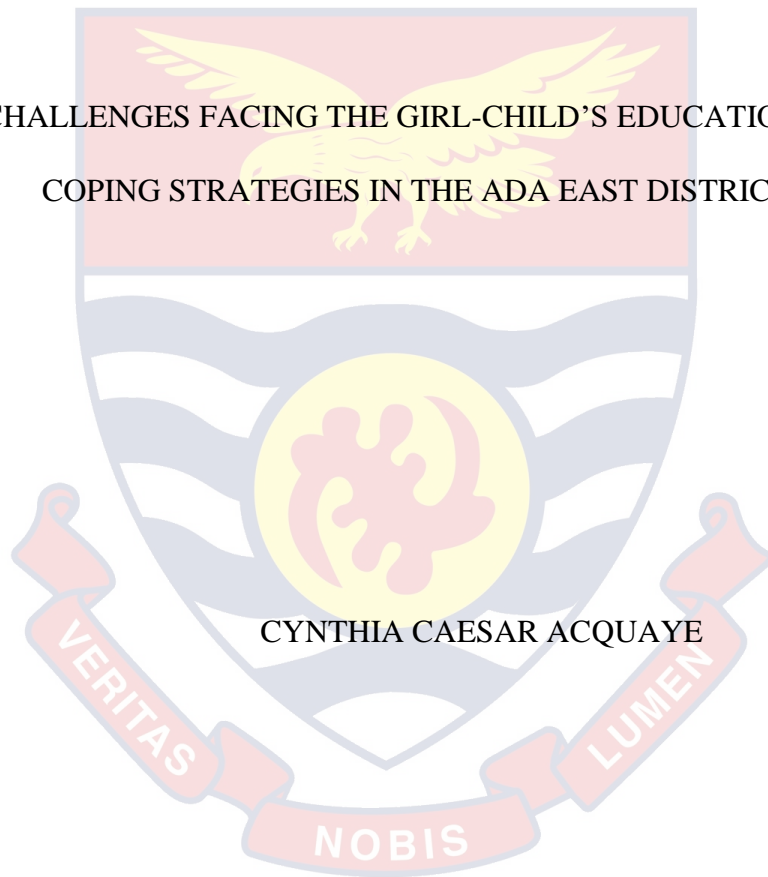


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CHALLENGES FACING THE GIRL-CHILD'S EDUCATION AND THEIR
COPING STRATEGIES IN THE ADA EAST DISTRICT, GHANA

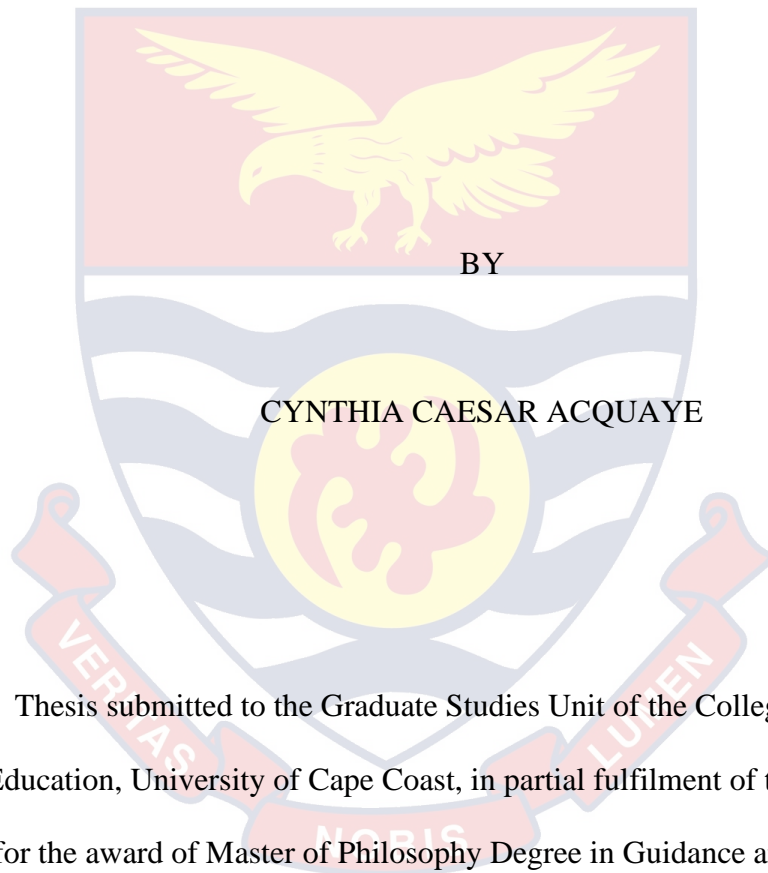


CYNTHIA CAESAR ACQUAYE

2021

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CHALLENGES FACING THE GIRL-CHILD'S EDUCATION AND THEIR
COPING STRATEGIES IN THE ADA EAST DISTRICT, GHANA



This thesis submitted to the Graduate Studies Unit of the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Guidance and Counselling.

AUGUST 2021

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

Name:.....

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name:.....

Co-Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name:.....

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at examining the challenges facing the girl-child's education and their coping strategies in the Ada East District. The convergent mixed method design was employed for this study. The population for the study comprised the Junior High pupils of schools in the Ada East District in Ghana. The population also comprised parents of the pupils, their teachers and District Education Officer. The stratified sampling technique was used to sample pupils in the basic schools in the Ada East District as the stratification variable. The parents and teachers were selected using a simple random sampling method. The District Education Officer was purposively sampled because the officer was in charge of the girl-child education in the district. The instruments used for data gathering were questionnaire and interview guide. The findings of the study revealed that the main challenges girls face in education in the Ada East District include teenage pregnancy, lack of financial support due to poverty and physiological changes. The study revealed that the government has instituted several intervention programmes, such as free education, to reduce the gender inequality gap. The study further revealed that there is no significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's education on the basis of age. It was concluded that Guidance and Counselling coordinators should strengthen counselling services in the schools. The study also recommends that there should be a social intervention by the Government of Ghana and Non-Governmental Organisations to provide sanitary pads for girls, especially those in the rural areas of Ghana on monthly basis.

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KEYWORDS

Girl-Child

Basic Education

Coping Strategies

Educational Challenges

Basic Needs



DEDICATION

To my loving husband, A.C.P/Mr. Abraham Acquaye.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality in the formal instruction is only not a key concern for policymakers, parents, and educators, but also a fundamental right for persons, a major pointer of attainment of education for all, and a basis of economic development (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2009; UNESCO, 2012). According to UNESCO (2011), 53% of a total of sixty-one million out-of-school pupils are females. Also, virtually, two out of three illiterate adults globally are females. According to statistics of UNESCO (2011), Sub-Saharan Africa contributes to half of the out-of-school pupils worldwide. These statistics point to the presence of a large educational gap between SSA countries and the remaining countries. To contribute to the bad situation of female education in Africa, the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) indicated a high enrolment of boys as compared to girls in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2012).

The issues of gender fairness have received comparatively minute attention in local education transformation efforts in several developing nations, especially in Africa. Regrettably for the majority of developing nations, females appear to experience much discrimination with regards to retention and accessibility at almost all stages of education, mostly in pre-tertiary and tertiary education (UNESCO, 2009). Absence of education has been acknowledged as a key hindrance to females' employment and progress

in the social order. In reality, there appear to be several obstacles in the way of the girl-child in accessing schooling as compared to the males. In this study, the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education are explored and the coping strategies employed are also investigated.

Background to the Study

The main focus of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) is to empower gender parity. This entails the elimination the discrimination of all manner, early marriage, strengthening women involvement in making decision, and surging universal access to sexual and reproductive health services (UNESCO, 2017). The campaign for gender equality has been joined by the AU. In its 2063 Agenda has encouraged most girls enrolling into fields related to (STEM) in Africa for speedy economic growth to reduce the gender disparity in STEM and education in general (African Union [AU], 2015). Both UNESCO (2017) and AU (2015) highlighted the essence of educating all persons and the benefits associated with such inclusive education.

Education, being the main source of quality human assets for every country, is a very vital factor in reducing poverty and improving the living standard for the people in the country at large (Magajin, 2010). This gives not only men but women the capacity to add to the economic and social growth of the families and nation as a whole. It is therefore very crucial and important that girls get unbiased access to quality education irrespective of their geographical locations. This will capacitate girls to give immense contributions to their families, their communities, countries and the world at large (UNESCO, 2012).

From the year 1957 up to date, there has been a surge in the degree of illiteracy in Ghana regardless of FCUBE. Enrolment of females in tertiary, secondary and basic school has been consistently low. Gender disparity has always been in favour of males, however, the gender gap at the higher, second and basic level is 55.6%, 22.2% and 8.4% respectively (Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004).

There exists a gender inequality among the ages 21 to 24 years (Nguyen & Wodon, 2013). They add that, the number of male enrolled in a basic school where more than the number of female that is, 90.7% and 84.1% with an accomplishment rate of 92.7% and 86.5% respectively. A parallel trend was found among JHS learners that is, 65.1% and 51.2% respectively. Accessibility with reference to enrolment and completion is a negotiated gendered process which is endorsed on daily basis (Dunne, Akyeampong, and Humphreys, 2007) among families, parents, and schools (Humphreys, Moses, Kaibo, and Dunne, 2015), growing characteristics of school dropout in Ghana.

Kofi Annan, the former UN General Secretary, at the World Education Forum in 2000, opined that: “No growth plan is excellent than one that includes females as the key actors. It has direct significance for health savings, nutrition, and re-investment at the household, society and eventually, at the national level. The girl-child education is a social growth strategy that brings about overall country development. Girl-child education is a long-term asset that brings about high returns not only to the individuals but to the country as well. It is of no surprise that countries with higher rates of girl-child education show signs of higher and better economic development, lower infant and maternal mortality, lower birth rate, lower rates of teenage pregnancy and

many more as compared to countries with lower rates of girl-child education (UNESCO, 2012). Equal educational opportunities mean a higher level of economic empowerment for both women and men across the globe. Educated persons are most likely to get opportunities to better their standards of living than uneducated ones (Lee & Pollitzer, 2016). This is very crucial when individuals cannot depend on their wealth, family, property and business connections. With this, women with more education are likely to gain employment or own and operate their businesses to earn higher returns and gain a better standard of living (Daddieh, 2003).

Educated girls of today have bigger aspirations of becoming country leaders and thereby increasing the leadership and entrepreneurial talent of a country. A key malicious characteristic of gender disparity is the fact that it feeds on itself. When there is the existence of gender inequality in a country, parents may also develop the lower level of motivations to take their female offspring to schools as compared to their male offspring (O'Neil, Plank & Domingo, 2015). The girls themselves also have lower aspirations of themselves in achieving educational success. This is not surprising as schools at all levels in most African countries experience enrolment of more males than females. However, if girls and women are given equal chance and opportunities in education, there is a high probability that they will develop the needed skills and confidence to contribute to national development. A current assessment of literature conducted on females being leaders revealed that the majority of female leaders started by having access to education and leadership activities from their adolescence (O'Neil et al., 2015).

According to Abbott (2008), several cases in countries like Rwanda and India have revealed that women leaders usually are capable of making good policies and activities that improve the well-being of their family and community. Empirical studies have also indicated that the more gender equality is being observed in education, the higher the economic and social growth of the countries involved. Also, Hanushek and Woessmann (2008) indicated that educational progress and success cannot be adequately measured by the length of years a person spends in school but by the quality of education one receives in school. According to the study of Gakidou, Cowling, Lozano, and Murray (2010), children with mothers who can read have a higher probability of growing beyond 5 years. According to the outcomes of the same study, the author stated that there has been a global reduction in child mortality rate and this could be linked to an increase in the literacy level of mothers.

There is a high probability that educated mothers will equally educate their children, particularly their female children. Several researchers have revealed a mother's education level as one of the critical criteria for mothers to invest in the education of their wards (Mastekaasa & Smeby, 2008). In India, for instance, pupils of mothers who are literate were found to learn closely two hours more per day as compared to pupils born to mothers who are illiterate in analogous family structure (Behrman, Foster, Rosenweig, & Vashishtha, 1999). Educated women can guard themselves and their households from adverse environmental and economic situations. More literate mothers are capable of protecting the welfare of their children during economic or environmental crises by providing them with higher and quality education on

how to alleviate adverse tremors, like changes in food price, that might lessen the intake of food.

The young female has been seen as the girl child who would ultimately be nurtured to become a woman and enter the job market with or without employable skills. However, gender discrimination puts the girl-child in a deprived situation, where her capacities are repressed making it very difficult, if not impossible to attain self-actualization (Gakidou et al., 2010). She, consequently, becomes the prey of an established socio-cultural male dogmatism. Concurrently, the young female is subject to multiple forms of exploitation, oppression and discrimination both at school by their colleagues and teachers, at home by their parents, extended families and also in their communities by their neighbours. From the view of Sahni (2015), even without all of the economic and developmental treat that are obtained from educating the girl, there is the need to educate girls because it is their right and it becomes integrally valuable for them.

Despite the importance of girl-child schooling, gender disparity has become a key concern globally and particularly in SSA, where a majority of female learners are not being given an education. According to UNICEF (2006), the worldwide prevalence of out-of-school pupils is predictable at 121 million, out of which 65 million (nearly 53.8 percent) were females and more than 80 per cent of these females reside in sub-Saharan Africa. It is very disheartening to know that primary school completion rates in Africa have been documented to be the least globally. This situation is still a big worry as 50 percent of children who do not have access to education globally are found in 15 nations, 8 of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa (Ibrahim, 2012).

To contribute to this bad situation, the number of girls who lack access to schools has increased from 20 million in 1990 to 24 million in 2002 (Offorma, 2009) in sub-Saharan Africa. “

According to UNESCO (2007), 38 million representing about 50% of the total of 77 million children out of school are located in sub-Saharan Africa alone. Data presented by UNESCO in 2007 indicated that nations with the highest figures for out-of-school children in 2004 were in Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and Pakistan. Other nations which followed were Mozambique, Burkina Faso, Kenya, the Niger, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire.

The report of UNESCO (2012) indicated that among 68 countries facing gender disparity in their educational system, 60 of these countries have girls being more disadvantaged. Data on gender parity index from 2011-2018 in Ghana indicate that accessibility to education still goes in favour of males (World Bank, 2019). The index for a period of nine years was all below 1. GPI below 1 indicate that accessibility to education still goes in favour of males. Nevertheless, GPI accessibility to education favours female if it is above 1. Due to intervention programmes by some stakeholders, the index has seen a surge over the years, it is still not up to 1- equal access to education.

The performance report of the Ministry of Education [Ghana] (2011) and the quantitative study of Lewin and Little (2011) on the gender disparity in educational achievement in Ghana offer crucial analysis on the educational system in Ghana in the concernment of gender parity. The Ministry of Education (2011) highlighted some key issues which concern gender disparity. According to the ministry, the country has recorded a huge development in female education at the basic level, although there are some concerns.

First, though there exist practical gender fairness in enrolment at the basic school level, the nationwide completion rate in terms of gender for SHS is projected at 67.5%. This indicates only 0.44% of improvement between 2003 and 2008. This reveals over-age enrolment with over 40 percent of pupils in grade one being eight years of age or older. Repletion of students in the basic schools of the academic system of the country has contributed to the high rate of over-aged enrolment. This serves as a disadvantage to girls in particular by being over-aged and this results in higher rates of drop out-of-school children, particularly in societies where a girl-child and early marriage is a phenomenon.

Pieces of evidence provided, indicates that pupils who are above their education level, study less and get less educational opportunities each school year (Taylor, Roehrig, Hensler, Connor, & Schatschneider, 2010). Also, Marteleto, Lam and Ranchhod, (2008) suggested that age variation within the learning milieu can intensify female susceptibility once at puberty stage.

Furthermore, there is a critical need for special support for over-aged students as evidence shows little or no support for such individuals. Above the junior high schools, education in Ghana gets costly and senior highs schools become selective and very challenging to enroll. The issue now has to deal with dropout rates especially with issues concerning girls. There has been little or barely any reduction in the dropout rates in the country. Though approximately the same number of males and females enrol in Primary one, females drop out more quickly up until Primary 6. If they get enrolled in JHS, they are less likely to drop out as compared to boys (Lewin & Little, 2011). Lewin and Little (2011) added that the overall probability that children will

drop out of school rises in accordance with their age, with this growth, difficult for females than for males. There are prominent geographic and social disparities in achievement, transition, retention and enrolment, with significant interactions between poverty, gender and geographical setting of pupils.

