men as authoritative figures should be automatically respected by their wives. If abused, it is usually blamed on the woman for not playing her role correctly as a good wife. Ghanaian women, even

those with better economic conditions, are disadvantaged and live in a patriarchal society that hardly recognizes their rights.

Education is, without doubt, one of the essential factors of economic progress as it improves the standard of life and gives one access to broad social benefits in society. Jewkes (2002) identified that education honours an individual with social emancipation, self-dependence and the expertise to make use of resources and materials to one's advantage. Education also empowers women and enables them to have the ability to assemble and comprehend information, exploit and control the modern world, anchor and safeguard themselves from any form of abuse (Malhotra 1997; Kishor and Johnson 2000, 2004). However, as research has established, most casualties of domestic violence in most developing countries lacked unique skills, literacy, and coaching that will empower them to acquire a job. To make matters worse, most of these victims had many children to care for.

Kishor and Johnson (2000, 2004) have proved that women who are highly educated have more extraordinary potential to defend themselves in difficult times, for example, when dealing with a violent partner. This, therefore, points to the fact that women who are highly educated encounter minimum violence. It was, therefore, not surprising that highly educated women were rather less likely to experience higher levels of physical violence compared to women with no education. On the basis of the above, the question I raise is, if most women in society lack specific skills and education, how do they sustain themselves and their children when they are forced to abandon their place of residence or when their husbands intentionally refuse to cater to them? Therefore, it is not surprising that, in 2003, 36 principal cities mentioned domestic violence as contributing to the main cause of homelessness in their area (Schwart, 1989).

As indicated by Kishor & Johnson (2004), it is possible to speculate that the association between man's education and abuse is negative though this relationship is also susceptible to changes and uncertainties. For instance, a study revealed a constructive correlation between education and violence (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Men with a higher level of education are more probable to profess unequally, and even aggressive authority in the relationship than their women counterparts (Hornung, 1981). Regarding further literature, studies suggest that when women have achieved a higher status than their partners, there is a greater possibility of conjugal disagreement to occur (Hornung, 1981; Daga, 1998). The findings in regard to a study conducted in Bangladesh found that having your bride price paid or a registered marriage fortified a woman's stand in her marriage, but still of these probable factors, only education was related remarkably with reduced odds of violence (Bates et al. .2005).

Aside from low levels of education and skills increasing the incidence of domestic abuse, Hamberge (1986) mentioned that the poor economic situation of women and their over-reliance on men or their partners made life complicated for as many of them that fell victims to domestic violence. Employment is said to be an indicator of financial health and stability, studies have uncovered that women who fell victims to violence at home do not have different opinions in their desire to work than from women without a record of domestic violence. Women living in sub-Saharan Africa countries including those in Ghana usually do not have much access to money and credit, and to job offers whether in the formal organisations or informal organisations (UNICEF, 2000; Brent et al., 2000). When there are a majority of women without cash and are facing severe challenges in providing for their personal needs and that of their children it leaves women in a financially helpless state as pointed out by (Fox & Benson, 2006). This financial dilemma has proved to be one of the major challenges encountered by victims of domestic violence and a

substantial determinant that can deter women from fleeing from their perpetrators (Hamberge, 1986).

With regards to women empowerment, financial reliance is a contributing factor. Malhotra (1997) and Garcia (2000) argued that the association that links women's employment status to their risk to encounter domestic violence can be conceptualized to have an impact over their monetary and household's matters in their marriages when they are engaged in either wages or salaries than that of their female counterparts who are unemployed (Malhotra, 1997; Garcia, 2000).

Women violence is possibly the most inescapable kind of maltreatment, an all-inclusive issue that rises above ethnicity, race, topography, religion and cast differences (Pickup et al., 2001). The commonness of domestic violence at home profoundly affects the physical, sexual, regenerative, mental or social strength of women and is a noteworthy reason for deadly results (WHO, 2005). As a result of this, a huge number of women are harmed, and plenitude is murdered every year because of domestic violence at home (Hattery, 2009).

2.4 Patriarchy, power and gender-based domestic violence

The term patriarchy primarily came into being and was used by feminist theories to describe the perpetuation of male dominancy in contemporary societies (Hadi, 2017). Becker's (1994) discussion of patriarchy outlines how women are asking for equal payment and equal treatment as workers which tells of the unfair treatment women get from the society they live in. Becker argues that the communal structures and the people within the confines of the structures make and replicate disparities related to sex, descent, rank, religion, ethnicity and other variations. In other words, women being regarded as objects and the expectation of society from them is to play

subordinate roles never existed from the onset of creation. It is the societal values and norms that have nurtured us to see it so, and even at that, it is more evident in African countries and with less of it experienced in the Western countries as mentioned earlier. Another problem is that the tolerant attitude towards domestic violence has given the society a domino effect, which has caused adults to suffer psychological trauma as a result of childhood experiences that their fathers often abused their mothers. Ghanaian women now need economic empowerment, but they also need cultural empowerment. This is not only beneficial to women but also to the whole society.

Dobash and Dobash (1979) developed the theory of patriarchy to explain family violence, especially domestic violence, which has been consistently directed towards women throughout history. They understand the cause of wife-beating and other abuse of the feeble or helpless in the family as the patriarchal structure of the family in the social system. According to Human Rights Monitor, patriarchal attitude strengthens customary values, which are used by men to manipulate women's sexuality (Green, 2001).

There have been different explanations of patriarchy by different scholars, in the theoretical argument of the Dobash's their central claim is that patriarchy results in the subjection of women and generate a historical pattern of systematic abuse directed towards women. Kambarami (2006) argued that radical women activists explain patriarchy as any system of power whereby men assume all social responsibility and put women in subordinate positions on the assertion of male supremacy. The study, in addition, indicated that patriarchal practices bring about gender inequality that makes women not to have full control over their sexuality, which leads to the control of female sexuality by males.

The feminist approach to domestic violence asserts that majority of all male-on-female abuse is dependent primarily on the patriarchal beliefs of our society, and "that these values are endorsed

by a culture in which male domination of women is both secretly and evidently strengthened" (Lawson, 2000, p. 20). Thus, the patriarchal perspective asserts a principle of male dominance over women as indisputable within a vast society as well as in the family leading to the abuse and oppression of women.

Rydstrom (2010, p. 79 as mentioned by Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele) describes patriarchy as being inculcated in societal culture and viewed as those "structural relations and cultural constructs that favours the initiative of the masculine gender in controlling the existence of others. Other scholars have also defined patriarchy as a system of social connections and establishments that give men the power of supremacy and advantages that women are refused.

Foucault (1982, as mentioned in Mikkola, 2018) on the theory of power, when discussing power, issues such as capacity and instruments of power becomes questionable. This theory fits well into the context of this study because of the structures and mechanisms of power described here, but only in cases when it can be assumed that there are individuals exercising power over others using a certain kind of knowledge which in this context is women being submissive to their husbands. Foucault's theory serves the purpose of this thesis in the sense that patriarchy works as a mechanism of power exercised over women – because the characterization of power entails a relationship between individuals, or between groups. In this sense, domestic violence towards women is an extreme form of men holding the title of superiority to the detriment of women.

Bowman et al., (2003) noticed that the power inequality evident in customary African marriages generates an exclusive platform for conjugal violence. What is more tragic is that in a society where the legal system is not perfect, women are more afraid of being abandoned by their husbands than fear of domestic violence.

The political scientist Amanda Gouws of the University of Stellenbosch, which belongs to the South African Commission for Gender Equality, stated: “offenders usually are not punished severely as I've seen too many cases that started with a thump, and many procedures do not come to a good end because not all witnesses were questioned and evidence was forged, or the processes fail because of procedural defects.” (Akerman, 2012).

2.5 Feminist Theories

The inhumane treatment women receive because of society’s conferred roles drew the attention of feminist theorist to the maltreatment women face. For Feminist theorist, when discussing domestic violence, they argue from a perspective that, the root of intimate partner abuse is as a result of belonging to a community where aggressive behaviour put up by men is seen as acceptable and instilling in women the virtue of being submissive and non-abusive towards their husbands. Though there have been many incidences of women abusing their husbands, feminist theory has disregarded them as non-problematic. Not so long ago, someone recorded a video in two different scenarios. In one scenario a man was beating a woman on the street, and almost all the men who witnessed it tried to save the woman from being hurt, some went to the extent of throwing fists just to defend the woman and, in the other scenario the woman was the one beating the man, all who witnessed it did not go to the rescue of the man, they watched and quietly went their way. This speaks volumes as to why feminist do not pay much attention to men who fall victims to domestic violence, as Kurt (1997) describes in his work. Kurt (1997) outlines that, it is very likely for women to be abusive in their relationships with men, but evidence indicates that on the whole women are mostly at the receiving end, as they get severely hurt in most cases of abuse.