According to the 2010 population census, the population of the Ada East District is 71,671 in total made up of 34,012 males and 37,659 females. Out of the populace 11 years and older, 72.8 percent are educated and 27.2 percent are uneducated. The percentage of educated boys is more than 82.2 percent as compared to the females (64.8 percent). This revelation confirms the fact that there is gender disparity in education in Ada east against the girl-child. Presently, there are 41 kindergartens, 40 primary schools, 29 JHS, a Technical Institution, an SHS and a teacher's College of Education all over the district. The total number of school infrastructural projects currently under construction in the district is eight (8) (Ghana Education Directorate, Ada East District, 2019). From the report of the Education Directorate in Ada East District (2019), more females than male pupils drop out at all levels of education within the district.

Statement of the Problem

According to the Ghana Ministry of Education Performance Report (2011), females who reside in deprived communities and those who reside in homes with lower welfare levels are more likely to be particularly underprivileged in terms of education as compared to boys under the same conditions. Girl-child education is significant to a country's growth and development. The importance of girl-child education to Ghana's national growth process has for several years been identified by several scholars. Dr. J.

E. Kwegyir Aggrey stated that ‘if you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a whole country (Christensen, 2007). Recognizing the importance of girl-child education to the child herself, the family and the society at large, various governments after independence have put in place several interventions with the view to addressing gender disparity in the educational system of Ghana. Despite such efforts, however, the situation in Ada East District has not significantly improved.

Statistics from the 2010 census show that out of the population 11 years and older, 72.8 percent are educated and 27.2 percent are non-educated. The percentage of educated males is more (82.2 percent) than that of females (64.8 percent). This revelation confirms the fact that there is gender disparity in education in Ada east against the girl-child. There has been a time gap since the census made this startling revelation. However, within that period, several interventions by the government, NGOs and significant others have taken place. Hence this research aims at finding out whether there is still gender disparity in Ada East District and to what extent. The researcher aimed at identifying the challenges that girl-children face during their educational process which have contributed to the majority of girls in the District being non-literate.

The subject of girl-child education has been extensively explored in Ghana but from different perspectives. What is known is the obstacles the girl-child experiences in accessing vocational and technical education, science education, engineering education, or even STEM education (Ankoma-Sey, Nsoh, & Quansah, 2019; Agbara, Chagbe, & Achi, 2018; Asare-Danso, 2017;

Donkor & Deni, 2016; Madara & Cherotich, 2016). This does not, however, suggest that females in the general education system do not have any challenge. It is possible or not that females in the general education system will also have some challenges.

Other scholars also investigated the challenges female students in SHS faced in their education (Komora, 2014; Tyoakaa, Amaka, & Nor, 2014; Ziyaba, 2015). These studies, however, focused on challenges in boarding house and staying away from home as a girl-child. Meanwhile, Makewa, Role and Ngile (2014) have underscored in their study that these challenges faced by the female students affected their academic performance. What is unknown is whether a girl-child in basic school faced similar challenges encountered by those in SHS and how they cope with such challenges. Due to the uniqueness of the basic school system and senior high school structure, likely, obstacles experienced by the girl-child at these levels of education may differ. Also, the basic education is a critical stage of the growth of the girl-child and such challenges faced if not addressed, at that stage can degenerate into unsolvable problems for the girl-child (Makewa et al., 2014). Hence, the need for a study to investigate the challenges faced in a girl-child's basic education.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the challenges facing the girl-child's education and their coping strategies in the Ada East District. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. explore the challenges facing the girl-child's education in the Ada East District of Ghana;

2. identify the coping strategies employed by the girl-child to address the challenges they face in education in the Ada East District of Ghana;
3. examine the measures the government has taken to address the challenges facing the girl-child's education in the Ada East District of Ghana;
4. assess whether differences exist in the challenges facing the girl-child's education on the basis of age;
5. examine whether differences exist in the challenges facing the girl-child's education on the basis of the father's education level;
6. examine whether differences exist in the challenges facing the girl-child's education on the basis of the mother's education level.

Research Questions

To achieve the above-stated purpose, the following questions were asked to guide the conduct of the study:

1. What are the challenges facing the girl-child's education in the Ada East District of Ghana?
2. What are the coping strategies adopted by the girl-child in confronting challenges facing her education in the Ada East District of Ghana?
3. What measures have successive Governments taken to address the challenges of the girl-child's education in the Ada East District of Ghana?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were stated to further guide the conduct of the study:

H₀1: There is no significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's education on the basis of age.

H₁1: There is a significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's education on the basis of age.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's education on the basis of the father's educational level.

H₁2: There is a significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's education on the basis of the father's educational level.

H₀3: There is no significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's education on the basis of the mother's educational level.

H₁3: There is a significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's education on the basis of the mother's educational level.

Significance of the Study

Over the years, a lot of concerns have been expressed by the Ministry of Education and other social commentators about the challenges the girl-child faces in our educational setting. Even though several remediation measures have been designed by the Ministry of Education, the negative situation surrounding girl-child education in some parts of Ghana with the Ada East District being no exception has seen minimal improvement. The study will probably be significant to parties such as teachers and school management, the Ministry of Education and Ghana as a whole.

Firstly, the study may be of importance to teachers and management of schools in the Ada East District as it will present findings of challenges facing girls' education. This may aid teachers and management of schools in coming up with ways that can be used to help girls cope with these challenges. Secondly, the Ministry of Education may benefit from this study as the findings can serve as a basis for making effective policies that may aid girl-child education in Ghana. Ghana as a whole may benefit immensely from better education for the girl-child. Findings of the study can serve as a stepping stone for improving the educational process of females, especially in the deprived areas of the nation. Improved and equal education for girls may imply that the country may get more literate people, women to be precise, which is a factor in a country's development.

Delimitations

The study covered the challenges facing girl-child education and their coping strategies of girls in the Ada East District of Ghana. It will also look at how the challenges can be remedied through guidance and counselling services. The study is confined to some selected Basic schools in the selected area. The study is also delimited to the socio-economic and school-related challenges associated with girl-child education. The study includes the following persons as respondents: pupils, parents, teachers and staff at the Ada East District office.

Limitations

The findings of the study should be generalized with caution. This is because the research conducted only in some selected basic schools in Ada-East District of Ghana. Thus, the size of the sample may not permit

generalizing the findings of the study to all districts in Ghana. Also, the data were gathered through self-report measures and as such, the tendency of respondents providing inaccurate picture of the situation is high. This may affect the validity of the responses provided by the respondents.

Definition of Terms

Girl-child: Any individual who is a female and enrolled at the basic education level of education.

Basic Education: The level of education from primary one to junior high school level (JHS 3).

Challenges: Any obstacles in the way of female pupils in accessing education at the basic school level.

Organisation of the Study

The study was structured into five chapters. Chapter one outlines the introduction including the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations to the study. Chapter two presents a review of related literature which covers the theoretical framework, conceptual review and empirical review. Chapter three takes readers through the methodology which comprises the research design, population, sampling procedure, data collection instrument, data collection procedure and data processing and analysis. Chapter four highlights the results and discussion from the analysis. Chapter five outlines the findings, conclusions, recommendations and the areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter gives a review and discussion of the literature related to the topic of the study. The literature reviews a considerable number of related articles and studies on gender disparity in the educational systems in Africa. The literature review covers the conceptual review, the theoretical review and empirical review. The conceptual review focuses on the concept of gender, historical context of girl-child education, development of girl-child education in Ghana, and concept of coping and coping strategies. The theoretical review covers the transactional theory of coping strategies and Abraham Maslows need theory. The empirical review highlights studies on the socio-cultural, religious, economic and other school-related challenges facing the girl-child's education.

Conceptual Review

The Concept of Girl-child

According to Tyoakaa et al. (2014), the concept of 'girl-child' is described as a female aged between 6-18 years. The term girl-child is a biological feminine child from birth to the age of 18 years (Ponte & Nicole, 2006). Offorma (2009) defined that a girl-child is a female biological child from birth to the age of 19 years. This stage is characterized by infancy, childhood, early and late adolescence stages of female development.

Culture and Gender

Nakpodia (2010) stated that the beliefs, customs, knowledge, morals, and any abilities attained by a man, as an affiliate of society is termed as a culture. A community's way of life is shaped and carved by winning situations and the environmental milieu, which becomes the total of what is known as culture. The way of life of a group of people which spells out norms, actions, customs, beliefs and values which can be modified when it becomes necessary from one generation to another is known as culture. Culture can be taught and learnt through interactions, either with materialistic or non-materialistic elements of culture. From generation to generation culture is common; it is practised by an entire cluster of persons (Bhaba, as cited in Nakpodia 2010). Based on certain factors such as civilization, culture differs from one community to another or perhaps, the same group of persons. This brings forward the assertion that culture is learnt rather not inherited, which brings us to the fact that culture is dynamic and not static and can be expressed in terms of human behaviours shared among a people. Values, beliefs, routines and norms are the fundamental aspect of culture that influences girl-child education in most parts of Africa.

Sociological Construct of Gender

According to Robeyns (2006), the concept of gender can be explained in several ways, through the use of the concept depending on the intellectual tradition and the purpose of usage in which it is being announced. Dewar (1990), in his contribution to existing literature looked at gender in a different construct. Firstly, in biological and behavioural sciences, gender is studied as a personal feature and by explaining the gap in performance levels by sports,

games, plays have been socially made to legitimize and produce male leadership.

Dewar (1990) stated that to explain the gap that exists in performance capabilities, gender must be treated as an issue of sexual differences. He focuses on the distribution of opportunities and problem of resource allocation as matters of gender disparity; thereby adopting a gender standpoint is to differentiate what is socially and culturally and what is naturally and biologically built. What is socially constructed is comparatively transformable but what is determined is relatively inflexible. A person's sex is the basis on which society assigns roles. Some of these roles are shaped by religion, ideology, history, culture and economic development and some are arbitrarily assigned. Roles of gender are behaviours learned in a specific community or society or other social groups that are; responsibilities, tasks and activities that are seen as females and/or males. They vary from one community to the other, from one social group to the other and over a period of time (Nakpodia, 2010).

Gender role development begins from the time a male baby is covered in a blue blanket and a female child in a pink one. To distinguish between female from male, the pink and blue colours are used as the first pointers. Other cultural elements will guarantee that this discrepancy remains complete, as these infants grow. Dolls to diapers and tiny stoves are given to girls to pretend to make meals. Miniature tools are given to boys to construct buildings and also wage war with tank and toys. The unbelievable influence of gender orientation is mostly held accountable for this. The lifelong process begins with pink and blue. (Nung, 1996)

Throughout childhood and during adulthood, gender roles are learnt. The schools, media, tradition, family, institutions and culture are all significant in terms of supporting certain behaviours for girls and boys while disheartening others. The roles of the gender of girls and boys within a specific social setting may be complementary or conflicting, rigid or flexible, analogous or dissimilar (Nakpodia 2010). There are gender gaps and inequalities that are not just female-male gaps as a result of this. This is because they are not biologically based. Different social locations and roles of boys and girls make these gaps arise. Thereby this explains that relations between girls and boys are not fixed and are thereby social. The gendered division of labour becomes a result of gender roles being learnt. As a result, Josephiders (1985) was of the view that there appears to be a gendered partition of labour, which has both practical and ideological parts.

Brief Historical Context of Girl-child Education

In Pre-colonial Era

Educating the Ghanaian young female started in the period of the Castle schools. Since the era of 1740, King Poku of Ashanti was alleged to have sent two females and 12 males to Cape Coast Castle School to study music, reading, and writing, and settling their fees with elephant tusks (Graham, 1976). One of the Africans who received education from the Dutch was appointed as the primer African Protestant priest to the Elmina Castle. He had a school populace of 45 learners; had 5 were African females, 7 mulatto girls, and 4 mulatto boys,.

During his demise in 1747, he had a populace of 400 pupils in the school (Graham, 1976). The young female was offered in co-institutional

establishment managed by the European companies(Graham,1976). The year 1821 saw the beginning of girl's school in the Castle School in Cape Coast (Sill, 2010).

In the Colonial Era

The foundation laid by the Basel Mission by encouraging young female education in the 1880s in Gold Coast was strengthened by the foreign government. The administration of Commander-in-Chief (Major Stephen John Hill) normally identified as Commander Hill, the Educational Ordinance 1852 (as cited in Asare-Danso, 2017) was broadcasted. Its introduction was indicated, among others, that: "... some effort must be made to educate the growing generation of women within Her Majesty's settlements and forts on the Gold Coast" (Educational Ordinance, 1852, (as cited in Asare-Danso, 2017, p. 37). The Ordinance again funded the institutionalization of teacher training colleges for the training of both females and males to develop proficient tutors (Graham, 1976, pp. 35-36).

Likewise, the Education Ordinance 1887 encouraged young female schooling. Article VII, (5) delivered: "That the subjects taught include reading, writing of English language, arithmetic, and, in the case of females, basic needlecraft ..." (Educational Ordinance, 1887, (as cited in Asare-Danso, 2015, p. 2). These signaled that the Ordinances required to encourage young female schooling in Gold Coast. Foreign administrations sustained to encourage young female education after the regulations era. During the 1900s, the foreign administration envisaged the aims regarding education for Africans, this includes development of males and females for bigger position

in industry, production, commerce and as a leader. Another aim is to broaden education to enhance political, social and economic competence.

The leadership of Sir Gordon Guggisberg, he articulated 16 institutional principles that encouraged education of young females. This includes establishment of educational standards within SHS, provision of equal chances for both pupils and necessitating co-education at specific educational phase (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975, p. 57).

In the Post-colonial Era

The period of the nationalists in the 1950s, young female education continuously received the government supports. During the second stage, succeeding the institutionalisation of the Ghana National College, Dr Nkrumah started increasing the boundaries of education in line with the Ghana Education Trust, which was mandated to establish SHS and Colleges for the training of the teacher. The established secondary schools were the Labone, Oda, Techiman, Winneba, Dormaa, Tema, Apam, Ofori Panyin, and Swedru Secondary School. Also, all girl secondary institution were at Mfantseman SHS in the Central region.

Certainly, learners who were admitted to these SHS would require people to teach them. Safeguarding this turns into certainty, the nation's First President initiated the establishment of about sixteen colleges for teachers, in addition to the already established by Christian missionaries. The sixteen training colleges comprised the Enchi, Fosu, Atebubu, and the Berekum Training College.

Educational Reform in 1987 sponsored equal access to education by both gender and for all adults, youth and children (UNESCO, 1990).

Afterwards, in 1987, STEM Clinics for females were made open to inspire females to enrol in science-related programmes in higher education. The (FCUBE) programme was an additional institutional plan announced in Ghana to improve accessibility, retention and participation in basic schools (MOE, 1996). During 1997, the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) was formed under the education ministry to increase accessibility to education among girls. Presently, a Minister of State accountable for young female, basic and secondary education in other to address matters concerning girl-child education in the country.

Female education in Ghana has received official acknowledgement and backing since 1925. The Guggisberg's Sixteen Principles aided countries to put the education of a girl in the national context. The second and fourth principle encouraged equal opportunities for both male and female students in their basic educations and provision of a standardized secondary education for all sexes that will enable both men and women into the various universities (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). The commencement of the educational reform by the Ghanaian government after independence started with the Education Act of 1961. According to the act, basic education was declared free and compulsory and parents were encouraged to send their wards to school, failure to do so which attracts a fine. Basic education in Ghana was made free and accessible to all students who wish to attend. However, students are still required to pay an amount of money as registration fee and also buy their schooling accoutrements such as books and uniforms.

Enrollment rates into basic schools have increased dramatically as a result of these reforms. This made it possible for more girls to peruse

educational desires as the cost of educating a girl-child was reduced drastically. Some schools, both governments owned and the private school offered scholarships for girls who were brilliant but could not afford their educational expenses. The gender gap in the educational system of Ghana decreased from 36.16 percent of primary pupils being girls in 1960 to 44.43 percent in 1968. The disparity remained huge with regard to secondary school education in Ghana. Governmental efforts to change this situation and as part of this, the Free Senior High School was initiated in 2017. Before that, the gender disparity was still huge in SHS, with 22.04% of females in 1960 and 25.88% of male student in 1968.

Great attention and consideration from all spheres of life in Ghana have been given to gender equality in education. For example, in 1986, the government endorsed the agreement on the “Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Children (CEDAW) (Awumbila, 2001). The education reform programme of 1987 offered a prodigious boost for the significant role of girl-child education in the growth process of this country. Furthermore, the government was mandated to provide equal accessibility to vocational and technical education depending on the capacity by every suitable way with the progressive introduction of free education (Graham, 1976).

The particular needs of female students received the needed attention in 1997 with the establishment of the Girls Education Unit (GEU). Since its commencement, the GEU has operated to provide female grants for capable students, and revised schoolbooks to be more gender-sensitive. Skilled women enlightened income-generating activities formed a Girls Education Week, and

paid attention to partnerships with the private sector to satisfy the demands of female students. In addressing the ongoing problem of low female admissions in tertiary education, GEU developed an action strategy that embraces phases such as encouraging female role models, advocating for the security of schools, offering incentives for female teachers, improving enough flexibility in school schedules for the child to combine labour and school activities, rallying the society towards an attitude transformation on female education, developing female hygienic units, educating men and boys regarding how to handle women, educating people on reproductive health, offering food programmes, and making sure that schools are affordable and less costly for students.

Major Recent Government Interventions/Policies

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (Article 25) assures the right of All Persons to equal educational facilities and opportunities and to attain the full awareness of that right. Free primary education was introduced in Ghana in 1995 under the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme (Government of Ghana, 1992). The Free Compulsory and University Basic Education Programme, usually called FCUBE, was instituted in 1995 and launched in 1996 to offer quality basic education for all children. The programme target is to make broad-minded developments in all facets of the education system that will result in momentous changes in the quality of instruction and learning in all basic schools in Ghana. From the viewpoint of the Ministry of Education, the objective of the FCUBE programme is to offer a chance for every Ghanaian school child obtain good quality basic education before the year 2005 and:

1. To provide quality instruction and learning
2. To offer efficiency in management
3. Grow the enrollment rate of girls in basic education to equate that of boys
4. Decrease the rate of drop-out of girls from 40 percent to 10 percent
5. Intensify the rate of transition of girls from basic education to senior secondary from 30 percent to 50 percent
6. Offer 10,000 girls from basic and senior secondary schools to the STEM clinics and expect that at least 30 percent to 35 percent of girls would select science as an elective at the senior secondary school level. (MOE, 1999).

Despite the initiative, Lewin and Little (2011) stressed that countrywide, ‘about 40 percent of 6-year olds are not found in school. This fall to about 10 percent by age 11. Aside this, those who have not enrolled are not likely to enroll ever.

The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) 2002 – 2004, Vision 2020 and the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003-2015 undoubtedly indicated that high precedence would be provided to women’s and girl’s targets and needs, with purposes to offer quality health and education for all and to improve the participation and accessibility of girls at different levels of education (Agyare-Kwabi, 2013).

The government of Ghana’s Education Strategy Plans (EPSs) was drawn for 2003-2015 and a more current was drawn for 2010-2017. The Fast Track Initiative (FTI) which focuses on getting all children into schools was proposed by the government of Ghana and was endorsed in 2003-2004. This

initiative also took major measures to improve girls' education in the country. In November 2004, the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Catalytic Fund (CF) assigned USD 8 million to Ghana intending to support. The funds were channelled to 1) Teacher initiative scheme, 2) Supplying of school textbooks, and 3) Monitoring and supervision. The development of the initiative was continued by subsequent governments and by November 2007, a total of USD 19 million has been distributed. In an evaluation of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), Allsop et al. (2010) reviewed and made conclusions that the Ministry of Education and the Government of Ghana are driving the initiative forward per all the evidence seen.

The government of Ghana after piloting the FTI in 2004 introduced the Capitation Grant System. With this policy, schools in Ghana receive sponsorship per student. In 2008/9 this was raised from GHC3 to GHC4.5 per pupil per term. Lewin and Little (2011) noted that free basic school coupled with a capitation grant had a massive impact on the rate of basic school enrolment in 2015 which has been sustained till date. This is a very important and crucial policy aimed at driving education in Ghana. The method was channelled to improve operational effectiveness and encourage a more responsive technique to education service delivery at the district and national school levels (Create, 2008).

Ghana has adopted several initiatives between the periods between 2003 and 2010. A major one is the school feeding programme which targets schools in locations of the high level of poverty. Students in these basic schools are provided with food during school days. Also, the distribution of free school uniforms and textbook to pupils. This initiative provides students

from poor homes and communities with free uniforms and textbooks to be used in schools. The National Health Insurance Scheme which aids needy students to access needed health care and the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) which aims at transferring cash to vulnerable and poor households. The NPP government on assumption of office in 2016 has also introduced free education for all senior high schools in the country. Parents can now send their children to senior high school for free.

All these initiatives have contributed to the growth of education in the nation. Education has been extended to the remote localities where poverty is high and as a result, parents could not afford to pay for the educational costs of their children. The initiatives have also helped increase the enrollment rates of girls in schools. This is because girls' education is not that costly as compared to old times where education was very expensive and mostly for the rich. With the free education policies, more parents can send their wards to school which indicates more girls will be in school (Lewin & Little, 2011).

Dunne et al. (2007) in his study concerning guidance and counselling services in schools in Ghana and Botswana urged schools to take initiatives on guidance and counselling to support students in times of such needs. The MOE has been able to estimate the educational needs of the country as stated in Children's Act 2001 and has developed educational policies to promote education in the country (Dawo, 2009). Schools are now expected to identify their unique educational needs and come up with strategies to meet these needs.

Causes of Gender Disparity

Socio-cultural and religious causes

It was observed by Magajin (2010) that despite education being regarded as a basic human right, numerous factors led to the low level of girl's education as compared to boys. According to Magajin (2010), these factors include socio-cultural impediments, negative attitude of society towards women's education, poverty, early marriages, religious misinterpretation of the Holy Book, gender biases, and socio-cultural impediments. These factors have been known to impede the educational development and success of women in most countries, especially in African countries. These factors also interact in several ways that produce and promote gender disparities in terms of education and other related areas.

According to Onochie (2010), several studies conducted in Nigeria have revealed that religious and cultural beliefs have an effect on the educational aspirations of girls in the country. This situation is to some degree very similar to most countries in Africa. Some cultures and religions in Nigeria discourage their girls from pursuing educational goals. This is as a result of the ridiculous perception that education tends to make females look down upon males in society. This has also discouraged the majority of men in society from marrying to be educated women. As a result of this situation, most parents in Nigeria are very reluctant in educating their female children with the fear that, education may serve as a hindrance to the marriage of their daughters.

Several studies conducted in Nigeria (Ayodele et al., 2006; Idabawa, 2004; Iruloh, 2008; Okojie, Chiegwe, & Okpokunu, 2006) have also revealed

that girls are sometimes discouraged to remain in education for long as such girls are normally mocked for not being married (very old single lady) as they continue to school and stay with their parents. The belief of not getting married by the time a girl will graduate from school is very common, especially amongst low-income families. Most ladies in Nigeria are mostly overwhelmed and fearful of not getting husbands if they achieve a specific level of education. They believe protracted education will serve as an obstacle to them finding husbands to marry.

Early marriages and early pregnancy are being encouraged in the northern part of Nigeria where girls are given out for marriage at very young ages. It is of this view that Sandhu et al. (2005) stated that wrongly understood religious knowledge, old customs, rural community, traditions and caste systems have brought about restarted growth of female education in most African countries. It was argued by Bunyi (2004) that it is of the general belief in Kenya that investing in a girl's education is unwise as the benefits from that education would be enjoyed by the husband's families which might result in the parents' families obtaining little from their investment.

Bunyi's argument concurs with that of Ekwukoma's (2014) who revealed that some cultures in Nigeria held that an investment in a girl's education is considered as a waste of money and incomes as the benefits of the girl's education will be benefited by the family in which she gets married later in life. The revelations of Bunyi (2004) and Sandhu et al. (2005) give credibility to the evidence that girl-child education has been seriously affected by some cultures and religious beliefs in Africa.

Within some cultures in Ghana, girls are used for routine household activities and it is of their belief that girl's education ends in the home and kitchen doing domestic house chores. Girls are being restricted to stereotyped domestic duties. This belief and practice have resulted in the majority of girls being offered little or no time for schoolwork and personal studies. The girl-child is barely given time to engage in any serious academic activity. Education has been tipped in favour of boys with the out-of-date perception that a girl's role is to be in the kitchen and at home (Okojie et al., 2006).

Early Marriage and Teen Pregnancy

Teen pregnancy and early marriage results in girls quitting school. Nowadays, 1 out of 3 girls in low- and middle-income nations (with the exception of China) got married before 18 years and 1 out of 9 girls get married before 15 years of age (Lloyd, Mensch, & Clark, 2000). Although nations with the greatest incidence of child marriage are concerted in SSA and Western (e.g. in Niger 76% of girls get married before 18 years), as a result of population size, the highest number of married children is in South Asia. Frequently, families will organize a marriage ceremony for their girl-child at a time where she is still in her teen, and consequently, interject her educational pathway. The child sometimes becomes pregnant at the early stage of the marriage; records from UNICEF (2006) show that only 20 percent of the population uses contraceptives, resulting in several unwanted early pregnancies.

In conclusion, sexual health information is not extensively accessible, and the insufficient use of contraceptive results in high cases of HIV/AIDS, which is more predominant in rural northern Ghana of 7.4 percent of the

population. Educating people on sexual health information will increase accessibility to contraceptives, and not encouraging early marriage would aid lessen this challenge. Child marriage results in high costs for girls in terms of emotions, physical, and social and weakens efforts to expand female education. In rural Bangladesh, for instance, each added year that marriage is deferred between 11 and 16 years could increase the year of schooling by 0.22 and literacy rate increase by 5.6 percent (Field & Ambrus, 2008).

Economic Factors

Educating the girl-child costs. The direct expenses (ie., school fees, transportation, uniforms,) and prospect expenses (ie., time could have spent assisting family or working) of school frequently impact girls and boys differently. Several non-experimental pieces of research conducted by means of household survey information revealed that girls' education is very delicate to cost, nevertheless, clear, male-child education (Glick & Sahn, 2007). For instance, in Kenya, a huge school fee encourages dropout chances for girls, however, this does not influence boys (Lloyd, Mensch, & Clark, 2000). Research in Ethiopia also discovered that boys are less probable than girls to both school and work, and are extra probable to be engaged in leisure events as compared to girls, so the amount of non-paid and domestic work is higher for young females (Woldehanna, Jones, & Tefera, 2008).

Economic considerations have driven the family preference for financing in a boy's education rather than girls education for some years (Burns, 1964; Khan, 1993). The act of families paying attention to the financial assistances for young females has been acknowledged as a component which limits girls' involvement in education. It was discoursed by

Handa (1996) that enrolment rate for the elite schools in society was influenced by the income of parents. Poverty has been identified as the main factor parents consider when making decisions on the investment of the education of their female children.

Household Chores

According to Muema and Mutegi, (2011), one of the contributing factors to the lack of girl education as compared to male is of the fact that girls are mostly being used for household chores. Narayan (2005) maintained the perception that gender roles in most African countries make girls work two times more than boys in the same age group. This negatively affects the participation of girls in school activities. It is most common for girls to take the majority of household chores such as cooking, laundry, the gathering of firewood, fetching water, cleaning and caregiving (Muema & Mutegi, 2011).

In a report by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2009 indicated that even though boys' part-take in house chores, they spend fewer time. The study also revealed that household chores done by girls also surge with time and age spent from 14 to 28 hours per week from ages below 12 to teenage. An increase in the time spent on domestic activities means more absenteeism from educational activities. It was then concluded that household chores done by girls causes a decrease in their attendance as compared to boys. Moyi (2011) explained that the educational results of girls suffer when they are overworked which increases the probability of them dropping out of school.

School-related Challenges

Both Ghana-based and international literature (e.g.: Antonowicz, 2010, Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009) have indicated that corporal punishment serves as a push factor to girls in schools which ends in dropping out of school. Despite this revelation coupled with the situation at hand, corporal punishment has been lawful in Ghanaian schools even though it has some restrictions by the Ghana Education Service (GES) Policy issued by the Ministry of Education. However, there are not monitoring strategies for the use of corporal punishment in schools.

Sanitary Facilities

Facilities in schools also play a very critical parts in the enrolment and drop-out of students, especially girls. A study of Tumwine et al. (2003) has revealed that the commonest sanitary facility in the rural areas of Ghana are pit latrine toilets while those in the urban areas are flush toilets. Clean sanitary facilities will make girls feel comfortable and confident using them without the fear of contracting diseases which will have a positive influence in their school attendance. On the other hand, when sanitary facilities are unclean, girls feel uncomfortable and they end up avoiding them resulting in an increase in girl's absenteeism from school Tumwine et al. (2003).

Physiological Changes

Physiological changes such as menstruation is also one of the challenges faced by girl-child's education. The issues with physiological changes are highly associated with the menstrual cycle of girls which starts in their adolescent stages. Nowadays, it is surprising to even know that, some girls discover their menstrual periods as early as 8 years. During these periods,

girls are expected to experience the flow of blood for several days and they are also expected to ensure good personal hygiene.

During menstrual periods, girls are expected to use a mechanism that will ensure that they do not spill the flowing blood which is an unpleasant situation for them. There is, therefore, the need for sanitary pads which per the personal analysis of the researcher, cost between GHS 5.00 and GHS 8.00 depending on the brand. Some of these girls are unable to purchase these sanitary pads and are usually forced to stay at home during their menstrual period, therefore, contributing to the problems the young female faces in the District and also reducing the number of times in attending school. This also has the tendency to adversely affect her academic performance.

Academic Performance

The academic performance of students based on their sexes is one of the major features of the whole issue of gender inequality as girls are seen to be academically inferior to boys in most societies of Africa. UNESCO (2009) discovered that most of the households used for the study admitted to the fact that they differentiated between girls and boys with regards to education in the sense that they view boys are more intelligent. There has been a real debate about this issue and scholars have divided point of views. Some contend that the issue is real and attribute it to socio-economic factors. Others maintain that the issue is only a supposed one with regard to developing countries.

Girl Safety

According to Kipngeno and Kyalo (2009), lack of safety in schools is created by disasters, unsafe environment, behaviour and emergencies which renders students, especially unsafe in the school setting. They also stated that

it is the responsibility of the school to guarantee a conducive schooling environment for students to achieve higher qualities of education. There have been reported experiences that indicate that there are serious cases where schools are insecure for students, especially girls.

Girl-child Harassment

Verbal harassment, irritating body language, and a touch of body parts of girls have been discovered as the common forms of sexual harassment in Kenyan schools per a study conducted by Kimani, Mugenda, Maina and Wainaina (2010) on obstacles experienced by female learners at all levels of education in Kenya. Sexual harassment is wrong and illegal in most countries of the world. Sexual harassment may not necessarily mean from teachers to students; however, the harasser can also be any other person or a colleague learner. Studies conducted such as those of Koskey (2011), and Ruto (2009) confirm the prevalence of sexual harassment in schools. As noted by Koskey (2011) revealed that sexual harassment is apparent in all schools.

Sexual harassment may also not necessarily mean from only men to girls, also there have been cases where male students are also being harassed (Koskey, 2011). Also, sexual harassment may not only be from a male to a female but also from another male to a male and a female to another female. According to Koskey (2011), key reasons why female students' drop-out of school is due to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment serves as a hindrance to female participation in educational activities and as such discourages parents from sending their daughters to school. Trying to explain this, Larkin 1994 stated that girls find school unwelcoming when they are being sexually harassed at school. These girls try to avoid places where they find as sexual

harassment zones and if the school happens to be one place, they end up dropping out of school. Also, Ruto (2009) added that as a result of this sexual harassment by male teachers and their peers, the females end up pregnant or become early mothers.