Until the 1970s, women usually had little concrete knowledge about the living conditions of women living in other countries, and feminism was a strongly Western-style movement and ideology, but this has now started to change fundamentally. Previously, women's issues were initially articulated exclusively from a Western point of view. The universal validity of ideals such as personal fulfilment, equality in the workplace or the right to abortion seemed natural to Western feminists. However, in common forums with women from other cultures and continents, especially at the major UN World Women's Conferences, it quickly became clear that women in different cultural backgrounds had very different interests and goals. In the southern countries, for example, the focus was not on individual self-determination but on the economic and legal equality of women. Although Islamic women, African Americans or Africans relate to the concept of "feminism" today, they often understand something completely different.

As a step to enhance the state of affairs of women across cultural boundaries, common interests had to be sought and articulated with a standardized vocabulary. Such a common denominator was found in the concept of violence against women. Twenty years ago, assault against women was never mentioned by either women's or human rights groups. None of the 30 articles of the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination" (1980) deals with violence. In the meantime, however, the term has become the most important guiding principle of the worldwide women's movement. Its success lies in the fact that under the generic term "violence against women" very different women interests are subsumed, and women from the most diverse social and cultural milieus can relate to it. However, the overarching category "violence", which arose in a dialogue between various women's organizations, allowed them to combine these diverse experiences and problems to work together for the right to physical integrity at a transnational level. The new concept has overcome both the indifference of extreme cultural relativism and the

arrogance of Western imperialism. One major obstacle to diagnosis and treatment of the problem of domestic violence is knowledge and lack of education. Ofei-Aboagye (1994 as mentioned in Bowman 2003, p. 852) points that "an analysis of women's comments leads her to attribute domestic violence in large part to the subordinate position, passivity, and economic dependence of married women on men in her society. She concludes that although there is no answer to this dilemma, changing the social order which teaches a woman that she is incapable of even small decision and confines her to waiting for her husband to lead the way in all that she does, must be our primary focus. In short, the struggle against domestic violence is clearly seen as just one part of a much broader context, the struggle for gender equality".

Human rights and women's rights activists urgently call for a movement against the rampant violence against women. According to the state police statistics in Ghana, on average, seven women are killed in the country every day. Criminologists also assume that every 40 minutes, a woman is raped.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Method

This chapter discusses the approach used in data collection and analysis. A qualitative approach was chosen for this study as scholars have shown that a qualitative method is suitable when the researcher looks for a thorough and in-depth opinion of an incident or a subject (Morrow, 2007).

In order to understand or produce insightful knowledge about the perception and incidences of domestic violence in the community where this study was carried out, it was necessary to study people's lives and structures of society. This calls forth the use of structuralism as a methodology. In sociology or anthropology, structuralism is used for evaluation of information that is collected through interviews or by other means and examining their underlying structures (Baronov, 2015). This approach concentrates on the circumstances that make the meaning possible rather than meaning itself. The structuralist approach looks for in-depth elements in the data that is collected.

This study also used phenomenology as an approach to explore the people of Bukom and Chorkor everyday life experiences. As the research questions seek to figure out in-depth the turn of event in leaving and deciding to endure, a phenomenological approach is regarded the best as it attempts to understand how participants make sense of their experiences (Haradhan, 2018).

As Creswell, Hanson, Clark, and Morales (2007, p.17) put it concisely, the task of the phenomenologist is to "describe what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon". The philosophical suppositions of phenomenology rely on studying people's experiences as they live; viewing these experiences as conscious; and, arriving at a description of the essence of these experiences.

The study attempts to record the incidences and experiences of women who have suffered domestic violence or abuse. It was assumed by the researcher that the women who are abused have complete authority over their lives, so their experience provides a vibrant picture of the truths, deterrents and the difficulties these women experience in making the decision of leaving or staying. According to Husserl (1970), all data is eventually based on human experiences. Qualitative research method conveys the procedure of self-reflection and self-awareness of the researcher and apprehends the opinions, meanings and respondents' experiences (Morrow and Smith, 2000; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Hence, a qualitative study of approach is beneficial to be used in this study as it depends on the concept that societal authenticity is intricate, vibrant, and is created historically and socially. (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

3.2 Study Participants

As a technique to increase understanding of the incidences of domestic violence, the study was conducted at the two selected communities (Chorkor and Bukom) in Ghana. The participants were all residents of the communities and have stayed there for more than five years. The selected participants were victims of Domestic Violence or Intimate Partner Violence. Approximately 20 people were interviewed. The age of the participants ranged from twenty to sixty-nine years, and all were in apparent good health, the youngest, a twenty-year-old to the eldest, a 69-year-old, who was on retirement.

The low level of education of participants compelled the researcher to use conversations with simple grammar, such that the participants would not shy away from their inability to speak English. The researcher did not force any participant to say what they felt uncomfortable. In one of the interviews, the interviewee did not understand what the researcher was asking, no matter

how easy the researcher made the question look, the interviewee felt the researcher was forcing her to say something she did not want to say so, the researcher closed the chapter on that and moved on to something else. A few of the participants were reluctant to disclose their names and age, so the researcher explained to them, it is not of much relevance. The researcher interviewed women who had fresh wounds from the beatings of their husbands. It was through an interview with Ama (one of my participants) that she informed me her brother had beaten her in-law (Ama's brother's supposed wife) and had some blood clot under her eyes.

3.3 Interview questions and Data Collection

For this study, the information gathered by the researcher was primary data. The main data was collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation. Gathering this type of data includes participants from the concerned population and the observations of the researcher. The concerned inhabitants for this research involve all Ga women in Bukom and Chorkor. The participants who were interviewed for this study were chosen through convenient sampling, which is mainly based on the capability and accessibility of the interviewee (Bryman, 2004). A sample of 20 interviewees was used to obtain rigorous and more detailed information from the participants. All participants were engaged individually in semi-structured in-depth interviews that lasted a maximum of 45 minutes and a minimum of 8 minutes. Merriam (1998, p.74) supports the suppleness and practicality of semi-structured meetings by stating that "either all the questions are more flexibly worded, or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions". The interviews were carried out in a way to understand and contemplate on domestic violence through participants experiences. All participants were presented with the same questions. When more

clarification and details were necessary, the researcher asked for it. Rubin and Rubin (1995) presented that scholars should progress, acclimate and create questions and complement enquiries relevant to the main research purpose.

Most of the interviews were done on Tuesday during the day and on other days of the week but in the evenings. The researcher visited the two communities mostly on Tuesdays, as it is forbidden to go fishing on Tuesdays for the inhabitants of these two communities. On Tuesdays, the fishermen mend their nets for the next fishing day, and the women are mostly at home. The researcher spent almost a day all the time she visited the site as she had to visit the two communities which were not closely situated to each other. The researcher often sat with them in the compound of their homes, and it was never a boring moment interviewing them. A bigger sample of the Ga communities would have been unattainable since I had to be in Ghana for a month – the whole month of June 2018.

Chorkor was the first community the researcher visited, and her first contact was with Richard, he lived in a family house with his sisters and mum. Richard was a sociable young man in his late twenties (20s) and became the researcher's key informant, through him, a lot of participants who had been victims of domestic violence were identified. The main informant did not have any effect on the gathered information. The analysis and recording of data were solitarily prepared by the researcher.

There were no principal criteria for participating in the study, as opinions of witnesses of domestic violence were considered as important for this study. Before the actual interview, the researcher had a conversation with the key informant Richard, his mum and two sisters, the conversation with them served as a guideline informing themes that were significant to what I was looking for – some of the themes were; were there incidences of domestic violence at all or they were just

assumptions? Were victims of domestic violence reporting cases of abuse to the police or not? Why do victims prefer to seek mediation from family members?

Carefully formulated questions were used to guide the direction of the research but also an open free flow form of the interview was used alongside in order not to restrict the researcher to the questions. Participants were interviewed individually and separately. The interviews were audio-recorded with a recorder and video recorded with a phone with participants consent. The discussions were conducted in Ga and Akan as most of the participants could not speak English. Grewal and Ritchie (2006, as mentioned in Dery and Diedong, 2014) state that, communication can be simplified with the help of shared language among the participant and the researchers. The capability of a scholar to carry out interviews on their own and speaking in common language with the participant, adds quality and wisdom to the gathered information. It also assists in smooth societal discussions with the native people (Devereux et al., 1993). The researcher's ability to speak the language of the participants facilitated the communication and erased any intention of using a translator. The interviews were transcribed verbatim from Ga and Akan language and translated to English to minimise exaggeration and misunderstanding.

Quite obviously, recording interviews electronically has proven to be convenient and counteracts the importance of writing as it is time-consuming. The interviews that are recorded can be re-played several times to get an objective, complete and un-judgmental analysis. Interviews were conducted in the housing compounds of participants which were of many conveniences to both the researcher and the participants. I interviewed women who had fresh wounds from the beatings of their husbands, and the interview questions ranged from their socio-economic status, cultural beliefs and how well they were abreast with government laws on domestic violence (see appendix for research questions). I do not assume that the findings in these two communities form a neat fit

with the occurrence of domestic violence in Ghana; however, I am convinced they are the desired reflection of some postulation concerning domestic violence.



Fig 4. Shows researcher interviewing a participant at Chorkor



Fig 5. Shows researcher interviewing a participant in her home at Bukom



Fig 6 shows participant with bruises under her eyes as a result of beatings by her partner

3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis was guided by identifying the major themes that surfaced from the responses of participants. The data were also analysed with the help of feminist ideals, the impact of culture on domestic violence, social status and its role in domestic violence and patriarchy as an obstacle to women's freedom and development. The responses were reviewed and coded using open-ended and thematic codes. Jayaratne and Stewart (1991) who are feminist scholars, claimed that quantitative approach overgeneralizes study findings. It fails to understand social occurrences appropriately. It disregards the local public's thought and perceptions, and thus a qualitative approach was regarded as suitable for this research as the purpose was to understand the participant's perception

According to Dery and Diedong (2014), qualitative method intensifies our concerns regarding the definite nature of social certainties being explored. It facilitates the study to grasp qualitative degrees and other relevant determinants. The field research generated written transcripts by reviewing the recordings and field notes. The translated data was cross-checked by the researcher and a colleague to check for accuracy, and this was also done to rule out imposition of interpretations during transcription and translation. Recognizing the key factors obtained from the participant's answers helped in data analysis.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of a study have generated several debates, particularly among quantitative and qualitative researchers. Nonetheless, as mentioned by (Judd et al., 1991 in Agbitor, 2012) both validity and reliability are not resolutions, but they are acceptable by

researchers as it measures the confidence shown in work. According to Saunders (2003), validity measures whether the research findings are really about what they appear to be about and checks the association between variables and contributing relationships.

The sample size of 20 was not huge for immense generalisation. However, it did not influence the accuracy of the findings as I found it reasonable for this kind of study. As pointed out by Creswell (2012), for a qualitative study, a sample size of fifteen and above is sufficient. In this study, prominence was placed on quality rather than on quantity, by so doing, cautious surveillance and evaluation of even a small chunk of data are able to provide deep information of a particular phenomenon (Mckeown, 2015). The geographical area for this study is not small as it covers two different communities in order to bring to light the different environments and variation in the perceptions and incidences of domestic violence.

3.6 Ethical Concerns

Ethical concerns are given utmost importance while carrying out research. Researchers encounter several problems while maintaining the ethics of research in terms of safety and self-esteem of the contributors (Silverman, 2009). The significant characteristic in research is preserving research ethics. Some basic moral concerns are required to be implemented while doing research. In this study, the data of the participants, as well as their responses, are kept confidential by the researcher. The various concepts used in the interview guide are well explained to the respondents. The nature of the interview was explained to the participants, and their oral consent was taken assuring them that their identity will be kept hidden. The participants were given a little amount of money to buy some food for their children; which did not in any way, affect the data since it was not an agreement

between the participants and researcher before the interview was done. It was done out of goodwill, looking at their poor living conditions.

4 RESULTS

This chapter unveils the outcome of the study. The findings were presented under certain key concepts such as feminist ideals, socio-economic status, cultural factors, women's autonomy and men's domination.

4.1 Views of Participants on Domestic Violence

Explaining domestic violence from the perspective of research participants is quite fascinating because of the way each participant sees it. Putting the perspectives of participants in a summary, the fundamental consideration of domestic violence is frequently restricted to the physical damage done on the women who are married. Conversely, this is established on the notion that most of the women in Ghana live in nuclear settings. Practically, in Ghana, the families live in both nuclear and extended settings. Domestic violence is not restricted to women who are presently in a marital relationship. Women who are divorced, single parents or in a relationship are also being abused by their families, boyfriends and former husbands.

While there are various perspectives and experiences regarding domestic violence that were observed after the interview, the description of domestic violence from the participant's point of view is that "Any physical, emotional, financial and sexual act imposed on a man or a woman in a direct or an indirect way by any family member". The participants of this study revealed that the mentioned acts are categorised as violent behaviours: sexual abuse, beating, offensive words, quarrels, insults and withdrawals. Moreover, the respondent conveyed that continuous insult falls under the category of verbal violence.

Physical abuse was described from the interviews as an act that physically harms the victims. This type of domestic abuse falls in the lowest rank in Ghana as compared to the sexual and emotional abuse cases according to the findings. The most familiar forms of physical abuse are pushing, kicking, slapping and beating. Though it was made mention that, this kind of abuse is mostly afflicted on women who belong to poor families, have lower educational level, jobless and socially backward it also cannot be ignored that disagreements and arguments are normal things in domestic homes and families regardless of their educational and financial status. People who belong to rich families and have a higher educational level also face this kind of abuse. There were different opinions on abuse being high in rich or educated people; a carpenter participant said:

> "*Even the politicians and those living in East Legon (a neighbourhood where rich people live) also beat their wives; it is because they have very long tall and thick walls around their houses, you cannot even hear when someone is crying or being beaten*".

The culprits who inflict such kind of behaviour are mostly seen as alcoholic, uneducated, lack modern values or the ones who have seen such practices in their families

Another common type of violence experienced by participants is emotional abuse or violence. Participants described it as the most tormenting type of abuse one could ever experience in their lives and occurs more frequently at home. A greater number of participants supported that insults, not eating food, not communicating, and not being intimate falls under the category of emotional abuse. Withdrawal also fell into the category of emotional abuse as described by the participants. Emotional abuse is demonstrated as the abuse that is voiced in diminishing the standard form of communication with the target. It is frequently done by the abuser to make the victim perturbed and disturbed. The culprit stops interacting with the other person by restricting regular

communication, coming home at abnormal hours, not eating the food that is being served and not telling them the real issue. The insights of participants on emotional abuse collaborate with a study by the Ghana Statistical Service (2009), the rate of emotional abuse is quite higher than the rate of physical violence inflicted on women. Feminists and psychologists have established that emotional abuse is a form of domestic violence which has a more damaging and long-lasting impact on the victim as compared to being physically abused (Davis et al., 2016). A fishmonger said that

> "*it is quite traumatic and shameful for women when her "husband" refuses to eat the food she makes, does not communicate with her and is always insulting her in front of other people. Though the man does not physically abuse her or harm her, it hurts the self-esteem of the woman*".

The findings of this study made known that the outcome of emotional abuse is sleeplessness, depression, suicidal thoughts and confusion regarding their own personality.

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that both women and men can be the culprits and sufferers of all the types of violence that fall under domestic violence, but mostly it is experienced by women.

The discussion regarding the forcing for sexual acts resulted in an intense dispute as the responses of the interviewees was mixed whether sexual abuse can be termed as domestic violence or not. However, recent studies by feminists have identified that sexual violence falls under the category of domestic abuse as it was not previously considered. The intimate partner is mostly the usual culprit of sexual violence (Harris & Landis, 2016). The responses from the study revealed that 40% of the contributors say that domestic violence is justified, while 60% perceive it as an untenable act.

4.2 Challenges of Victims

Several participants confessed that domestic abuse had a great impact on their social life.

Most women complained,

> *"we even sometimes forget that the police exist or DOVVSU exist due to the way a case is handled".*

They lost their confidence and did not feel like meeting other people. According to an abused female participant,

> *"I used to feel uncomfortable among the crowd or when I meet other people. People rejected me because of raising a voice against abuse".*

Constant abuse or insulting behaviour resulted in instilling fear inside the victims. The people who go through such situations are always scared of being beaten up or slapped if they go against the perpetrator. One of the women shared her experience regarding this she said

> "*whenever my husband comes home, I used to be anxious, and my heart would start beating fast, I always fear which act of mine will make him beat me. I was always terrified of him".*

Most participants confessed that continuous exposure to abuse makes them lose their productivity. They are unable to focus on their job because of the pain and distress they encountered in their life. One of the interviewees who was physically abused was suffering from poor health conditions that resulted in her taking numerous leaves from work, as well as losing her concentration while working.

The data collected through the interviews revealed that the people who suffer from domestic violence face the issue of losing their friends when told about being abused. One of the male participants told of his male friend who was abused by his wife "When I shared my pain and told my friends about being abused, they left me alone because according to them, I am not a man. They tease you and call you all kinds of names like "*Kojo besia*" (meaning a man who behaves like a woman). It is without a doubt that some men do get abused, but the interest of this research is not in men who get abused but rather women. Another respondent who was a young girl and married at a very early age, when asked she revealed that

> *"telling my friends about being abused was a bad mistake".*

According to them, a man beating his wife is a normal thing and making it an issue would only result in losing everything. They never understood my point of view and left me alone to deal with my problems".