Long Distance to Schools

According Dawo (2009), long distances to school become one of the factors that hinder a girl-child from going to school often. He proposed that in order to curb this situation, boarding schools should be built. This serves as an advantage of helping these females to have more time to learn and revise as compared to being at home where a lot of distractions and interferences are experienced.

Age and Challenges in Education

Few studies have examined the probable association between age and academic success and challenges. Green and Simmons (2003) examined the student age in relation to school success, relating “early entrants to years of achievement” (p. 45). Green and Simmons (2003) interrogated the issue of students enrollment at a tender age and stated, “notwithstanding the extra year of education, the early entrant is only 3 months greater in achievement to the regular entrant at a specific age” (p. 45). According to Green and Simmons, older children can cope with the challenges they face in basic education as compared to younger children.

Wood, Powell, and Knight (2004) indicated, “chronological age of children being admitted to kindergarten within the range of 4 to 6 years, is unconnected to overcoming challenges and ultimate failure or success” (p. 8). Dietz and Wilson (2005), and DeMeis and Stearns (2002) revealed no

significant association between a student's age and academic success. Meisels (2005) again found that children of different ages have similar challenges in accessing basic education and have a similar ability to overcome these challenges.

Education Level of Parents and Girl-child Education

Educational background of the mother is a significant variable which influences their children's education. According to Samal (2012), educational level of family members, especially the mother, is important predominantly on children and it regulates their accessibility to education. The notion is widely accepted as the most consistent determinant of child education. Also, a higher level of education of mothers is linked to increased accessibility to schooling. (Adeola & Adefunke, 2010; Kimani, Kara, & Njagi, 2013; Wamala, Saint-Kizito, & Jjemba, 2013). Mothers' level of education and school retention have been found to be associated with several reasons for school dropout. It has been found that illiterate mothers cannot offer the needed support or frequently do not appreciate the importance of education (Ampiah & Yeboah, 2009; Trang, Rolf, & Van der Velden, 2011).

The chances of girls being admitted in primary school can be increased by 9.7 percent and secondary by 17.6 percent by her married mother's primary education and it has no substantial influence on boy's enrolment in schools (Jaiswal & Choudhuri, 2017). They contend that literate mothers give preference to girls' education, and this shows that mothers have a comparatively robust preference for their girl-child schooling and that their education affords them either improved power for household decision-making or improved economic status. Additionally, Sui-Chi and Willms (1996) found

that mothers' education significantly impacts only on the female child's education.

Research has also shown that the literacy of fathers powerfully impacts their children schooling. A key reason why father's education significantly impacts their children's schooling is that parents who have been educated beyond a high school education are more engaged in their children than those failed to complete high school (Khan, Iqbal, & Tasneem, 2015). In a study by Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013), it was discovered that there is a significant difference between pupils of literate fathers and children with non-educated fathers or fathers with only primary school. It was further indicated that for fathers holding a university degree, their children comparatively do well academically by getting the top most score. It is significant to mention that several pieces of research conducted have found that parent's level of education largely impacts the academic achievement of their ward. It has been revealed that educated parents positively influence their children while non-educated parents influence their children negatively. Regarding this, children of literate parents normally receive excellent grades in school as compared to children of non-educated parents. It is, thus, obvious that parent's education level is very influential in explaining the academic performance of their wards. Typically, the kind of education received by parents directly influences the kind of education they give to their children (Jaiswal, 2018).

Khan, Iqbal and Tasneem (2015), observed that parents' education is such a crucial factor for a child for his/her future. It has been revealed that the children of literate parents are more experienced, resourceful, and confident than the children whose parents have no formal education. Mairo (2017)

showed that non-educated parents are influenced by community interference, fear of immorality, inadequate role models and inadequate sensitization. These are among the reasons parents do not enroll girls in school and when enrolled the girls are not retained till completion. Yusuf (2006) stated that parent's economic status, educational level or awareness, interest and methods of encouragement determine largely the rate at which a female child acquires education and her aspiration to further her education. Some families where parents are educated always tend to favour the participation of women in their educational pursuit. It also coincides with Tsauri (2010) assertions that in the far North, some parents isolate many girls from being enrolled in school and those that are allowed were removed after primary school or junior secondary education. Hari (2012) stated that low enrolment and dropout result from a negative attitude of parents towards the education of girls... traditional opinions of women's model gender roles and the beliefs of their capabilities negatively affect the attitudes of parents towards educating the female children.

Theoretical Review

The research is based on transactional theory of coping strategies and Abraham Maslow's theory on human motivation as they present a background of the probable factors influencing girl-child retention and drop out and how they cope.

Concept of Coping and Coping Strategies

There exist diverse definitions of coping. Lazarus (1966) sees it as a process that is reckandled when threat are professed with the aim of controlling emotional conflict. Coping is described as continually varying

cognitive and attitudinal intents to specifically manage inside or outside demands that are assessed as taxing or beyond the resources of the individual (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping also refers to the means that individuals react and interact with problem circumstances (Zamble & Gekoski, 1994).

Coping strategies can be categorised into problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies. Problem-focused coping is a rational approach that attempts to change the situation by changing either something in the environment or how the person interacts with the environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Emotion-focused coping styles tend to make themselves feel better about a problematic situation without changing the problem itself or the perception of it (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). In contrast, individuals with problem-focused style tend to actually make changes on their situation or their perception of a situation in order to make it less or no longer stressful (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1996; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The use of productive and effective strategies to cope with problems from school life or deterioration of interpersonal relationships is associated with favourable outcomes of socio-emotional adaptation and a greater adaptation and psychological well-being (Cappa, Moreland, Conger, Dumas, & Conger, 2011; González, Montoya, Casullo, & Bernabeu, 2002). Maladaptive coping mechanisms are associated with emotional maladjustment, including symptoms of anxiety and depression (Lapointe & Marcotte, 2000; Seiffge-Krenke, 2000; Wright, Banerjee, Hoek, Rieffe, & Novin, 2010), and also with social-emotional and school maladjustment (Seiffge-Krenke, 2000; Wadsworth & Compas, 2002).

Due to the fact that the use of diverse coping mechanisms yields different results of adaptation, several authors established a link between the employed strategies, stressful situations and the prediction of psychopathology and maladjustment or, conversely, of mental health in children (Compas, Orosan, & Grant, 1993; Lapointe & Marcotte, 2000; Seiffge-Krenke, 2000). In particular, some studies (Morales-Rodríguez & Trianes, 2012; Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2012; Seiffge-Krenke & Stemmler, 2002) find that problem avoidance strategies are often associated with symptoms of depression and high levels of self-reported aggressive behavior and anxiety.

Transactional Theory of Coping Strategies

The transactional theory of coping strategies was propounded by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). This model's central tenet is that a potentially stressful event will trigger the primary appraisal process in which an individual assesses the degree of threat in relation to his or her wellbeing. When an event is perceived as threatening or a challenge, the secondary appraisal process provides a global assessment of the individual's coping resources and ability to manage the threat/challenge. Coping responses are initiated after the cognitive appraisals and the eventual psycho-physiological experience (stress outcomes) of this potentially stressful event depends on the effectiveness of one's cognitive appraisals and coping processes. The stress outcomes will then feed back to the cognitive appraisal stages for further actions if required.

It is worth noting that the sequence of influence between primary appraisal and secondary appraisal does not always present itself as one being more important than the other (i.e. primary vs. secondary), or that one always

precedes the other (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Their relationship is far more dynamic but as a basic process Lazarus and Folkman conceptualised a linear sequence flowing from primary to secondary appraisals to coping and eventually, to stress outcomes as a reflection of the basic pathways within the dynamic process. Therefore the key premise of Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model is that primary appraisal, secondary appraisal and coping strategies mediate the relationship between stressor and the individual's stress outcomes. Folkman and Lazarus (1991) conceptualised coping as a complex, organised sequence of behaviours that include cognitive appraisal, action impulses, patterned somatic reactions and reflect physiological aspects of a particular emotion. Essentially, Folkman and Lazarus have included the psycho-physiological aspects of emotion as part of coping that occur after the appraisal of a stressful event. This is logical and realistic since an appraised stressor will elicit immediate psycho-physiological reactions or stress outcomes. However, there is no empirical test to date on the transactional model's entire linear process with its pathways between the variables that includes stress outcomes after cognitive appraisal.

Abraham Maslow Need Theory

This theory is undoubtedly one of the well-known theories of human motivation. Maslow's theory of Hierarchy Needs: Abraham Maslow propounded the need-based theory of human motivation. Maslow (1943) analysed and identified five fundamental needs which he alleged motivates all human behaviours, these needs are

1. Physiology (the needs for sex, water, shelter, air, clothing and food)
2. Safety (safety, the absence of illness),

3. Love/Belonging (love, interaction, friendship)
4. Esteem (recognition and respect), and
5. Self-actualization need (the capability to attain one's potentials).



Source: Maslow (1943)

The first level need on the hierarchy is the physiological needs which consist of basic need for human well-being such as air, water, food, shelter, clothing and many more. The safety needs are the second on the hierarchy. This level has to deal with what an individual needs to feel safe and consists of needs such as security, good health, properties amongst others. Love and belonging need to follow up the hierarchy. Here an individual looks for love, attention and a sense of belonging which can be provided by family, friendship, relationships and other sources. Esteem need is where an individual now looks for respect, recognition, strength, freedom amongst others. On the highest level of the hierarchy is self-actualization need where an individual looks to achieve his/her maximum potential.

The theory of human motivation was used for this study as it presents some reasonable explanations for the enrolment and drop-out of students in Ghana as both parents and wards have to choose whether to educate their children or not or aim at achieving other pressing needs which may be at a lower level of the hierarchy. Maslow believed that human needs are organized in a hierarchy where higher needs appear, as an individual satisfy his/her lower needs. According to him, one will aim at satisfying his lower need before thinking of how to satisfy higher needs. If an individual is thirsty and hungry at the same time, there is a high probability that he/she will aim at quenching his/her thirst before looking for food to eat. This is the underlying factor why this theory serves as a means to understand what keeps girls at school or what makes parents seek to educate their children, especially girls.

At the base of the ladder of need are the physiological needs which are fundamental needs for existence for every individual. These needs supposed to be the socio-economic set up of rural areas that incline to deprive children of aiming at higher needs. Families in the rural areas are barely able to meet their physiological needs which include food and shelter. With these situations, families are mostly reluctant and unable to send their wards to school as the need for education may fall in higher-level needs that may not press at present. This has resulted in some household using their children as workers on the farms, giving them out for early marriages and many factors to provide for their basic needs. If a girl lacks basic need such as food and shelter, she may or will not be motivated to stay in school. It is when the basic need of the girl is satisfied that she will aim at moving to higher need which includes seeking educational goals.

The theory being applied in this study will serve as a guide for counselling of the girl-child to pursue educational goals. The counsellor has to understand the level at which the girl is at that moment before he/she can advise her to aim at achieving academic success. For instance, you cannot advise a girl who does not have a place to sleep or a ready source of food to pursue university education.

Empirical Review

Komora (2014) investigated the hindrances to girl-child education in Tana River County, Kenya. Using a cross-sectional research design, the research sampled 225 female pupils; 15 pupils from 15 schools each. The study also interviewed 171 girls; at a 76% response rate. Stratified sampling and systematic sampling were employed. The results found that the obstacles of girl-child education are insufficient teaching and learning materials, sexual harassment, early marriages, and shortage of teachers. Other factors were the implementation of regressive cultural beliefs, child labour, and early pregnancies. The study also revealed that consciousness on the significance of education by providing of suitable learning resources and amenities, mentorship, and school feeding programmes are great avenues which will significantly increase enrolment and retention of the females in schools.

Komora (2014) suggested that practices that lead to early pregnancies be discouraged whereas the economic influences which result in poverty be highlighted through economic community empowerment. Other suggestions stressed are the eradication of cultural practices which are regressive and the communities tackling the pestering subjects of school dropout and early pregnancies, and the subsequent poor academic achievement in schools. The

study, however, failed to highlight a working agenda of all shareholders to addressing female school dropout and poor academic achievement and strategies to eliminating regressive culture practices affecting female education nationwide.

Donkor and Deni (2016) examined the determinants of the wide discrepancies in the choice of science programme in SHS in the Upper West Region, Ghana. The authors indicated that Ghana has not seen any momentous development in girls studying science-related programmes, especially in the northern zones, although there have been special initiatives instituted in such area. Schools were selected purposively, focusing on SHS having science and science-related programmes. The research employed mixed-method design using observation, interviews, questionnaires, focus-group discussions and appraisal of secondary information.

Donkor and Deni (2016) revealed that high illiteracy rate of parents, insufficient science materials, harassment by teachers and peers, and poor academic achievement in the department of science were the challenges faced by students on the science programme in SHS. Other challenges were shortage of staff, insufficient female educators in science to serve as role models, and absence of motivation either from teachers, peers or parents. The results of Donkor and Deni reflect the challenges the girl-child faced in accessing science education and not the general education. Although their study gave some knowledge on the challenges the girl-child faced, these challenges were only restricted to science education.

Makewa, Role and Ngile (2014) argued that the obstacles experienced by females in mixed second cycle schools have been highlighted by several

scholars. Nevertheless, inequalities still persist in second cycle education with females at the disadvantaged point. The authors, consequently, examined the correlation between the challenges faced by the girl-child and their academic performance in schools in Mbooni West District, Kenya. Makewa et al.'s (2014) research was grounded in human capital theory and Pearson's gender relations theory. Descriptive comparative, cross-section survey and correlation methods were adopted. About 468 participants were sampled through cluster sampling technique. Information was gleaned through questionnaires. Challenges to girl-child education such as parents education level, home training, peer pressure, and pressure from siblings, were found to be significantly correlated with students' academic achievements. The findings indicated no significant association between female educators as role models and students' academic achievement. This research failed to highlight the obstacles experienced by the girl-child in second cycle institutions. Instead, the challenges were correlated with the academic achievement of the girls.

Asare-Danso (2017), in his historical study of girl-child education in Ghana, investigated the obstacles faced by the girl-child. Using a historical design and a qualitative research approach, data were gathered through documentary policy analysis, interviews and observations. It was found that female pupils experience several challenges which were social, cultural and institutional in nature. Findings from Asare-Danso's study showed that a key institutional obstacle facing female education is the little attention given to vocational education by post-independent administrations in Ghana, although it is an essential aspect of Basel Mission education. Only 26 out of the 126 Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) establishments, were

found to be directly placed under the Ministry of Education. The cultural obstacles were early marriages; the partiality given to male education; betrothal; and traditional native role potentials of girls. The social obstacles experienced by the girl-child were early pregnancies; parents inability to cater for the cost of education; the long-distance covered from home to school; and the lack of role models for females to learn from.

Ankoma-Sey et al. (2019) examined the experiences of the Girl-child in the accessibility of technical education in Ghana. The study employed a phenomenological design using a qualitative approach. The study was carried out in one of the Technical Education Institutions in Ghana. The study sampled 8 female students and 2 female coordinators of Women in Technical Education (WITED). The students were conveniently selected whereas the coordinators were purposefully selected. An interview guide was adopted for data gathering. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data gathered. It was discovered that the attitudes of family and friends towards Female Technical Education were negative. Also, female students were found to be harassed by male teachers and students. The study found that the institution did not have facilities like a place of convenience for the available female students. It was concluded that even though Technical Education is very important to national development, females are not encouraged by family and friends to enroll in Technical Education programmes. The study by Ankoma-Sey et al. only focused on technical education rather than general education access. It must be emphasised that access to general education by the girl-child may also have some challenges that need to be looked at.

Tyoakaa, Amaka, and Nor (2014) surveyed the challenges and problems of female child education in Kebbi State, Nigeria. The cross-sectional research design was used. The research covered all the primary schools and secondary schools in Kalgo L.G.A. Nevertheless, 14 primary and 2 secondary schools were sampled randomly from the population. Data were collected using archival data such, oral interviews, and inventory/checklist. The study discovered that the challenges experienced by the girl-child included early marriage, poverty, religious and cultural misconceptions. The research suggested among other things that, parents, non-governmental organizations, government, religious and traditional leaders should join forces to enlighten all stakeholders of the need to educate the girl-child.