It is undeniable that domestic abuse has a huge impact on one's confidence and self-esteem as this research and earlier research has established. The respondents who were physically abused agreed that they were not confident in themselves anymore. One of the respondents, while sharing her experience, said that

> *"my boyfriend hits my face and forehead, resulting in severe scars on my face, any scar you see on my body is from him. All these scars on my body made me self-conscious about myself as people kept staring. I lost my self-esteem and became withdrawn and stopped meeting people".*

Several respondents said that they need to take several times off from their job in order to heal from the pain they were going through. This frequent absence from their work resulted in them

losing their customers. One of the interviewees who was earning by selling fish on her own said that

> *"I am blessed that I earn on my own rather than working for someone. I am certain that if I had a job, my boss would have sacked me because of taking several days off work".*

4.3 Socioeconomic Status and Domestic Violence

The data concerning participants socio-economic status and demographics were collected to assess whether these factors were linked to domestic violence in any way or not. Of the twenty participants who took part in the interview, 16 had lower education, 4 had secondary education, and none had university or polytechnic education. Also, considering their marital status, two were single, two were married, 16 of them were cohabiting, and none were divorced. A detailed description of the participants is found in the table below.

Table 1. Socioeconomic and demographic description of data.

Variable (V)	Frequency(F)	Percent (%)
Sex		
Male	4	20%
Female	16	80%
Total	20	100%
Age		
19 – 24	9	45%
25 – 30	5	25%
31 – 36	1	5%
37 – 49	3	15%
50 – 55	1	5%

55 – 71	1	5%
Total	20	100%
Marital Status		
Single	2	10%
Married	2	10%
Divorced	0	0
Cohabiting	16	80%
Total	20	100%
Educational Background		
Lower educational background	16	80%
Secondary Education	4	20%
Polytechnic/ University	0	0
Total	20	100%
Work Status		
Currently working	12	60%
Not working	2	10%
Job training	2	10%
Self-employed	4	20%
Total	20	100%

The study revealed that 16 women between the age gap of 19 – 24 and 25 – 30 were mostly victims of domestic violence; this shows that domestic violence is faced by younger women than older women. All the women who took part in this study had been victims of domestic violence with some still experiencing abuse by their partners.

Out of the 20 respondents, 60% are currently working, but only two respondents earned a stable salary that is the cleaner at the hospital and the carpenter. For the others, they were working, but the income was not stable.

Table 2. Description of their jobs

Occupation	Age	No of People
Fishmonger	19 – 22	5
Hairdresser apprentice	19 – 25	2
Fisherman	42 – 71	2
Hairdresser	25 – 28	1
Beautician	30	1
Carpenter	38	1
Cleaner	39	1
Traders	20 – 25	3
Total		**16**

From the table above, five of the participants were fishmongers, 1 was beautician, three of them earned by selling things on the street, the other was a hairstylist, two were into hairdressing apprenticeship, and the remaining respondents were unemployed. When the data was evaluated, it was identified that domestic violence is not only restricted to the inhabitants belonging to poor families. These people were found to be uneducated, and most of the girls that were interviewed had children at a very early age. They were financially dependent on their partners for their needs. Looking generally at the level of living of all participants, they belonged to the lower-class level. In addition to this, most of the women respondents cohabiting considered it as marriage and only two of the participants were officially married. UNICEF (2000) also supports this concept and also declares that "*domestic violence is part of every society, and it is not limited to employment or the financial status of the inhabitants".* Another research carried out on the domestic abuse in Zambia, Rwanda and Tanzania revealed that working women also encounter domestic abuse just as much

as the women who are unemployed. However, the women who are receiving education and belong to a financially stable family can raise a voice against their husbands or the abusers.

4.4 Women's Autonomy

In Ghana, women are generally seen as the weaker sex because of the gender inequality prevailing in the society. Gender inequality includes women's financial dependency on men, not given access to money and dependency in decisions making. Most women of the women were not financially independent, so they had no choice than to willingly submit to their partners. They tried to express their dislike towards certain things sometimes, but it always resulted in fights. Most at times, domestic violence has been said to be associated with power. In Ghana, men hold the dominating position, and the women are not given any kind of control regarding their life. Women have to obey instructions given by their husbands without opposing their instructions or suggesting ideas that they think would be better off than that of their partners. Any attempt to disobey is regarded as disrespectfulness or arrogance. Placing women in the category of the weaker sex makes them unable to raise their voice against any wrongdoing, and all of these creates a culture of femininity and masculinity. Few of the participants assumed that women relatively lack in terms of intellectuality and are not capable of making effective decisions. The interviews showed that in Ghana, the majority of people believe that it is more suitable to allow young boys in decision making than to allow women.

The rate of domestic violence was seen as high among families who were facing financial problems or who were extremely poor. Earlier research and journals suggest that approximately 40% of cases that were informed to the police were withdrawn due to poverty issues. Low level of

education has somehow been linked to poverty by earlier studies though some scholars argue that education is the only key to success. Most women who are not educated have no means of survival than to be completely reliant on their partners for fulfilling their needs. As a result, they do not have enough means or resources to file against men in court. Even if they earn themselves, they are only able to fulfil their own needs as well as their children. In a family where the man is the only breadwinner, no one dares challenge him, if you challenge him, there is a high possibility of staying hungry for days without food. If the man does not provide, you cannot eat or cater for your needs.

The well-being of women is not considered at all when it comes to sexual matters. Deciding whether you want to be intimate should be mutual between partners, but in most African societies, women do not have a say. Refusing your partner free access is a key contributor to sexual abuse, and most of the men in Ghana believe that they have a complete right over their partners' bodies. The literature-based on cultural and gendered customs perceives that marriage gives a binding and perpetual consent to men regarding sex. The married women of Ghana are found to be more vulnerable because of their sacredness towards their family. Most at times, women find it difficult to discuss these sensitive issues with anyone since they consider it as a sign of failed femininity when they refuse their husbands. Hayes and Van Baak (2017) revealed that it is a shame to discuss with others the matrimonial issues such as sexual abuse and unavailability of choices to deal with such husbands.

The cleaner said,

> *"my penis is erected where do you want me to go and put it? Open the thing and let me put it inside, you are saying you are tired. As for that one, it would not work. If I want sex a*

hundred times, you should be able to give it to me. That is the reason why I love my late wife; I never hit her. If I want sex 100 times, she gives to me 1000 times".

In this scenario, the well-being of a woman is not considered at all; women during their menstrual period experience pain sometimes. Aside from the issue of menstrual pains, humans experience somebody pains because of one reason or the other, will a woman going through this kind of pain still be left with no option than to satisfy a man's sexual desire? A woman has no excuse whatsoever to say no! I am not feeling so well, even in her pain, she would still have to endure just to satisfy the pleasure of a man.

Earlier research on domestic violence revealed that women who were able to receive education and were not dependent on men in any way do not become victims of domestic violence. This is not totally true; dependent women also go through some sort of violence though mostly not physical since their dependency is seen as showing some kind of pride towards men. I do not see any progress with women gaining autonomy when they cannot be financially independent. How can a person dependant on someone to survive raise a voice against that someone? It does not happen especially in an African culture where patriarchy is *"sang"* everywhere.

4.5 Cultural Factors

Cultural norms have a huge impact on the thinking of the Ghanaian people concerning domestic violence. There are quite a few practices in the Ghanaian culture that render women to be lower than men. Two participants out of 20 were officially married, other women were cohabiting. The literature on cohabitation points out that the most habitual method of violence endured by the women is in co-habitant relationships. Research has stipulated a higher prevalence of domestic violence among cohabiting couples compared to married couples. In a community such as Ga's,

where cohabitation is the most common form of "assumed marriage" it is not surprising that the occurrence of domestic violence is high. This finding collaborates with what Okyere- Manu (2015, p. 53) pointed out in her research, "a number of scholars have argued that most women in co-habitant union are at a disadvantage and face a number of challenges. These include the danger of economic deprivation as well as human wellbeing". Amber (2009 as mentioned in Okyere- Manu, 2015, p. 54) explained that "co-habitants are less committed and can easily decide to go or come out of a relationship as compared to married couples who are much committed". When a man and a woman are legally married, there is a status conferred on both of them by society. It is either the marriage is civil, which is bonded by-laws or customary, which is more of the performance of rites and rituals between both families. When a marriage is customary, the voice of family members, especially, the parents of both couples is prominent in the marital relationship. If a woman reports her partner to her parents for abusing her and her parents advise her not to report to the police and that it should be settled at home, it stays like that. Domestic violence cases often reported to family or friends are only met with sympathizing with the victims and comforting them. Participants were of the opinion that, by communicating the pain to loved ones, helps and gives strength to the victims to tolerate it. One of the women participants when asked this question, she replied

> "*Sharing their pain and sufferings with family and friends, they were always advised to stay quiet and bear it as it is considered a normal thing".*

Other research and literature indicate that the hurdles and challenges which include loss of support from one's own family, lack of information and absence of resources prevents the victim of domestic violence in Ghana from pursuing legal right and from filing a case against their partners".

Immediately a woman's hand is sought for in marriage; they become the responsibility of the man to cater for her. Though some men misinterpret it and see women as their property immediately,

the bride price is paid and use that opportunity to abuse them. One of the female respondents said that:

> "*my partner thinks that he can control me and own me because he has paid my bride price. He behaves as if I am his property, not a human being*".

It's even worse when you have children with the man, one of the respondents while sharing her experience said that in their culture it is not considered good to leave the man with whom they have a child. Very few women and their mothers believe that paying the bride price does not make a woman the personal property of a man.

Among the men interviewed one said

> *"if you will worry me, just pack your things and go so that I can have some peace. If you do something wrong and I tell you to stop, and you refuse, then it is better you pack your things and leave".*

It is easier for a man to say this to a woman when he has not paid her bride price. Nothing he has worked for, went into getting that woman to be his partner, so it is so easy and simple to say leave.

Religion cannot be ignored when cultural factors are being discussed. Religion did not come up in my interview with the participants but carefully recounting the sequence of the interviews; religion plays a role in how women perceived violence. Religion generally teaches women to submit to their husbands, the only woman who was legally married said:

> *"my husband beat me, and I reported him to my father-in-law who is a pastor and he advised my husband that, anytime he is angry he should put his hands in his pocket and*

count one to seven, by the time he is done counting till seven, his anger would have subsided".

In the Ghanaian culture, women are told to be submissive and quiet and are told to forgive their partners when they mentally or physically abuse them; no elderly person would advise you to pack your belongings and leave the man's house. One of the respondents told that

"*I told my family about being abused by my husband; my father told me to let it go and forgive him*".

A lady participant recounted when you see a friend being beaten or abused by her partner and you try to interfere on your friends' behalf, sometimes your friend would tell you "it is none of your business, are you the one being beaten? Mind your own business".

Another female participant expressed her view and stated that

"the tongue and the teeth in the human mouth occasionally agree and disagree, but they eventually get united when they need to chew the food. Same is the case with humans."

Similarly, in a marital relationship when disagreement takes place often, and no specific reason exists for it, it is considered as domestic violence. Psychologically, continuous arguments put an individual in an unhappy mood, and it indirectly affects one's relationship with those around them and most of the participants approved this statement. Pondering over these comments, the only connection I can find with these are religious. It could be related to something else, but it was not of much interest to me.

The literature on domestic violence specifies that previously, victims of domestic violence hardly used to file a case against the abusers or the culprits. Women barely raise their voice against

violence and bear the violence silently due to several practices in the culture of Ghana that do not see anything wrong with abuse against women. One of the participants, when questioned regarding this, answered that

"*domestic violence was an ordinary thing and considered as a personal family matter".*

It is quite difficult to tell if domestic violence was severe, or its prevalence was high two decades ago due to the little research done on this sensitive issue. One of the male respondents said that

"*If this act or behaviour was considered as bad, our forefathers would have left it".*

Does the fact that the forefathers abused women and did not make any headlines makes it any better for it to be continued? This statement shows how culture runs in the blood of many Africans when a group of people have a mindset like this; it is extremely difficult to try and introduce them to something new.

A greater number of respondents agreed to the fact that their culture permits men to beat their partners and abuse them. The people of Ghana consider domestic abuse a normal thing. They believe that men are superior in the family and speaking against them is unacceptable behaviour. Men can hit or insult their women as it is out of love. It is considered okay for them to be violent if they feel that their partners are showing resistance or going against their authority. Some men assume they are stronger than women and one way to show women their strength is by being violent. When women in Ghana tell their family members about their partner's torture or regarding reporting them, the women are strictly told not to dissolve their marriages. Majority of the women in African societies are not regarded at all; they are insulted and treated anyhow.

4.6 Men's Domination

African societies are mostly patriarchal and conservative. Due to this, the role of a woman in society is not clearly defined; a certain level of esteem is placed on men as compared to females. A male participant stated that:

> *"man is considered the dominant person in a domestic home as they provide financial support to the family and thus are capable of making decisions".*

In Bukom and Chorkor, the patriarchal men believe they hold the authority to discipline their wives through beatings. Conversely, this chastisement should be done in a sensible manner rather than physically harming the women. The responses of the participants showed that women are weak and are unable to challenge men. Women have no right to take part in decision making and cannot complain regarding this issue. Usually, it is said that it is a close family member who plays a vital role in initiating violence either in a direct or an indirect way against the woman. Violence is initiated by the partner and other relatives of the man who lives in the same compound with the woman. All the women who participated in the interview revealed that mostly the one who initiates the abuse is the man. Women just insult, they don't have the strength to fight, the few strong ones defend themselves by fighting back. In-laws are regarded as the main assailants of violence at home. They sometimes report lies to their sons and their sons do not bother to find out the truth; they just act on what they have been told.

Previous research suggests that male-dominated societies have traditional opinions on gender roles and doing something wrong to the other gender is normal (Rothman, 2016). In Bukom and Chorkor, the men hold a dominating position and have all the power. Their attitude and behaviours need to be accepted by the family members even if they are wrong. No one in the family has the

right to blame them. Women in male-dominated societies consider themselves wrong when they are being abused by their husbands as the men's behaviour is believed to be correct and cannot be interrogated. One of the women participants who was interviewed stated that:

> "*In their society, it is still considered as an ill-mannered and culturally intolerable behaviour when a woman raises her voice against abuse and her husband's behaviour".*

This statement of the respondent indicates that violence and antagonistic attitude is the practice of men in patriarchal societies and women are forced to bear it.

Women in the Ghanaian culture are under a lot of pressure from their elders not to raise their voice against their partner's abusive practices but rather forgive them. Even if the victim decides to take action against the abuser, the reason for dissolving the marriage held the women back. The significant reason for not reporting these cases is that the family members of the woman believe that family matters must stay and be settled inside the home. Domestic abuse is still considered as "normal" in the Ghanaian culture and women are told by their friends and family to not make it a big issue.

5 DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results that were obtained through the analysis of the interviews. Judd et al. (1991) in the book "Research methods in social relation" explained that the discussion part of a research thesis formulates an organised narrative with the initial chapter of the thesis, see also (Jupp, 2006). In this section, the evaluated result will be thoroughly demonstrated on the basis of the introductory chapters as well as the literature. This chapter interprets and recognises the substantial findings of the study. It majorly focuses on the interpretations made from the important outcome obtained from the in-depth interviews, literature concepts and theories used. Though the focus of this research is on perceptions and incidences, I also found women who were bold leave abusive relationships as well as those who are still in abusive relationships and still fighting for respect to be given to them from their partners.

This chapter interprets and recognises the substantial findings of the study. It majorly focuses on the interpretations made from the important outcome obtained from the in-depth interviews, literature concepts and theories used.

5.1 Domestic Violence in Bukom and Chorkor

This research was carried out to know the perception and incidences of domestic violence among the Ga women of Bukom and Chorkor, particularly. However, a few men were involved in the study as well to find out about their opinions. Overall the results indicated that domestic abuse is still part of the daily lives of the women of these two communities. The women portrayed that, a day does not pass without one hearing of a man abusing his partner. This finding is in line with Mann and Takyi (2009), who stated that wife-beating had been a common practice in Ghana. Some

of the participants, especially women, had a cold reaction towards domestic abuse while on the contrary men had a positive reaction towards domestic abuse. It was interesting observing how all women thought hitting or abusive words was not the best way to go about arguments while on the contrary men thought hitting or 'discipline' brought the women back to their senses. Women are expected to be submissive and quiet and are told to forgive their partners when they mentally or physically abuse them.