Agbara, Chagbe, and Achi (2018) examined the obstacles faced by females in vocational and technical education. The data obtained for this research were taken through questionnaire administration. The study used a cross-sectional descriptive research design. The population of the research was female pupils of Federal College of Education (Technical), Gusau, Zamfara state. Purposive and random sampling technique was employed to sample 120 female students from the population. The study discovered that the challenges female students experienced included sexual harassment, financial constraint, childbirth on the programme, and insufficient educational facilities/unqualified instructors. These obstacles negatively influence the pursuit of females in vocational and technical education. Agbara et al.'s study only focused on technical and vocational education rather than general education although the girl-child also faces some challenges in accessing general education.

Focusing on engineering education, Madara and Cherotich (2016) examined self-acknowledged challenges experienced by undergraduate female students in offering engineering programme at the School of Engineering (SOE), Moi University (MU). Qualitative and quantitative approaches were useful and were adopted for the study. The central point sample was selected at random and was restricted to 50 female pupils. Qualitative data coding approach was employed to analyse and interpret the data collected. 66 percent of the participants believed that there are gender-related challenges in their education.

In another study, Ziyaba (2015) focused on girl-child participation in SHS education. The main objective is to assess the determinants of girl-child participation in SHS education in the Bolgatanga Municipality of Ghana. The cross-sectional method was employed to carry out the study. The purposive sampling technique was adopted for collecting the data. Simple random sampling procedure, specifically the lottery method, was also adopted to select parents, teachers and students to make sure that all parties have been represented. The study discovered that the girl-child accessibility and participation in SHS education is influenced by bad cultural practices such as exchange marriage, betrothal, early marriages, poverty coupled with parental attitude and perceptions of educating the girl-child. Also, the study found that there exist a considerable number of interventions programmes by the Ghana Education Service, Municipal Assembly NGOs and some institutions which in their diverse way try to promote girl-child education in the Municipality. The authors indicated that intervention programmes should be put in place to support females and for them to have a positive attitude towards their

education, and to help the girl-child build confidence in pursuing higher education.

The Nagira Consultants Limited in April 2016 conducted research on obstacles to female education in South-Central Somalia. The study collected quantitative data from 305 girls in basic schools on the factors that threaten girl-child education in South-Central Somalia. According to their findings, the main threats to girls' education are financial challenges (49.5%) as most parents are unable to pay the fee of their female wards in school. Also, child and early marriage (29.2%), insecurity (13.1%), negative attitude of parents towards girl-child education (12.5%), cultural barriers (9.2%), household chores (4.3%) and lack of educational opportunities (1.6%) were the other factors recorded from the study. From the findings, almost half (49.5%) of the respondents lacked school fee which prevented them from successfully achieving their educational ambitions since the majority of their parents and guardians cannot afford their fees and other expenses involved in their education process. The study went on to indicate that students who do not pay their fees are usually traumatized since they are openly publicized as defaulters. This is often done in front of the entire school hence girls who are unable to pay their fees to feel embarrassed to attend the school which in most cases ends up in them dropping out of school.

In another study conducted by Gondwe (2016), the author examined the factors affecting female pupils in rural areas to drop-out from primary schools in Malawi. The study used a qualitative approach to interview 30 female school drop-outs which were sampled using a purposive and snowball sampling. Data was collected on both on-school related reasons and out-of-

school related factors that contribute to school drop-out of female students. Concerning the on-school factors, the majority of the girls indicated in the interview that poor academic performance was the main cause of them dropping out of schools. The next factor mentioned was grade repetition with 10 of the students indicating that as the factor that causes them to drop out of school. From the findings, it emerged that the dominant out-of-school factor that caused school drop-out of girls was their lack of interest in pursuing academic goals. Just like the study of Nagira Consultants Limited (2016), the findings also indicated that lack of financial support with a frequency of 11 out of the total 30 was also a contributing factor to girls dropping out of schools. This was followed by pregnancy, early marriage and girls having to take care of sick relatives.

With regard to girl-child education in Ghana, Lambert, Perrino and Barreras (2012) conducted a study to explore the hindrances to female education. The study was conducted in the rural central region where 195 students were sampled with 67 being males and 128 being females. The findings reported poverty as the most overriding hindrance to female education as 85.4 percent of the pupils stated that insufficient money for school supplies. It was found that even with the existence of free education in Ghana, in practice, schools still charge an expensive amount for registrations and other levies. In addition to this, every student is expected to buy the prescribed uniform and should have patronised all the recommended books, pens and other materials for school. In situations where students are unable to acquire these supplies, especially school uniform, they are mostly disciplined and sent home. As a result, children who cannot afford these supplies

frequently stay at home to evade punishment and the embarrassment of being sacked to go home.

Empirical studies on the parent's level of education and how this influence their children education. Little literature was in existence regarding how a parent's education level affected the girl-child level of education. This necessitated the need to infer from literature covering general education of children. Akpede, Eguvbe, Akpamu, Asogun, Momodu, and Igbenu (2018) evaluated parents' attitude, parenting practice and factors affecting the girl-child education. A descriptive cross-sectional design was employed by targeting parents having, at least, a child of school-age. Data were gathered through the use of interviews schedule by conducting a semi-structured interview. Data was gathered using the multi-stage sampling procedure. It was found that 69.20 percent and 58.90 percent demonstrating good practice and attitude toward girl-child education respectively. This extent of attitude was undesirably influenced by factors like inadequate funding and big family size. One of such indicators that influenced the education level the girl-child was behavioural attributes (54.8 percent). The authors concluded their study by indicating that parents with a high education level had a positive attitude towards girl-child education.

In another study, Ludeke, Gensowski, Junge, John, and Anderson (2019) assessed the influence of parental education on a child's educational outcome. The authors employed data on a cohort from Danish administrative data and tested whether the education level of parents influences children's educational outcomes in both adopted children and biological, at 4 developmental phases: (a) the child's conscientiousness during mandatory

schooling (grades 4-9), (b) academic achievement in those same years, quantified by objective achievement tests, (c) enrollment in academically challenging high schools, and (d) graduation accomplishment. Their findings revealed that the diverse phases demonstrate that whereas adoptive parents' education has a momentous effect on advanced phases, such as educational enrollment and attainment, these influences are heavily due to influences in previous phases.

Mairo (2017) investigated the effect of parents' educational background on girl-child education. The cross-sectional survey research design was utilised. The study covered 38,595 female students in the 82 second cycle schools in which females were enrolled. The study sampled 450 students through a stratified sampling procedure, whereas a sample of 78 parents was selected through quota sampling. Mairo (2017) utilised questionnaire, focus group discussion guide and interview guide to obtain the data. The research revealed that differences were found between non-educated and educated parents in terms of influencing the education of the girl-child. That is, as compared to non-educated parents, the educated parent encouraged their children to study and work hard in school and as well provided for their needs.

Summary of Literature

From the literature reviewed, it can be concluded that the girl-child in Africa and particularly in Ghana faces a myriad of socio-cultural, religious and school-related challenges which influences their well-being and academic achievement, It is against this backdrop that the call for the Ministry of Education, the government, school authorities and NGOs for pragmatic

approaches to enhance the education of the girl-child cannot be over-emphasized. The issue of girl-child education has been extensively explored in Ghana but from different perspectives in the literature. What is known is the obstacles the girl-child experiences in accessing vocational and technical education, science education, engineering education, or even STEM education (Ankoma-Sey, Nsoh, & Quansah, 2019; Agbara, Chagbe, & Achi, 2018; Asare-Danso, 2017; Donkor & Deni, 2016; Madara & Cherotich, 2016). This does not, however, suggest that females in the general education system do not have any challenges. It is possible or not that females in the general education system will also have some challenges. Other few scholars also investigated the challenges female students in SHS faced in their education (Komora, 2014; Tyoakaa, Amaka, & Nor, 2014; Ziyaba, 2015).

These studies, however, focused on challenges in boarding house and staying away from home as a girl-child. Meanwhile, several government interventions have been observed and discussed in the literature (Agyare-Kwabi, 2013; Akinade, 2012; Allsop et al., 2010; Lewin & Little, 2011). What is unknown is whether a girl-child in basic school faced similar challenges encountered by those in senior high school and how they cope with such challenges. Due to the uniqueness of the basic school system and senior high school structure, it is unlikely that challenges experienced by the girl-child at these levels of education will be similar or even the same. Also, the basic education is a critical stage of the growth of the girl-child and such challenges faced if not addressed, at the stage can degenerate into unsolvable problems for the girl-child.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter highlighted the research methodology used for this study. The chapter includes discussions on various concerns such as the study approach, research design, the study area, population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments and data analysis techniques.

Research Design

The convergent mixed method design was employed for this study. The convergent design is a type of mixed-methods design in which the investigator gathers and analyses two distinct data (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) and, then, combines the two data to compare or combine the results (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The objective of this design is “to acquire diverse but balancing information on the same area” (Morse, 1991, p. 122) to better appreciate the research issue. The reason for using this research design is to combine the weaknesses and strengths of qualitative and quantitative approaches (e.g., quantitative methods uses objective trends and measures, a large sample size, and greater generalisation, whereas qualitative approaches use a small sample, subjective measures, depth, and details) (Patton, 2014).

The convergent mixed design was employed when the investigator wishes to compare quantifiable statistical results with qualitative results for a comprehensive appreciation of the research issue. Other reasons for the use of this design include validation and corroboration purposes, explaining

quantitative results with qualitative findings (or vice versa), or exploring the correlation among variables by addition of new variables depending on the qualitative information (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The means for the utilization of a convergent design are seen in four major steps. At the first stage, the investigator gathers both qualitative and quantitative information about the phenomenon of interest. These two main forms of information collection are done simultaneous but typically distinct—that is, a single form of data gathered does not rely on the outcome of another. Typically, they also have equivalent significance in terms of providing answers to the research questions or addressing the objectives of the research. At the second phase, the investigator studies both data sets independently and separately from each other through the use of qualitative and quantitative analytic means (Morgan, 2014).

After the data from both research strands are obtained, the investigator gets to the point of integration and tries to combine the results from both data sets in the third phase. The point of convergence is the discussion level. This integration phase may be carried out by directly linking the distinct results in a discussion or a table, or it may be done by transforming data to ease connecting the two types of data when the need arises for further analysis. In the last stage, the investigator interprets the degree, and in what ways results from the two approaches diverge or converge from one another, link to one another, and/or syndicate to produce a comprehensive understanding in relation to the overarching aim of the study (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The convergent mixed method design is simple to implement and efficient since both forms of data are gathered during a single stage of the

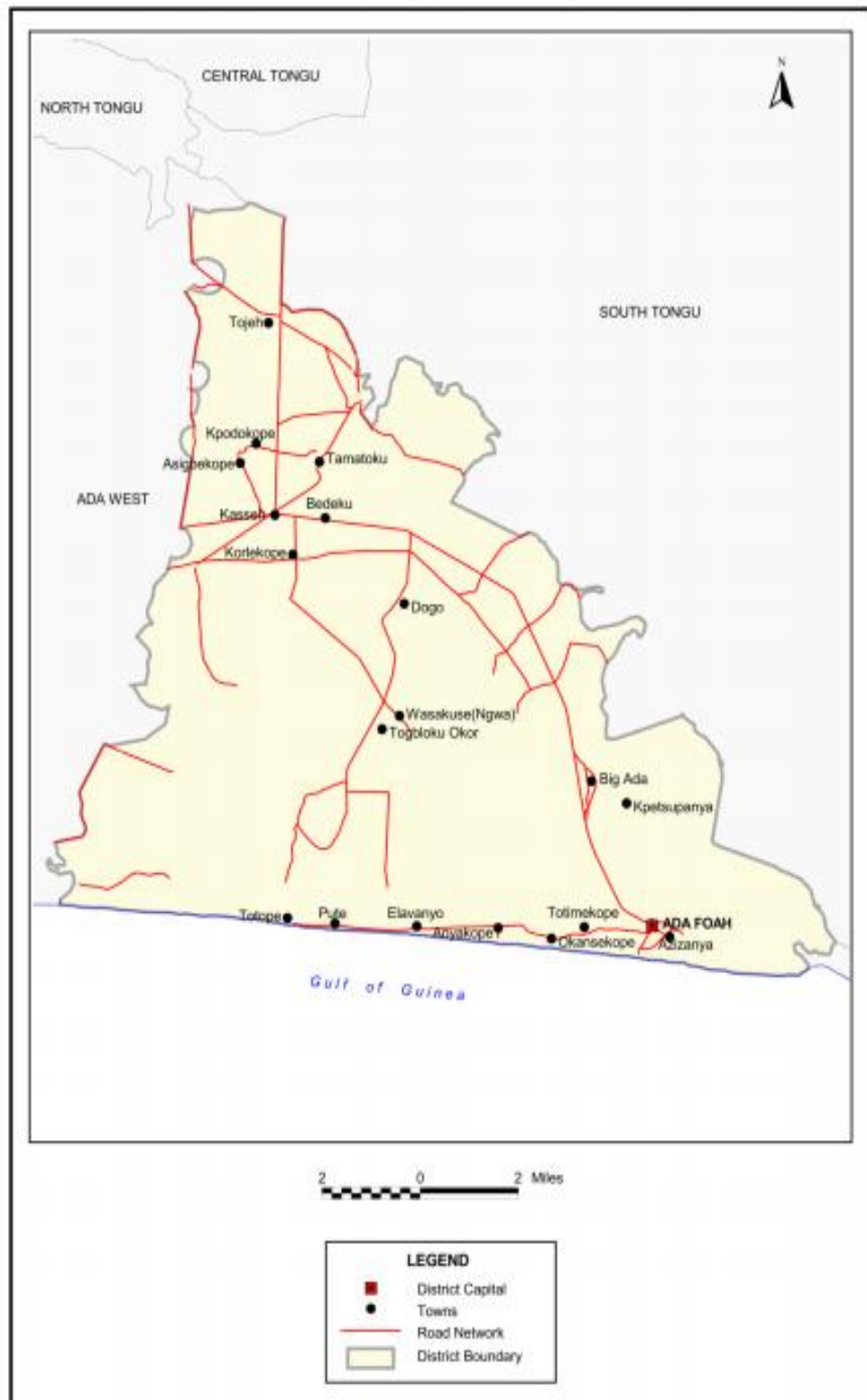
research at approximately similar times (Seltzer-Kelly, Westwood, & Peña-Guzman, 2012). Additionally, each form of data can be gathered and analyzed independently and separately, through the use of procedures conventionally related to each other. The design again enables a straight comparison of respondents' viewpoints collected in an open-ended inquisitorial format (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

Despite the strengths associated with the use of the convergent mixed design, there are also some challenges associated with its use and these challenges can be conquered. First, the danger of merging data from two or more different samples and sample sizes would be obtained since the qualitative and quantitative data are typically gathered for diverse reasons (i.e. quantitative generalisation whereas qualitative in-depth explanation). An additional challenge is difficulty in explaining results (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

Study Area

Ada East District was previously Dangme East District and was established in 1989 by Local Government Instrument, L.I. 1491. By subsection 1 of section three of the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462), a new district (Ada West) was instituted of Dangme East with a new LI (L.I 2130) a new district which was developed and called as Ada East in March 2012 having 27 electoral areas.

DISTRICT MAP OF ADA EAST



Source: Ghana Statistical Agency (2010)

Vegetation: The vegetation in the Ada East District is notably the coastal savannah form, branded by short savannah lawns and scattered with vegetation. The coasts of the district are occupied with stretches of coconut trees which provide the area with a typical look. Uncommon elements of mangrove trees could be seen along the branches of the Volta River where the soil is salty and drenched.

Geology and Minerals: Salt is the greatest mineral endowment of the Ada East District. This has been an immense contributor to the economic growth of the district as it creates the highest number of employments in the district. The district greatly depends on salt as its major source of internally produced funds. The larger share of the district is triggered by tertiary and current deposits (District Planning and Coordinating Unit, Ada East District Assembly, 2010).

Festivals: The people of the Ada East District celebrate Asafotufiami as their main festival which is yearly celebrated on the first week in August. The festival is of great significance to the people of Ada East District as it serves as a celebration to their forefathers who wrestled in the war in their mission to travel to their current setting. During the festival, the indigenes of the Ada land come together and use a week-long celebration to re-unite with their relatives and make merry.