The women participants knew the actions of men could be reported to officials to bring punishment on the men, but most of them were afraid to take that bold step because they felt it would ruin their relationship and make them starve with their children. There was always arbitration by family members advising partners or couples to settle issues of abuse amicably at home instead of reporting to the police. The responses of the participants gave the idea that most of the time, the women were told to forgive and forget about what happened, and they were forced to go back to their partners. In line with other scholarly work, very few of the women file cases against their partners and the reasons was, family pressure and the other was financial issues. One of the respondents, when asked concerning the occurrence of domestic violence in their neighbourhood stated

> "*domestic violence is still common here in this neighbourhood. Sometimes the victims even shut us up (their friends) by asking, are you the one being beaten? Mind your own business".*

This response is quite strange coming from a victim, but a witness can only mind his or her own business when you are told to. To some others, after a fight their bonds of love becomes strengthened so resorting to abuse is also a way of 'fuelling the spark in their relationship' The results also established the different kinds of abuse women face which ranged from physical,

psychological and emotional to verbal abuse. The women of Bukom and Chorkor who took part in the study agree that their culture is the main reason the residents of their community are still facing this problem. The outcome of the interviews revealed that domestic abuse is perceived as a normal thing in the community. Very few women in the community of Bukom and Chorkor get married officially while most of the women stay with their partners in relationships and bear their children. According to Browne (2011), every culture follows its own societal norms. Some other cultures force women to be submissive and play the role of subordinates, which is the same case in Bukom and Chorkor. In the same way, the mindset of the Ghanaian people is that; they consider men to be the head of the family since they earn for their family or better still are breadwinners. These men have a complete right over their women, and they can beat them and insult them because it is out of love. Furthermore, the results suggested that child marriages are frowned upon in Ghana, but several women of Bukom and Chorkor were introduced to intimate affairs at a very young age, even before adolescence. Child marriage is not the focus of this study, but it cannot be ignored because there were female participants who had children already at the age of 18 years.

It can be indicated or said that the low socio-economic statuses of women and the cultural orientation of society were discovered to be the leading cause of domestic violence.

5.2 Domestic Violence and Gendered Power

Studentcova (2014, p. 7) states that "one of the reasons for the resurgence of domestic violence from generation to generation is the gendered tendency of upbringing where the behaviour of girls is limited to a greater degree than that of boys, implanting inferiority in them, and in boys – superiority". Adjah and Agbemafle (2016) also mention in their report that domestic abuse

prevails in Ghana due to the culture and the mindset of the inhabitants. In view of the aforesaid, a person cannot be described without mentioning the culture one belongs to or the upbringing of that individual.

Understanding the culture one belongs to is essential due to the fact that our personal cultural orientation is present in each association (Zion, 2005). There are many elements of culture contributing to a greater part of a person's life; some of these elements include language, attitude towards time, gender roles, space, familial roles and others. Theoretically, the culture of many Africans has oriented the gender female to assume the passionate, mother, caring role while the gender male assumes the leader, the aggressive, the loud and the assertive kind of role. A rigid system of gender roles is considered a reason for the risk of violence against women. The probability of a man in any life situation to be a breadwinner and provider of the family forms the basis of circumstances of stiff psychological and economic tension (Studentcova, 2014). These variations in gender roles and behaviour contribute to inequalities, whereby one gender becomes more privileged to the detriment of the other (WHO, 2009). Thus, a good start in discussing domestic violence and gender power issues in Ghana should be connected to culture. Gender power remains significant in ideas of domestic violence, and it is obvious gender inequality has a wide range of negative impact on society which includes a rise in the use of assault by men against women and constraining the ability of those affected to seek protection (WHO, 2009).

It has mostly been argued by other scholars that, the most common reason for the occurrence of domestic violence is usually related with the person of a man: a rigid traditional point of view on the position of the man and woman in the family (Studentcova, 2014). The earlier chapters of this thesis have demonstrated the fact that a few cases of domestic abuse were reported to the officials as most women of the Ga community feared that reporting their partners would ruin their

relationships. The question here is “why should women fear their relationships would be ruined”? So, it can be assumed that more meaning is read into a woman reporting a husband to the police by the community. Whether when women report their husbands, they are not submissive, or they are arrogant is something that can be researched later, but theoretically, women would rather save their relationships than lose their lives.

5.3 Socio-economic Status

Ghana is a middle-income state that had a population growth of 2.2% till the year 2018; the in-depth interviews conducted revealed that majority of the victims of domestic abuse were women, it may be assumed that the main root cause of domestic violence in Ghana was found to be poverty. Being a low economic state, the people of Ghana face several financial issues (Doku and Asante, 2015). The findings showed that the social life of Ga women only revolves around their family and kids. It is honourable in the African society when the bride price of a woman is paid, but in Bukom and Chorkor, most of the women were found to be in a co-habitant relationship and with children. It is worth mentioning that, whether one is married or unmarried the right of an individual does not reduce in anyway. Majority of the women in Ghana are dependent on their partners financially, and they have to face and bear their partner's abuse when they ask them for money. This fact is supported by the response of some women of the Ga community. One of them said

> “*My partner beat me because I stole money from his wallet. Whenever I ask him for more, he always refuses. And then I would steal money from his pocket. This causes fights among us*”.

It is obvious that poverty contributes massively to the occurrence of domestic abuse, as has been mentioned severally in this study. Most of the women tolerated beatings from their partners

because they were financially dependent on them. Most of the women in Bukom and Chorkor were dependent on their partners, making it difficult or impossible for them to raise a voice against the "hand that feeds them" in a proverbial saying. Single-handedly women are unable to provide for their needs without the help of a man due to their low financial status. Most women do not have any special skills to find them a job that can bring them regular income, so they have no choice than to endure the maltreatment they go through every day. Based on previous research it is identified that women's lack of economic resources, in access to education and other socio-economic advantages reflects aspects of gender inequality and norms regarding access to traditional knowledge and customs (Annin, 2009).

Other literature revealed that women who were able to receive education and were not dependent on men in any way do not become victims of domestic violence, but this outcome, however, contradicts the concept provided by UNICEF (2000) which states, domestic violence is a part of every existing society, and it is not limited to the financial and the employment status of the inhabitants. Doku and Asante (2015) have argued that it is without a doubt that poverty cannot be ruled out in problems of domestic violence.

Low level of education cannot be ruled out when discussing socio-economic statuses. African societies have emphasised on male education as more important than female education. It should be made clear that education is equally important to both males and females. It is evident in the work of Debrei (2018, p. 19) that "the more educated a woman is, the less likely she is to experience or accept any form of violence against her, and she is less likely to tolerate it". Lacking the main abilities of reading and writing puts you in a place of exposure to social rejection which makes it difficult to get employed, and it reduces the betterment of life. Lack of responsiveness to diversity is the consequence of all the difficulties one has to go through as a result of poverty. For

this reason, it was not surprising that a few women did not find it necessary to tell incidences of abuse to the police. Two of the respondents puts it like this:

> "*I would not report a man who has beaten me to the police if I love him. If I don't love him, I will go and report, but if I love him, I won't go. It is not acceptable for a woman to report a man she has had children with to the police*".

With things like this being said, it is undeniable that violence and antagonistic attitude have been the practice of men in patriarchal societies like Ghana since time immemorial and women have been forced to bear and accept it. Some have this mindset that, if our great grandparents endured it and they survived it, why should we be making any effort to change it. Until there are interventions in our communities and schools that stand up to rooted beliefs and cultural norms from which gender inequalities develop, I am afraid we will continue to see violence happening all the time (WHO,2009).

5.4 Women subordination and Cultural implications

According to Ardayfio-Schandorf (2005), violence has now become a reality for an appreciable number of women and is seen as an excuse to humiliate women, showing society is embracing it and making it look acceptable (Tenkorang, 2018). The rights of women are not considered prominent in society again, and as a result domestic abuse has been identified as a culture in different societies. People tend to connect violence with many factors, such as support inequalities, and women as subordinate subjects of society. Culture plays a role in women being expected to play subordinate roles in society, whiles the men dominate. Even when women report their abusers to the police, they are tagged as not being submissive. The common word the elderly use in

counselling women when they have issues with their husbands is submitting which means "*brewohoase"* in the Akan dialect. Strife's in relationships are always settled by elderly advising the women that:

> *"They are the men, they are the head, whatever they say you have to be quiet; you are the woman, so you have to humble yourself".*

A male respondent said:

> *"The men consider themselves as the ones in control and believe that women are only meant to follow their orders".*

Usually, much attention is not paid to the reason for the abuse or the violence, and family members are only interested in settling issues that come up in relationships. In Bukom and Chorkor, the patriarchal rights men hold confers on them the right to discipline their wives or partner's by physically and emotionally torturing them. A man can flirt with as many women as he likes and equally abuses them as much as he likes. Because of the little financial support, they give to the women; the men believe if I lose one woman, I will get another replacement.

Generally, in Ghana, religion has always taught women to be submissive to their husbands. Though the marital standing of a woman influences how she is treated, whether both families are aware their children are in a relationship or the bride price has been paid depends on how serious a man takes a relationship. Some verses in the bible even make the situations worse; there are verses in the bible that state clearly that

> "*wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church" (Ephesians 5: 22-23).*

Some examples of verses like give men the opportunity to use it as an excuse to exercise authority over their wives. Men who are not even Christians refer to this verse since it favours them; however, it should be noted that the verse has been interpreted wrongly as the same chapter says

> "*husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her….in the same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies*" *(Ephesians 5:25).*

Biblically, if men want to make reference to this verse, they should also remember not to do anything to hurt or cause pain to their wives since they cannot do the same to their own bodies. It is, therefore, not surprising the outcome of this research revealed that the men in Ghana want to have complete control over their women (Sedziafa et al., 2016).

According to the literature based on the cultural and gendered customs, it is perceived that marriage gives a binding and perpetual consent to men regarding sex. The married women in Ghana are found to be more vulnerable because of their sacredness towards their family. Research has established that women who share their matrimonial problem that includes sexual abuse, have been looked upon by their friends and family. Most African cultures believe that men have complete authority over their spouse, and the women cannot refuse them their rights. It is without a doubt that in the Ghanaian society, domestic abuse is related to power. Men have this dying need to always be in control; anytime it looks like a woman is in charge, men become laughing stocks in society. Men see it as an abomination for women to be in control, it is common to hear men saying, if you give a woman an inch, she will take a yard. Men find it difficult to treat their women with respect or even pamper them. A woman participant revealed,

> *"imagine a man you call your husband insulting you on top of his voice in the middle of the street that, you are a prostitute. Whether he is saying you are a prostitute out of anger or because it is true cannot be determined by the people in the community. It makes you feel so ashamed of yourself".*

In fact, even when it comes to a decision making women are considered as lacking in intellectuality and thus are not able to make effective decisions, and this weakness women are "tagged" with makes it impossible for them to raise their voice against any wrongdoings. In this sense, it should be understood that all these categories women are placed in, indirectly impacts subordination negatively. There are some women who have single handily taken care of their families when they lost their husbands or partners at a very early stage of their relationships, this assumption that women cannot do without men should be corrected. Women should rather be supported and encouraged by society rather being brought down.

Most cases of domestic abuse are not being reported because they are regarded as family issues and should be settled at home by a religious leader, an elder or an opinion leader. Friends and family just render their support to give you comfort and nothing else. On the other hand, some are even shy to talk about it, especially when a victim is a man. It is obvious that all the stigma attached to domestic abuse is because of our cultural orientations. It is not allowed to behave like this and so on, and so it has come to remain like that.

Though almost all of the participants had a very low level of education and earned an income through their occupation as fishmongers, through support from their "husbands" and the others through the trading of goods, they still fell victims to domestic violence due to issues of mistrust and jealousy. Generally, a lot of men in African societies want to have complete control over their women; women are beaten by their partners when they associate with people of the opposite sex.

A woman participant said:

> *"my boyfriend never wants to see me with any friends, if he sees me talking with someone of the opposite sex, he gets jealous and angry, and he beats me up."*

Adjei (2015) points out that, when men feel like their partners are not listening to them, they lose their mind and conduct physical or mental abuse to satisfy their egos. In analysing the interviews, the researcher came across issues of jealousy and mistrust at least more than twice, and it can be said with all confidence that these issues play a role in initiating violence at home.

Another response that was recorded revealed that the majority of the men in Ghana easily get jealous, and because of their dominating attitude, they result in abusing their spouses. Another response from a male participant portrayed that, usually men in Ghana do not feel ashamed when they torture or abuse their wives. The key reason is, because of the culture they belong to, their mindsets and their upbringing. A man who was a participant stated boldly,

> "*The reason I beat my wife is because of our children. My wife spoils them and takes their side when I want to punish them for any wrongdoing, and when this continues, our children will not grow in the right path*".

Another male respondent stated the reason for abusing his partner. He said that

> "*I have beaten my wife so many times because she always denies me sex. My penis is erected, where does she want me to take it? Does she want me to go and find a prostitute to satisfy me? Then why is she, my wife? She makes excuses to get intimate with me, which triggers my anger*".

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarises the key findings of the research carried out. The outcome of the in-depth interviews that were taken from participants highlights a lot of elements that are crucial for the greater rate of domestic violence in Ghana. This chapter focuses on the conclusion that was extracted from the study and recommended as well as give some suggestions through which change can be brought to the Ga community.

The purpose of gathering the data and conducting the interviews was, to a great extent, fulfilled. The research findings and the results have emphasised on the reasons why Ga women tolerate abusive acts. This research will only establish the foundation by revealing the reasons as well as presenting the mechanisms to redress the adversity of domestic violence. This research will suggest ways that can help in bringing change in the lives of the Ga women. At the same time, there is perseverance to correct this gender-based inequality that is prevailing in their community. It is important that further research is carried out in other areas of the Ga communities to monitor the rates and trends on domestic violence and suggest the best possible solutions for it. Identifying socioeconomic status as a major determinant of domestic violence is essential in coming up with useful resources and mediations to fight the cause. Comparing the happenings of domestic violence in different communities will help to come up with interventions to help reduce it. The study done can be more effective if the recommendations and suggestions presented can get implemented in those areas. For the gathered data, it is established that domestic violence has a damaging and adverse effect on victims, more specifically, the Ga women who were the main subjects of interest in this research.

The victims of domestic abuse suffer a lot because of the pain they encounter. One of the negative effects that were highlighted in this study is the immense impact on the victim's social life. The participants themselves said that they had to go through rejection from the community because of being separated from their partners or raising their voice against abuse. Other negative effects that were discussed in this study were that the victims were always scared of being beaten up or slapped if they went against the abuser. Furthermore, the victims of domestic abuse lose their efficiency. They were unable to focus on their jobs because of the pain and misery they encountered in their lives. The victims of domestic violence sometimes lose their friends when they told them about being abused. They felt that they were all alone in this cause, and that made their lives more miserable.

Domestic abuse has a huge influence on the victim's self-esteem and confidence. The respondents who were physically abused agreed that they were not confident about themselves anymore. Some of the abuse they faced left permanent scars on their bodies that reminded them all the time of the incident. They always felt insecure about themselves in front of other people. This resulted in victims avoiding social gatherings as well as close relatives and friends, causing difficulties in their healing. The results and findings discussed in this research are in line with other research and literature of other researchers (Ajayi et al., 2018; Asiedu, 2016; Osei-Tutu and Ampadu, 2017; Adjah and Agbemafle, 2016).

The discussion section also identified the answers to the research question that were posed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation. The analysis of the collected data revealed the fact that not only women but men are also victims of domestic abuse. Of the twenty participants used for this research, four respondents were male and very little research is being done on men in general. Women are of most priority in domestic violence cases. Research that has been done previously

only focused on women and the adverse effects of violence on them. More research in Ghana on the reasons for domestic violence will be helpful and interesting. On the other hand, this research can be extended to other regions in Ghana to guide them in obtaining their results as well and propose solutions according to it.

This study will also provide relevant information to several stakeholders that include government, NGO's and the units that are created only for catering the needs of domestic abuse victims. This study can also be utilised as a reference for further research. The outcome of this research points out the fact that DOVVSU is the only unit that has been established to work for the betterment of domestic abuse victims. DOVVSU as the only government unit responsible for domestic violence cases should be equipped with more tools, resources and incentives to help the victims of domestic abuse. The establishment of more similar units like DOVVSU would help in addressing domestic violence issues quickly and productively.

The responses of the women also uncovered the beliefs and opinions of the Ga women on intimate partner violence and their living conditions. The interviews taken concluded that mostly in cases of domestic abuse, the Ga women's priority is their family and friends rather than the police or other authorities that can take strict action against their abusers. Most women are advised to stay quiet or deal with it and forgive their partners as it's a normal thing in their society.

From the outcome of the results, it can be deduced that the inhabitants of Ghana more specifically women display a high degree of acceptance and tolerance towards physical abuse contrary to women who are married or in a relationship (Tenkorang et al., 2018). The interview for this study disclosed that about 80% of the victims of domestic violence were women, while 20% were men. In as much as this issue is justified in the Ga community that women are the most victims, very few people report the case of abuse. Furthermore, the men in the Ga community believe that

women are supposed to obey their husbands in all circumstances, and if they disobey them, men can discipline their wives in any way they want. Earlier research has identified that the majority of men in the Ghanaian society have grown up in a culture that considers abuse as a normal thing. Moreover, most of the people in Ghana do not support the fact that domestic violence should be reported to the authorities (Adjei, 2018).

Previous statistics obtained from other researches identifies that, with the passage of time the rate of violence has primarily increased in Ghana, the reason for this increment in the prevalence rate was found to be the unawareness of the "*Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732)"* among the inhabitants as pointed out by (Alvarado et al., 2018). Contrarily, it is also indicated that, through the initiation and execution of punishment laws and conventions in Ghana, there has been a considerable decrease in the rate of physical abuse though it is not up to satisfaction. It should be made clear that the interest of this research lies not in domestic violence increasing or decreasing but as to whether it persists after some years on, the people's perception about it and its incidences after introducing the domestic violence act to help curb the issue. On the other hand, the women who were aware of the act feared to report to the authorities due to family pressures or the fear of ruining their relationships as stated earlier.