Agriculture: The main activities of the indigenes in the district are farming and fishing. In the district, farming is mostly carried out under irrigation which includes crops like maize, cassava and others. Vegetables such as onions, okro, garden eggs, tomatoes, shallots, carrots, and pepper. Watermelon is the major fruit being produced at the district and this serves as a major source of

income for farmers in the district. Fishing is also carried out in the Gulf of Guinea and the River Volta (District Planning and Co-ordinating Unit, Ada East District Assembly, 2010).

Population

A population can be defined as the total number of individuals, groups, organizations and others that are being targeted for a study. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) explained a population as a target group of elements on whom the researcher wants to obtain information and knowledge. Similarly, Burns and Grove (2003) defined a population as all elements that satisfy the sample conditions to be involved in the study being conducted.

The population for the study comprised the junior high pupils of schools in the Ada East District of Ghana. The district is made up of 22 basic schools. The population of the study was therefore made up of 1,348 female pupils in the district. The population also comprised parents of the pupils, their teachers and District Education Officer.

Sampling Procedure

The sample consisted of 318 girls in basic schools in the districts, 8 parents, 6 teachers and a District Education Officer. The sample size for the girl-child was derived using the formula developed by Miller and Brewer (2003):

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\alpha)^2} \text{ where}$$

n=sample size,

N=sample frame=1348 and

α =margin of error= 5%.

With a confidence level of 95% the researcher arrived at a sample size (n) of 318.

Sampling is described as the choice of a representative sub-set of the whole studied population as indicated by Polit and Beck (2006). Sampling has to do with selecting any sub-section of the population or universe as a representation of that universe or population. The population was stratified to identify potential participants for the study. The stratified sampling procedure was utilised to sample the pupils in the 22 basic schools in the Ada East District, using the basic schools as the stratification criterion. With the basic schools serving as the strata, the number of female pupils to be selected from each school was identified via Miller and Brewer's (2003) formular. The use of stratified sampling was to ensure that all schools within the district have been represented (Sarantakos, 2005). Table 1 shows the selected sample per school for the study.

The parents and teachers were selected using simple random, specifically, the lottery method. Random Sampling is described as the means of selecting a sample from the universe or population such that every member of the universe or population has an equal and unknown opportunity of being chosen. Stated differently, in random sampling, all likely samples of fixed size have the same chance of being chosen.

The District Education Officer in-charge of girl-child education was purposively sampled for this particular exercise. With purposive sampling, the researcher expressly selected individuals who, in her judgement, were pertinent to the research. The choice of participants was done using the expert judgment of the researcher. For this reason, it is also known as judgment

sampling (Sarantakos, 2005). Purposive sampling was utilised to sample the District Education Officer of the Ghana Education Service. This is because of his knowledge and experience in the subject of study.

Three groups of individuals were interviewed. They include 8 parents, 6 teachers and a District Education Officer. In all 15 persons were interviewed. Survey was conducted for the pupils.

Table 1- *Population and Sample Size*

Schools	Population	Sample
Pute D/A JHS	53	12
Elavanyo Basic Sch	41	9
Anyakpor Basic Sch	21	5
Ocansekope Basic Sch	46	11
Totimekope Basic Sch	57	13
Ada Foah D/A Basic Sch	69	16
Ada Foah Presby JHS	199	44
Ada Foah Methodist Basic Sch	74	17
Ada Foah R/C Basic Sch	54	12
Azizanya Basic Sch	25	5
Maranatha Basic Sch	44	9
Big Ada Methodist Basic Sch	55	12
Big Ada Presby JHS	76	16
Gorm Basic Sch	48	11
Kasseh No1 Basic Sch	89	20
Bedeku Basic Sch	67	14
Amlakpo Basic Sch	57	13
Future Covenant Into Sch	33	8
Glorious Wave Into Sch	71	15
Asidahe Into Sch	37	9
Kasseh Methodist Basic Sch	61	14
Kasseh Islamic Basic	62	12
Kasseh No2 Basic	91	21
TOTAL	1348	318

Data Collection Instrument

The study employed two forms of instrument, namely, questionnaire and interview guide. The main instrument utilised for the study was a questionnaire that was developed by the investigator. The questionnaire was named “Girl-Child Challenges in Education and Coping Strategies Questionnaire”. The questionnaire consist of three sections. Section A demanded for the personal information of the participants. Sections B was used to tap information on socio-cultural, economic and religious, and school-related factors affecting girl-child’s basic education as well as the coping strategies they employ in the areas under review. Section C was used to solicit for information on the coping strategies of the respondents. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert-type scale comprising, 1-to a very smaller extent and 5- to a very large. The content validity of the questionnaire was established by the supervisors (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). Again, pilot testing was conducted to fine-tune the instrument. After the pilot, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Only one of the items had a loading below .50 and was subsequently deleted. The reliability estimate for the questionnaire was also estimated using the Cronbach alpha reliability method which yielded a reliability coefficient of .74.

The interviews were conducted with the interview guide. This was necessary because the researcher asks open-ended questions for the interviewee to explore his or her views about the topic of study. This procedure was employed in this research due to its flexibility as questions were asked in a manner which did not follow any order by the interviewer.

Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Data

The question wording was changed by the interviewer when it was considered suitable. This enabled the researcher to probe into areas in which respondents were not able to expand ideas and also gave participants the freedom to express their ideas about a variety of issues relating to the topic of study. The use of the interview for the research helped to obtain accurate in-depth information from the study participants. The interview guide was subjected to expert approval in order to ensure content and face validity (Gay et al., 2009).

Again, I replayed all the audio recordings against the transcriptions to make sure all errors involving omissions and insertions were corrected. I reported the verbatim responses from the respondents. Finally, I piloted the interview guide and this helped to refine it. To ensure reliability, the interview guide had the same structure and classification of questions and words for each participants (Silverman, 1993). Also, all transcriptions were cross-checked to ensure that there were no apparent mistakes (Gibbs, 2007).

Data Collection Procedure

An introductory letter was taken from the College of Distance Education of the University of Cape Coast. The researcher sent copies of the ethical clearance and introductory letter to the schools selected, parents and district office. This was essential to make sure that the teachers, students, parents and the district office were given prior notice of the study and the data collection. A follow-up was done to organize for the exact date and time which were appropriate for the collection of the data and as well take an opportunity to provide explanation to the authorities in charge on what this

study seeks to accomplish and the essence to conduct such a study. The time and date were settled and the collection of the data commenced. The parents and the district officer were invited to the school and data was gathered from all the participants.

The study collected data from both the qualitative and quantitative strand. The questionnaire was first administered to the pupils. Interviews were conducted for parents, teachers, and the district officer of the Ghana Education Service. The interview aimed at assessing the measures that are being taken by the government and other agencies to aid girl-child education in the Ada East District as well as some challenges girls face in their education.

The interview were conducted at places which were convenient to the participants. The 8 teachers preferred that the interview should be conducted at the school premises. The 6 parents opted for the interviews to be conducted at their homes whereas the District Education Officer opted for the interview to be conducted at the district office. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The only inclusion criteria for the selection of teachers was that they must have taught at the basic school for not less than 5 years. The inclusive criteria for the parents were: (1) they should have a female child in a basic school in Ada East District, (2) they must be the one responsible for the upbringing of the child. There was no inclusion criteria for the selection of the District Education Officer since only one person was in-charge.

Ethical Considerations

In each school, the researcher took the opportunity to provide a detailed explanation to all the respondents, clearly indicating the purpose of

the research and as well as the essence of conducting such the study (Creswell, 2012). Nonetheless, the investigator made it clear to the respondents that their involvement in the research was voluntary (Neuman, 2007) and they were, consequently, encouraged to offer honest and accurate information if they were willing to participate in the study. Also, the investigator elucidated to the respondents that they had the liberty to terminate their participation in the study at any point in time (Creswell, 2012), however, that liberty ended after they submitted their questionnaire. This was because of the struggle of tracing their questionnaire for it to be exempted from the analysis. Participants were made known that the study was free from any physical or psychological harm (Neuman, 2007). They were also guaranteed confidentiality.

The participants were informed that they were not mandated to write their names or index numbers. The questionnaires were retrieved in a random fashion such that information provided could not be identified to any specific respondent. This guaranteed anonymity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The researcher further sought the respondents' consent by endorsing the consent declaration part on the questionnaire. Participants who were below the age of 18 years were not permitted to give consent. This was done by pronouncing to all the participants that those who were less than 18 years are unqualified to take part in the study. Nevertheless, these minors were permitted to provide consent from their guardian/parents prior to their participation in the study.

It is imperative to stress that, in each school, the teachers or school authorities were made to excuse the class for the duration of the data collection. This was because these school authorities presence has the probability of indirectly coercing some respondents into taking part in the

study against your will. This might result in respondents giving dishonest information. Consequently, the absence of the school authorities was to safeguard vulnerable participants (Creswell, 2012).

Data Processing and Analysis

For the quantitative data, the gathered questionnaires were sorted and checked for completeness. No missing data were identified. The questionnaires were numbered from 1 to the last number, coded and entered into Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) version 22.0. The entered data was screened to check for errors and missing data. The descriptive statistics (such as frequencies and percentages) and inferential analysis like one-way analysis of variance were utilised to analyse the quantitative data.

In the thematic analysis, major issues raised during the interview were put into themes to make the analysis of the data relatively easier for discussion. Braun and Clarke (2006) explained thematic analysis as a qualitative analytic approach for the identification, analyses and reporting patterns (themes) in the data set. They argued further that as thematic analysis does not need the detailed technological and theoretical knowledge of methods like grounded theory, but rather provide a more available form of analysis, predominantly for emerging qualitative researchers.

For research question one which sought to find out the challenges facing the girl-child basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana, both quantitative and qualitative data were taken. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the quantitative data whereas the qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Research question two, which also sought to examine the coping strategies used by the girl-child being faced by challenges facing

the girl-child basic education, was answered by analysing both quantitative with descriptive statistics. The last research question examined the measures that the Government has taken to address the challenges of the girl-child basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the interviews conducted on this particular research question. Finally, hypotheses 1-3 were tested using one-way analysis of variance.

Chapter Summary

The convergent mixed method design was employed for this study. This design is used when the researcher wants to compare quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings for a complete understanding of the research problem. The population for the study comprised the Junior High pupils of schools in the Ada East District of in Ghana. The district is made up of 22 basic schools for this research. The population of the study was therefore made up of 1348 female pupils in the district. The population also comprised parents of the pupils, their teachers and district education officers. The stratified sampling technique was used to sample the pupils in the 22 basic schools in the Ada East District as the stratification variable. The parents and teachers were selected using the simple random sampling technique, specifically, the lottery method. The district education officer was purposively sampled.

The instruments used were a questionnaire and interview guide. Ethical issues were considered. The data were taken in various schools. The quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, and one-way analysis of variance whereas thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. In straightforward terms, the data for the research questions

were analysed using thematic analysis, frequencies and percentage. All the hypotheses were tested using one-way analysis of variance.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter comprises the findings, analysis and interpretations of data collected concerning the study. The information gleaned is based on the responses from the questionnaires administered to female students of schools in the Ada East District of Ghana and interview conducted with parents and teachers of female pupils in Ada East District as well as a correspondent from the Ada East District Office.

Response Rate

The targeted sample of the study consist 318 girls, 8 parents, 6 teachers and a District Education Officer. Out of the total 318 questionnaires distributed to the girls, 279 were received back for analysis. The response rate for the girls was therefore 93%. For the parents, teachers and the personnel, a 100% response rate was achieved.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Class distribution of pupils

The researcher collected data on the pupils who participated in the study. The data collected was analysed and presented in Figure 1.

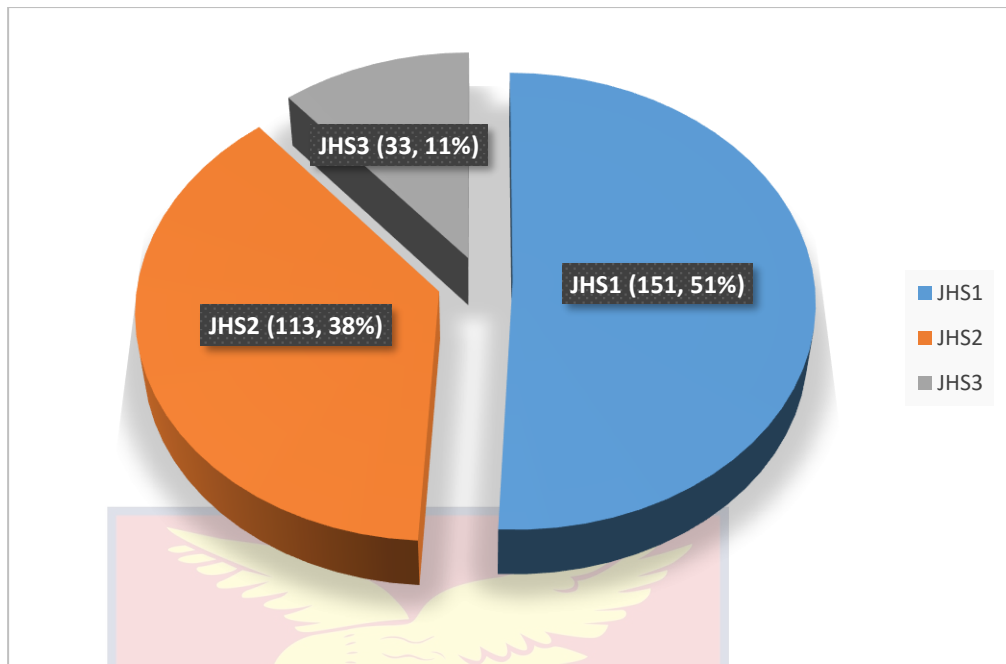


Figure 1- *Class Distribution of Pupils*

Figure 1 shows the various classes of the students who partook in the research. The data showed that the majority of the pupils (n=151) representing 51% were in JHS 1. This was followed by 113 pupils, representing a percentage of 38% who were in JHS 2. The remaining 33 pupils, who represent 11% of the total number of respondents were in JHS 3. The findings indicate that most students who partook in the research were in JHS 1.

Age Distribution of Pupils

Figure 2 shows the age distribution of pupils.

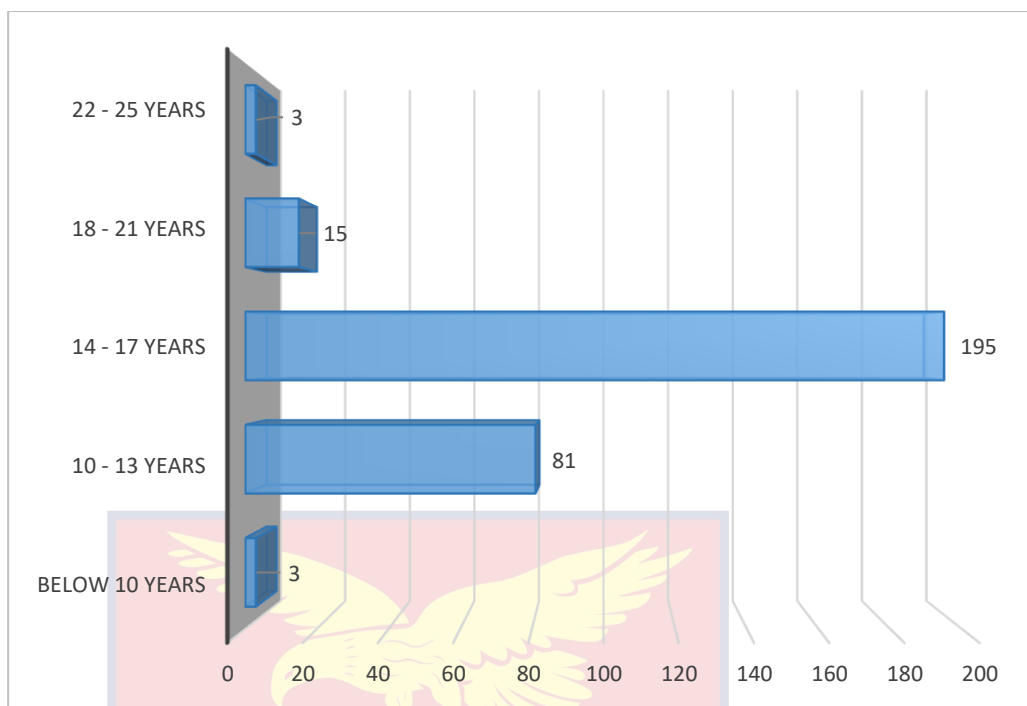


Figure 2- Age Distribution of Pupils

The researcher also collected data based on the age distribution of the students who were engaged in the research. The findings have been shown in Figure 2 shows that the majority of the pupils (n=195) were between the ages of 13 and 17 years. This was followed by 81 pupils who were between the ages of 10 to 13 years. Also, 15 pupils who partook in the research were between the ages of 18 to 21 years. Finally, 3 pupils each fell under 22 – 25 age group and below 10 years.

Educational Background of Parents

The data in Table 2 is a presentation of the educational level of parents of the students who partook in the research. The first part shows the level of education of the fathers and the later part displayed the level of education of the mothers.

Table 2- Educational Background of Parents (n=297)

Parents education	Frequency	Percentage
Father's Educational Background		
No formal Education	27	9.1
Primary/Basic Education	132	44.4
Secondary Level	63	21.2
Tertiary Level	75	25.3
Mother's Educational Background		
No formal Education	60	20.2
Primary/Basic Education	138	46.5
Secondary Level	75	25.3
Tertiary Level	24	8.1

Source: Field Work, 2019

From Table 2, it can be observed that the greater percentage of both fathers (n=132, 44.4%) and mothers (n=138, 46.5%) of the students have Basic Education. With regard to the father of the students, 27 have no formal education, 132 have basic education, 63 have secondary education and 75 of them have tertiary level education. On the other hand, 60 of the mothers have no formal education, 138 have basic education, 75 have secondary level education and 24 have tertiary education. It can also be observed from the findings that, the fathers have more tertiary education as compared to the mothers of the students.

Research Question One

What are the challenges facing the girl-child basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana?

This research question sought to explore the challenges facing the girl-child basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana. To answer this question, series of items were posed to the pupils and they were required to respond using a 5-point Likert type scale where 1 = to a very smaller extent and 5 = to a very large extent. The challenges were in two dimensions. The first was educational challenges which are conceptualised as the factors outside the school setting which served as an obstacle to the girl-child in accessing basic education in the district. The other dimension was school setting challenges which are conceptualised as the challenges which prevail in the school setting and served as an obstacle to sustaining their interest in schooling. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Not only were data obtained from pupils, but the information was also gathered from parents, teachers and a District Education Officer. All these strategies were utilised to corroborate and triangulate the findings obtained under this research question. Quantitative data was gleaned from the pupils whereas parents, teachers, and district education officer provided qualitative data.

Table 3- *Challenges of Girl-Child Education in Ada East District*

Challenges	Mean	SD	Ranks
Educational challenges	--	--	--
Teenage Pregnancy	3.22	1.78	1 st
Lack of financial support due to (poverty)	3.14	1.51	2 nd
Physiological changes such as menstruation	3.01	1.48	3 rd
Distance to school	2.86	1.39	4 th
Financial resources of parents being invested in other sectors such as farming and trading.	2.86	1.46	5 th
Overburdening girls with household chores	2.79	1.54	6 th
Girls being used for economic activities such as hawking and farming.	2.58	1.57	7 th
Early marriages	2.41	1.60	8 th
The notion that girl-child education is a waste of money and resources.	1.88	1.28	9 th
School setting challenges	--	--	--
Lack of academic self-esteem	2.66	1.49	1 st
Poor Sanitary Facilities in schools	2.63	1.35	2 nd
Lack of Girls' Safety in schools	2.30	1.35	3 rd
Sexual Harassment by counterparts and male teachers	2.03	1.36	4 th

Source: Field Work, 2019

The descriptive data in Table 3 shows the challenges the girl-child faces in accessing education in the Ada East District of Ghana. Using the mean, the challenges for both educational and school setting were ranked to create a better picture of the situation. For the educational challenges, it was found that teenage pregnancy was the highest-ranking challenge experienced by the girl-child in their basic education ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.78$). Lack of

financial support due to poverty followed up the ranking with a mean of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 1.51. The findings also indicate that physiological changes such as menstruation was another educational challenge facing the girl-child with a mean of 3.01. In effect, the three key educational challenges experienced by the girl-child in basic education were teenage pregnancy, lack of monetary support because of poverty and physiological changes such as menstruation. Other challenges which were not so much intensive were the distance to school ($M=2.86$, $SD=1.39$) and financial resources of parents being invested in other sectors such as farming and trading ($M=2.86$, $SD=1.26$), and overburdening of house chores ($M=2.79$, $SD=1.54$).

For the challenges which emerged for the school setting, it was revealed that lack of academic self-esteem ($M=2.66$, $SD=1.49$), poor sanitary facilities in schools ($M=2.63$, $SD=1.35$) and lack of girls' safety in schools ($M=2.30$, $SD=1.35$). Little emphasis was placed on sexual harassment from the opposite sex be it male pupils or teachers ($M=2.03$, $SD=1.36$).

Challenges of parents in the education of their girl-child.

To gain a better understanding and more insight into the challenge's girl's face in education in the Ada East District, the researcher also aimed at exploring the challenges parents face in educating their girl-child. To achieve this aim, the researcher interviewed eight parents, consisting of four mothers and four fathers. Series of questions were asked and the findings have been reported below using thematic analysis technique.

Finances or economic hardship among parents

The first question of the interview enquired about the challenges the parents face in the pursuit of educating their girl-child. Analyzing all the

responses derived from the interview, it was observed that financial challenge dominated. In the interview with the parents, they disclosed the level of difficulty they face financially in ensuring the successful education of their girl-child. Some parents voiced this challenge:

“It is very difficult and sometimes become impossible for my girl-child to go to school. I am a farmer and my wife sells in the market. The income is not much to even take care of the house on some occasions. Yes, there is a free education and the school feeding, yet the girl-child still needs some item for school which sometimes become a challenge to provide due to our financial situation”
(Parent A).

“I have five children in total, three boys and two ladies. As a fisherman, I am unable to take all my children to school sometimes due to our financial problems. Sometimes the girls have to stay at home and help their mum sell some of the fish. If they are able to make enough money, they can go to school the next day” (Parent E).

“I’m unable to get the needed financial assistance from my marriage partner, hence putting all the financial obligations of my girl-child on me. I am sometimes not able to cater for her needs which affects the rate at which she goes to school” (Parent D).

From these excerpts from the parents, financial challenge is obviously affecting the ability of parents in the District to cater for the education of their girl-child.

Insubordination on the part of the girl-child

Another challenge that was recorded by the researcher through the interview was insubordination on the part of the girl-child. It was revealed to the researcher through the interview that there is a challenge in educating the girl-child as some of them turn out to be very stubborn which makes it difficult for the parents to control. One parent revealed her ordeal with her girl-child by saying that;

“the child no longer listens or takes advice from me and so does things that please her. She sometimes stays away from home and unable to attend school” (Parent B)

Another parent said:

“My daughter picked up some behaviours which were very bad. She now has a boyfriend that she has been making money from. I have told her to be content with whatever she has. For me, I have turned deaf ear to her things” (Parent C).

Poor Academic Performance

When further questions were asked about the reasons that might cause a parent to avoid educating the girl-child, the academic was also a major issue which came up for discussion. The majority of the parents said they did not see the need to educate a daughter who is not performing well academically. For most of them, they felt the girl-child did not put in much effort into their academics. The following were some of the excerpts:

“Poor performance. I do not seem to get results from the efforts I put in her education” (Parent A).

“If she does not perform better at school, I will not hesitate to withdraw her from school so she can be of better help to her mum in order to make some money which will be more beneficial to the family” (Parent B).

“She is not doing well, especially in mathematics and science. And due to economic hardship, we have no option than to let her stay at home and help with our various jobs like farming and selling at the market. When things get better, they can go to school” (Parent C).

From the responses, it was found that the reasons that have the potential to cause parents to avoid educating their girl-child is the poor academic performance of the girl and economic hardship, therefore, requiring the girls to help the family in its various trades and occupation to make a living as a family.

Educating the girl-child based on gender stereotype

Finally, the parents were asked if they would prefer educating their male child to their girl-child. The general response obtained revealed that most parents did not really care about or take into consideration the gender of their wards before educating them. A parent confirmed this by stating that; *“I have no particular taste for any of the sexes, they all can be good if educated”* (Parent H).

Some of the parents stated that although they did not take into consideration the issue of gender when educating their children, some also said that they would gladly educate the male ones if the female children were not performing very well.

“The girl does not perform well in mathematics and science. So I had to withdraw her so that I would have much money to take care of the male child because he was doing well. You know the economy is hard so I have to do that” (Parent G).

Challenges teachers face in educating the girl-child.

The study, by extension, further investigated some challenges observed by teachers in their attempt to educate the girl-child in the Ada East District. The researcher was able to interview 6 teachers from the conveniently selected schools. The data gleaned indicated that the factors that hinder the teacher’s ability to successfully educate the girl-child in the Ada East District are teenage pregnancy, peer pressure, irregular school attendance by the girl-child and the difficulty of the girl-child in competing with male counterparts. Teachers were then asked some of the reasons they thought girls’ drop out of school. One of the teachers with a pseudonym as Teacher C mentioned: *“Unfriendly school life”*. Other teachers gave the following responses;

“Despite the free education and all that, the girls still have some educational needs that are sometimes very difficult for them to obtain. When that happens, most of them drop out of school”
(Teacher A)

“Due to some socio-economic factors in this district, teenage pregnancy is very common. The girls get involved in all sort of sexual activities for different purposes and end up getting pregnant, after which they drop out of school” (Teacher B)

From the responses derived, it was found out that the financial difficulty tends to affect the girls’ ability to remain in school. Through the

interview with the teachers, it was revealed that most girls who get pregnant in their teens engage in sexually related activities to be able to support themselves financially. For the reason of unfriendly school life, it was explained to the researcher that, when the girls get pregnant at that age, they are stigmatized in school by authorities and their peers, making them uncomfortable and then decide to drop out of school.

Opinion from the district office of Ada East.

As part of the study, the researcher collected data through an interview with a correspondent from the Ada East District Office. The interview was carried out to evaluate the current state of girls' education in the district and to explore the interventions of the government and other NGOs in helping girls' education in the district. The interview was conducted with the District Education Officer in-charge of girl-child education. The first question of the interview aimed at assessing the opinion of the Ada East District Office with respect to the current status of female education. The following response was obtained;

“Drop-out rate among girls bothers the district office a lot. Also, sexual relationships, bother between Pupil-Pupil and Pupil-Teacher still remains a topical issue in the district. Teenage pregnancy is on the increase affecting the girl-child to a great extent” (The District Education Officer).

When asked about the opinion of the district office on the challenges they think girls in the district are facing, the response below was obtained;

“The major challenge of the girl-child in this district is poverty. Most of the girls here look after themselves in school. Most of them

appear to come from single-parent homes or living with their grandparents or mother only, and this contributes to their poor performance in school. Most of them engage in all sort of things in order to provide for themselves, with some of these activities being sexually related leading to teenage pregnancy” (The District Education Officer).

Information gathered revealed to the researcher that most of the girls depend on their friends, teachers and engage in small business as coping strategies to some of their challenges.

Research Question Two

What are the coping strategies adopted by the girl-child in confronting challenges facing her basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana?

This research question sought to identify the coping strategies the girl-child’s in the Ada East District adopt for the challenges faced in basic education. The pupils indicated the strategies they employ to cope with the challenges they experience in accessing education. Percentages and frequencies were employed to present the data.

Table 4- *Coping Strategies Employed by the Pupils to Cope with the Challenges*

Coping Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Seek Guidance and Counselling.	161	54.2
Report to necessary authorities in school	82	27.6
I talk to my parents or guardian	24	8.1
I keep it to myself	18	6.1
Reduce the number of times I go to school.	12	4.0
Total	297	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2019

The result in Table 4 depicts the coping strategies school girls in the Ada East District adopt for the challenges faced in school. From findings revealed that most female pupils seek Guidance and Counselling when faced with challenges in school (n=161, 54.2%). This was followed by 27.6% (n=82) respondents who indicated that they report challenges to the necessary authorities. Further 8.1% of the pupils disclosed that they talked to their parents or guardians concerning the challenges they face. Few of them revealed that they reduced the number of times they go to school (4%).

In addition to this, the researcher through the interview with the teacher enquired about the availability of guidance and counselling services for the students. The responses obtained indicated that most of the schools' lack such a facility. Out of 6 teachers interviewed, only 2 indicated the availability of a guidance and counselling unit in their schools. Students are therefore seeking guidance and counselling from any teacher available and from their parents as well as some elders in the community.

In the opinion of the Ada East District Office, girls going through challenges in their education depend on help from their friends and teachers as coping mechanisms. The district also believes that some of these girls engage in small businesses to raise some money to provide for their needs.

Research Question Three

What measures has the Government taken to address the challenges of the girl-child's basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana?

This research question sought to identify the measures that the government has taken to address the challenges of the girl-child basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana. To get an answer to this research

question, teachers and the district officer were interviewed to share their views on the government interventions to alleviate the challenges of girl-child basic education. The following excerpts were reported:

“over the past decade, the government of Ghana has ensured policies to aid the development of girl-child education, especially in rural areas. Programmes like free SHS and Complementary Basic Education are all interventions by the government” (Teacher

D)

The free education policy, the provision of school uniforms and sandals, provision of school books and other reading materials and the school feeding programmes are some of the intervention being ensured by the government (Teacher E)

Another respondent said:

“At the district level, the Ada East District has engaged a series of activities to promote girl’s education in the district. The Ada East District office carries out yearly programmss geared towards girls such as talks on teenage pregnancy, talk on avoidance of rape, defilement and harassment, stakeholder conference on the promoting, retention and performance of the girl-child in school and many more programmes” (District Officer)

Another teacher said:

“there has been series of Non-Governmental Organizations who are organization programmes to support girl’s education in the district. Some of such Non-Governmental Organizations include, Plan Ghana, McDan Foundation, Every Drop, Hunger Project,

College for Ama, International Child Development Programme and many more” (Teacher B)

The excerpts show that the government has instituted several intervention programme to reduce the gender inequality gap. These strategies are found at the district level to the national level.

Hypotheses Testing

The study sought to test three hypotheses. These hypotheses were tested at a significance level of .05 and a confidence level of 95%. For all the hypotheses, one-way analysis of variance was utilised. Before testing the hypotheses, the normality test was conducted. The result is shown in Figure 3.

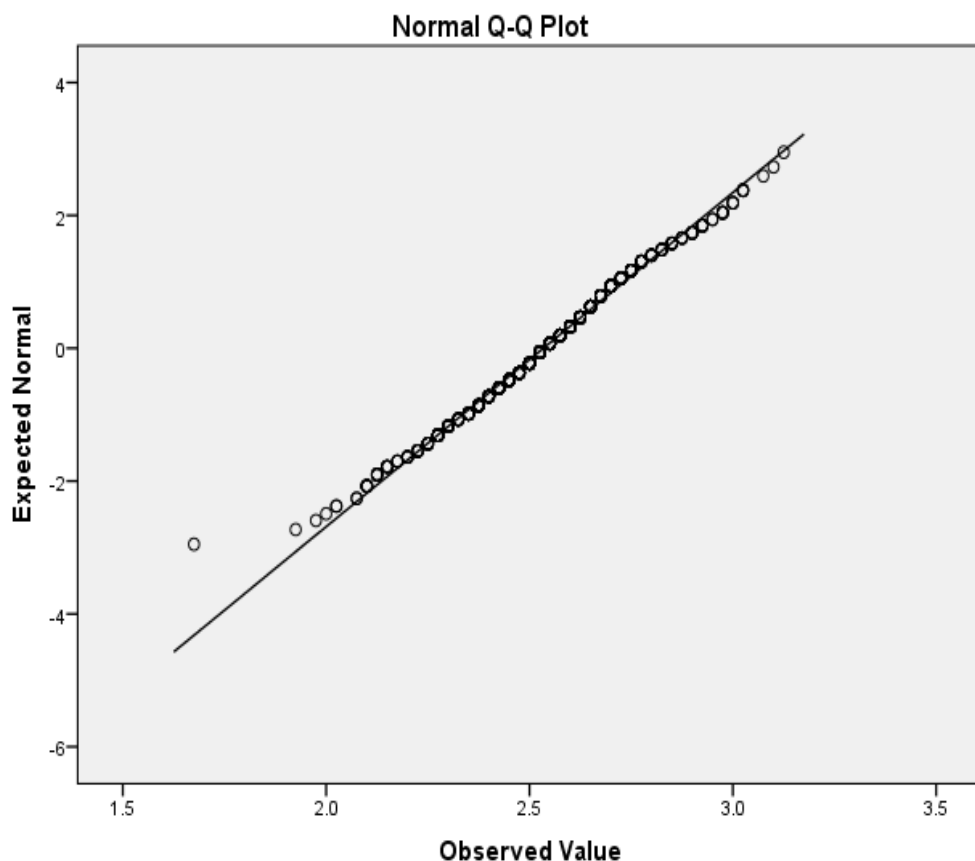


Figure 3- Normality Test (Q-Q Plot)

The Q-Q plot presented in Figure 3 shows that the data was normally distributed across the dependent variable. This is because the data points were closer to the line of fit.