More units like DOVVSU must be created and equipped fully in every region to cater to such sensitive issues as intimate partner violence and domestic abuse since it can greatly impact the rate of abuse in communities. Creating a temporary shelter home for victims of abuse would help women find a temporary place of solace while they prepare to move to another safe place, this suggestion collaborates with what Kirkwood (1993) mentions in his work, he pointed out that, the need for housing and economic resources was recorded in several studies as the most vital need among battered women who had recently left. This temporary refuge will help victims of domestic

abuse heal faster after going through such emotional, physical and psychological trauma. The units or temporary refuge homes must include receiving care from professional psychologists and medical officers so they can effectively deal with the cases of abuse and help victims heal in a shorter time. Other than this, there is a need for spreading awareness of the existence of domestic violence among the inhabitants of Ghana.

Moreover, with women born to be submissive and patriarchy engraved in the mindset of the people of Ghana, it will take time to bring change in the cultures. The Ghanaian traditional values and culture has nurtured the girl child to be submissive to men and continues to nurture women to be submissive which is unlike in the Western and European cultures, where women are not tied to any traditional values. Suggestively, there are several elements that also impacts the capability of DOVVSU in accomplishing their aims, and these elements are related to the prevailing system in Ghana. In order to handle these issues of violence or abuse, it is necessary that not only the units but the legal authorities, i.e. the government and police must play their part in punishing the perpetrators. This will help in restricting abusers and perpetrators. Abusers who have received punishments will serve as deterrents to others. People will begin to think about the consequences of their actions.

Besides this, the literature for this dissertation highlighted the concept of patriarchy. This practice brings about gender inequality that makes women not have full control over their sexuality; it results in men having full control over their partners. Another theory that was discussed was the feminist approach which holds the thought that just about all male-on-female abuse is predicated on the patriarchal values of society which these morals are sanctioned by a culture in which male domination of females is both covertly and overtly reinforced. Most women in Ghana are still unaware of feminism theories as it is exclusively articulated from the western point of view. The

Ga women still do not make demands for equality or their rights because of their low educational level.

The in-depth interviews empowered and permitted the researcher to discover the perspectives of the Ga women on domestic violence as well as the few men who were incorporated in this study. The occupational background of the participants was analysed to know whether the occupation of a person has any influence on the extent, kind and possibility of domestic violence on the people of the Ga community. The occupation of men in the Ga community was mostly fishermen, and the women were fishmongers. Most of their women were financially dependent on their partners. Two participants out of 20 were officially married, the remaining were cohabiting. Domestic violence is considered in the community as the most habitual method of violence borne by the women. It was perceived that the families who were facing financial problems or who were extremely poor, the possibility to experience domestic violence in such houses were found to be quite high.

From the results of this study, it is evident that there is an immense need to promote education in their culture and establish community intervention programmes. Through this, the people of the Ga community will be able to change their mind-sets towards domestic violence, and it will also help women to become independent. The results also highlighted the different forms of domestic violence that exist in their community. The most common forms are emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Furthermore, the discussion pointed towards the idea that in order to comprehend domestic abuse in the Ghanaian culture, it is necessary to explore and discover some socio-demographic variables that include the use of alcohol, educational level, social life and the absence of appreciation of women by their partners because of rooted internationalisation of male domination and gender roles differentiation. Not every woman suffers from the same form of violence. Some are physically abused; some are emotionally abused and some sexually abused. Each abuse has a

specific duration, with some having lasting effects. Mostly, emotional abuse has long term impacts on people.

There are numerous challenges that are encountered regarding reporting domestic violence cases. These challenges include cultural norms, interference from family and friends, family pressure, poor financial conditions, absence of facilities and practices and mindsets of the inhabitant. The abusers are hardly punished for their acts. Even if a few women gather the courage to report against the issue of domestic abuse, the men are released and sent back to their homes after giving bribes to the officials. The greatest challenge that stops the women of the Ga community from reporting against domestic abuse is the mind-set of the people and the resources involved in lodging a complaint. The women sometimes do not accept that they are being abused by their partners. All these elements proved to be obstacles in bringing betterment in the Ga community.

This research and its results have clearly deliberated the current picture of domestic violence that is prevailing in the Ga society. Other than financial factors, there are other aspects as well that are causes of the increased rate of violence in society. The findings of this study will serve as a guideline in knowing where and how measures to reduce domestic violence can be initiated.

The fourth objective of this study addresses the solutions through which the prevailing frequency of domestic abuse in Ghana can be controlled. There are several factors when implemented in an appropriate manner will have a huge influence to redress domestic violence in Ghanaian culture. The first unit that was established for the purpose of providing protection against domestic violence was WAJU which is now DOVVSU. In addition to this, awareness is needed in every culture concerning the domestic violence act to refrain people from beating, insulting and abusing their partners. Most of the participants that were interviewed asserted that domestic abuse is widespread because several people in Ghana show an ignorant attitude towards this issue. When

the respondents were questioned regarding the present situation and what possible mechanism could be taken to reduce the rate of abuse, most of them agreed on educating the people of the Ga community as the impact of the abuse on the victims stays for a long time, and it is necessary to make their situation better. One of the responses that were recorded mentioned that,

> "*People are required to educate themselves in order to bring change in the culture and society of Ghana. Besides that, awareness needed to be spread concerning the laws and acts on domestic violence*".

The existing act in the Ghanaian law called "*Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732)"* that handles cases of abuse and violence should take strict action against the culprits. There are several laws mentioned in the "*Domestic Violence Act, 2007"* of Ghana that states the punishments that must be given to people who conduct acts of domestic violence against their partners as well as children Issahaku (2018), however, the act has failed to enforce the punishments. The strict implementation of this law and act in Ghana will encourage women to report such wrongdoings of their partners and in a way, raise their voice against domestic violence. A possible solution that can help in diminishing this type of violence from the Ga community is to take strict action against the perpetrators and to educate residents on the harmful consequences of such acts. Another way of reducing incidences of domestic violence in Ghana is an immediate need for the spread of awareness among the women regarding the law that is specifically designed to take action against the abusers.

The findings of the research suggest that many survivors did not have access to the justice organisations as well as their financial conditions did not allow them to file a case against their partners. According to Bott et al., (2005), there are a lot of survivors that are not aware of their rights as well as they do not know the ways of reporting to police or how to get in contact with the

units that help these victims. The data collected showed that since the people of the Ga community have a low level of education, there is a need to use resources for the promotion of units like DOVVSU to help the women in their communities and to provide them with support. The findings of this study show that cultural norms have a huge impact on the thinking of the Ga people concerning domestic violence.

The justification or condemnation of violence is said to depend on the social orientation of society, and correspondingly can intensify or weaken. It is without a doubt that the reasons for the display of violence are numerous enough. Violence has a sociocultural nature, and it is an indispensable part of stereotypical representations about the essence of family relationships. Regardless of the race or class of a woman in Ghana, she is still a victim of domestic abuse due to the deep patriarchal system that nurtures men to see women as possessions; this is in line with what Saunders and Anderson (2003) mention in their work, according to them the patriarchal social structures on the macro level keep women in a group that makes them financially reliant on men and making them embrace the existing patriarchal norms about gender roles. Several researchers believe that prevention programs, as well as intervention programs and basic education, are the most effective and promising measures that can deter abuse in society.

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APPENDICES

Abbreviations

DOVVSU – Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HIV – Human Immune Deficiency Virus

HRDA – Human Rights Dialogue

MDG – Millennium Development Goals

NRSV – New Revised Standard Version

UN – United nations

UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Education Fund

WAJU – Women and Juvenile Unit

WHO – World Health Organization

Thesis interview questions

1. How old are you?
2. Are you married or dating or living together with someone?
3. How long have you been married or been living together with your boyfriend?
4. Do your work? What is your level of income?
5. Have you been beaten or hit by your husband or boyfriend before?
6. What did you do, that led to the beating or hitting?
7. Did you report to anyone (police, family/ head of family, neighbour) when you were hit by your husband or boyfriend?
8. Was there arbitration? By whom?
9. Do you know it is an offense for someone to beat or hit you?

10. How do you know/ from what source?
11. Do you know what to do when you are beaten or hit by your husband or boyfriend?
12. How do you feel when you are beaten or hit by your husband or boyfriend?
13. Are you afraid to report to the police that you have been hit or beaten by your husband or boyfriend?
14. Can you report to the police or any authority when you are beaten or hit by your boyfriend or husband in the future?
15. How do you see domestic violence?