Hypothesis One

H₀1: There is no significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education on the basis of age.

This hypothesis sought to test whether there is a significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education on the basis of age. The grouping variable was age categories: 13 years or below, 14-18 years, and above 18 years. Table 5 and 6 provides the details of the analysis.

Table 5- *Descriptive Statistics on Age Categories*

Age categories	Mean	SD
13 years or below	32.54	1.221
14 – 18 years	31.95	1.192
Above 18 years	31.73	1.188

Source: Field Work (2019)

As presented in Table 5, the female pupils who were 13 years or below had a mean of 32.54, those between the ages of 14-18 years had a mean of 31.95 whereas those above 18 years had a mean of 31.73. The results in Table 6 test whether significant differences exist in the challenges female pupils face in accessing basic education.

Table 6- *One-way ANOVA for Age Differences in the Challenges Facing Girl-child's Basic Education*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.008	2	.004	.105	.900
Within Groups	24.847	294	.040		
Total	24.856	296			

Source: Field Work (2019)

The data in Table 6 revealed that there is no significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education on the basis of age, $F(2, 294) = .105, p > .900$. This suggests that the challenges facing a girl-child's basic education are similar for female pupils across different age categories.

Hypothesis Two

H₀2: There is no significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education on the basis of the father's educational level.

This hypothesis sought to test whether there is a significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education on the basis of the father's educational level. The grouping variable was the father's education level: no formal education, primary/basic education, secondary level, and tertiary level. Table 7 and 8 provides the details of the analysis.

Table 7- *One-way ANOVA for the difference in the Challenges Facing the Girl-child's Basic Education based on Father's Educational Level*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	1774.308	3	887.154	28.235*	.000
Within groups	8483.538	293	31.421		
Total	10257.846	296			

*Significant, $p < .05$

The study revealed a significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child’s basic education on the basis of father’s educational level, $F(3, 293)=28.235, p<.001$ (Table 7). Further analysis is shown in Table 8 to give an in-depth understanding of where the difference is coming from.

Table 8- Multiple Comparison

(I) Father’s Education Level	(J) Father’s Education Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
No formal Education	Primary/Basic	5.02*	.671	.000
	Secondary	9.70*	.831	.004
	Tertiary	19.70*	.45	.000
Primary/Basic	No formal Education	-5.02*	.831	.000
	Secondary	5.73*	.641	.000
	Tertiary	14.32*	.732	.000
Secondary Level	No formal Education	-9.70*	.831	.004
	Primary/Basic	-5.73*	.641	.000
	Tertiary	11.31*	.743	.000

*Mean difference significant at $p<.05$

Source: Field Work (2019)

As shown in Table 8, it was found out that the girl-child whose father had no formal education had more challenges in accessing basic education than those with the father having primary/basic education, $p<’.001$. Similarly, the girl-child whose father had secondary education faced more challenges in accessing basic education than those whose father have tertiary education, $p<.001$. In effect, the father’s level of education explains the challenges facing a girl-child’s basic education.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child’s basic education on the basis of the mother’s educational level.

Table 9- One-way ANOVA for the difference in the Challenges Facing the Girl-child’s Basic Education based on Mother’s Educational Level

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	1993.789	3	664.596	21.672*	.000
Within groups	8985.117	293	30.666		
Total	19570.753	296			

*Significant, p<.05

Source: Field Work (2019)

The study revealed a significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child’s basic education on the basis of mother’s educational level, $F(3, 293)=28.235, p<.001$ (Table 9). Further analysis is shown in Table 10 to give an in-depth understanding of the results.

Table 10- Multiple Comparison

(I) Education Level	(J) Education Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
No formal Education	Primary/Basic	6.11*	.983	.000
	Secondary	8.73*	.452	.000
	Tertiary	16.42*	.521	.000
Primary/Basic	No formal Education	-6.11*	.983	.000
	Secondary	6.73*	.732	.000
	Tertiary	12.90*	.691	.000
Secondary Level	No formal Education	-8.73*	.452	.000
	Primary/Basic	6.73*	.732	.000
	Tertiary	10.96	.874	.000

*Mean difference significant at p<.05

Source: Field Work (2019)

The results in Table 10, revealed that the girl-child with a mother who had no formal education had more challenges in accessing basic education than those with the mother having primary/basic education, $p < .001$. Similarly, the girl-child with a mother who had secondary education had faced more challenges in accessing basic education than those with mother having tertiary education, $p < .001$. On the whole, the mother's level of education explains the challenges facing a girl-child's basic education.

Discussion

The study has been conducted to identify the challenges facing girl-child education in the Ada East District. The discussion was based on the research questions and hypothesis.

Discussion on Research Question One

The first research question sought to examine the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education in the Ada East District. The results of this research revealed that the key challenges girls experienced in accessing basic education in the Ada East District are teenage pregnancy, insufficient financial support because of poverty and physiological changes such as menstruation.

Poverty

This study found that poverty is a key blockade to girl-child education. The finding of the study is consistent to that of the Nagira Consultants Limited (2016) who found that poverty is the main constraint to the successful education of the girl-child. In a similar study in Ghana, Lambert et al. (2012) also indicated that even with the existence of free education in Ghana, in practice, schools still charge an expensive amount for registrations and other levies. Thus, every student is expected to buy the agreed uniform and should

have bought all the recommended books, pens and other supplies for school. In situations where students are unable to acquire these supplies, especially school uniform, they are mostly disciplined and sent home. The findings of Lambert et al. support the findings of this present study which also found poverty as a challenge to girl-child education. This implies that children who cannot afford these supplies regularly stay at home to evade punishment and the embarrassment of being sacked to go home.

Poverty in Ghana has been one of the major factors affecting education in rural zones especially. Despite the intervention of the Government of Ghana to provide free education, school feeding and even uniforms, education of girls still demands that parents meet some other financial needs. From the demographic findings of the study, most of the parents of girls in the Ada East District are either farmers, fishermen, salt miners or traders. In addition, the majority of the parents only have secondary school education which limits their ability to secure well-paying jobs in the district. These parents and guardians have a lower chance of earning much to afford the fee and other expenses which comes with educating their children. This has been the main contributing factors to the reduced admission rate of the female into schools and a higher rate of school drop-out by girls in the community. This explains why some girls were observed even resorting to hawking and selling in the street before they go to school.

Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy has also been discussed by many researchers, NGOs and the Government of Ghana. Findings from the students revealed that teenage pregnancy is the main challenge affecting female students in the

district. To confirm this finding, the correspondents from the district office of the Ada East District also indicated that, teenage pregnancy is a concern for the district office. The teachers who were also interviewed revealed that one of the challenges they face in the education of girls in the district is teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy has become common in the rural areas of Ghana. Scarcely will one see a pregnant girl going to school. Most of such girls, who should be in the classroom were seen selling on the streets or in the market.

In the school community where this study was conducted female pupils mostly cater for their needs, which cause them to engage in sexually related activities and relationships with men and boys in the District so they can provide for themselves. At least this is a mechanism used by these girls to provide for themselves and this often leads to teenage pregnancy which later leads to dropping out of the school. This, perhaps, is due to the financial and economic hardship of parents as most of them do not have much control over their children who leave home to pursue their means of survival. One interesting revelation made by one teacher was the fact that the school setting is mostly unfavourable to females who become pregnant and are usually mocked and stigmatised. When such students can no longer take such unfriendly and hostile treatment, they drop out of school and some never returned to the classroom in their entire lives. These findings of the study are confirmed by Lloyd et al. (2000) who found that several girls become pregnant before the age 18 and finally drop out of school. This was confirmed by other research conducted by UNICEF (2006).

Physiological Changes

Physiological changes such as menstruation were also one of the challenges faced by girls in the district. Unfortunately, not much studies have reported this finding or there is none to the knowledge of the current researcher. The issues with physiological changes are highly associated with the menstrual cycle of girls which starts in their adolescent stages. Nowadays, it is surprising to even know that, some girls discover their menstrual periods as early as 8 years. During these periods, girls are expected to experience the flow of blood for several days and they are also expected to ensure good personal hygiene.

During menstrual periods, girls are expected to use a mechanism that will ensure that they do not spill the flowing blood which is an unpleasant situation for them. There is, therefore, the need for sanitary pads which per the personal analysis of the researcher, cost between GHS 5.00 and GHS 8.00 depending on the brand. Some of these girls are unable to purchase these sanitary pads and are usually forced to stay at home during their menstrual period, therefore, contributing to the challenge of teachers in educating girls in the district and also reducing the success rate of the girls' education.

The challenge of menstrual periods translates into poverty or low finances. This aligns to the early part of the results where parents could not afford the needs of the female student. That is why some of the girls were found working or soliciting for funds elsewhere to cater for their needs. This confirms a study by Woldehanna et al. (2008) who indicated that males have less chances than females in terms of combining work and school activities or to be involved in only work, and are more probable to be engaged in leisure

activities only linked to females, so the summation of voluntary and domestic work is higher for females. Findings from other studies have also confirmed that the issue of finances for the girl-child in procuring their basic necessities (Glick & Sahn, 2007; Handa, 1996).

Poor Sanitary Facilities

Another challenge recorded has to do with the poor sanitary facilities in some of the schools. Also, there is limited research available with regard to this particular finding of the study. However, Tumwine et al. (2003) revealed in their study that, the shared sanitary facility in the rural settings of Ghana are pit latrine toilets whereas those in the urban areas are flush toilets. Clean sanitary facilities will make girls feel comfortable and confident in using them without the fear of contracting diseases which will have a positive influence in their school attendance. On the other hand, when sanitary facilities are unclean, girls feel uncomfortable and they end up avoiding them, resulting in an increase in girl's absenteeism from school. Girls faced with this challenge tend to avoid the use of such sanitary facilities which affects the comfort and soundness of the education they receive in their various schools.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment from peers and teachers was minimal, however, findings obtained from the interview with the correspondents from the district office suggests that sexual harassment and relationship between pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher is still a challenge in the district. Sexual harassment is wrong and illegal in most countries of the world. Sexual harassment may not necessarily come from teachers to students; however, the harasser can also be

a colleague student or any other individual within the school premises. This makes the school environment unsafe.

Studies conducted such as those of Ruto (2009), and Koskey (2011) also revealed that sexual harassment is evident in most schools in Africa. Koskey (2011) particularly observed that sexual harassment in African school nowadays may not only be from a male to a female but also from another male to a male and a female to another female. The finding of this study is therefore consistent to that of Koskey (2011) who revealed in a study that, a key reasons why female students' drop-out of school is due to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment serves as a hindrance to female participation in educational activities and as such discourages parents from sending their daughters to school. Also, Ruto (2009) added that as a result of these sexual harassments by male teachers and their peers, the females end up pregnant or become early mothers thereby greatly affecting the ability to achieve their educational goals.

Discussion on Research Question Two

The second research question was to identify the coping strategies school girls in the Ada East District adopt for the challenges faced in school. The study revealed that when female pupils are faced with any of these challenges, the majority of them cope by seeking guidance and counselling from their teachers, parents and other elderly persons in the community. It was observed that even though most girls turn to seek guidance and counselling when faced with educational challenges, only a few schools in the district have made special provision for the guidance and counselling for students. Seeking counselling when experiencing challenges is the best thing to do as a girl-child. This has also been stated by UNICEF (2006).

In addition, some girls indicated that they report the challenges they face to the necessary authorities such as the Police or CHRAJ. It was observed that such students do so when the challenges they are facing have to do with sexual harassment, abuse, or neglect from parents. The findings also revealed that some students, when faced with these challenges, talked to their parents or guardians, or keep it to themselves by suppression, or even by reducing the number of times they went to school. This finding agrees with the observations of scholars (Daddieh, 2003; Lee & Pollitzer, 2016; Nguyen & Wodon, 2013).

Discussion on Research Question Three

Though the number of males and females admitted in schools amplified after the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme was implemented, it has since reduced vividly with the decentralisation of education. More of the funding responsibility has been put on communities and parents with previously scarce resources. As the Ghanaian government lingers to reduce the education budget and spend the larger proportion of the nation's GNP on debt reimbursement, citizens have a fewer choice rather than to send their kids out to the markets and farms to sustain the household (Lewin & Little, 2011). There is insufficient funding to pay for the continuously growing fee charged by PTAs, school officials, teachers, and several others. Together with the blockades exclusively experienced by females, at long last, they are influenced the more. Notwithstanding the unwelcoming outlook for the accomplishment of the 2005 goal of educating all children of school-age in Ghana and satisfying all

the purposes of FCUBE, people have not given up hope (Agyare-Kwabi, 2013).

In a continuing effort to promoting the consciousness of the significance of female education through the nation, the Unit issues bulletins that are sent to non-for-profit organizations, PTAs, and parents school officials. It is presently establishing a Female Education Scholarship Scheme (PESS) for females whose relatives cannot afford the direct and opportunity cost of educating them. If the education system of Ghana is to ever come to a point where it profits the entire community and quality free compulsory education will be available for all school-age pupils, numerous things need to occur (Akinade, 2012).

Discussion on Hypothesis One

This hypothesis sought to find out whether there is a significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education based on age. The study revealed that there is no significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education based on age. The findings of the study are consistent with the results of Wood, Powell, and Knight (2004) stated, "chronological age of pupils starting kindergarten within the range of 4 to 6 years, is unconnected to overcoming challenges and ultimate failure or success" (p. 8). Just like the findings of this study, Dietz and Wilson (2005), and DeMeis and Stearns (2002) agreed, revealing no significant association between a student's age and academic success. Similarly, Meisels (2005) again found that children of different ages have similar challenges in accessing basic education and have a similar ability to overcome these challenges.

Other studies found inconsistent findings with this study. Green and Simmons (2003), for example, examined student age as a factor contributing to success in school, comparing “initial applicants to achievement years” (p. 45). Green and Simmons (2003) interrogated the knowledge of admitting students at a tender age and abridged, “notwithstanding the additional schooling year, the early applicant is only 3 months greater in achievement to the regular entrant at a specific age” (p. 45). According to Green and Simmons, older children can cope with the challenges they face in basic education as compared to younger children.

Discussion on Hypothesis Two

This hypothesis tested whether a significant difference exists in the challenges facing the girl-child’s basic education on the basis of the father’s educational level. The result showed that female pupils having fathers with a high level of education had few challenges in basic education. Those female pupils with father’s having low education status, to a large extent, had more challenges. In essence, fathers who are highly educated know the benefits they have accrued for being educated and as such, they would gladly educate their children. With this, it is obvious that they understand the demands of educating their wards, especially the girl-child, and will thus be willing to sacrifice anything to educate such a child.

The findings of this study support the observations of Jaiswal (2018) that literate fathers tend to be more involved academically in their children than the uneducated parents. The findings of this study also corroborate with other previous studies which also confirmed that father’s education plays a momentous part in educating the girl-child. From the view of Khan et al.

(2015), a major reason why the education level of the father largely influence their children's education is due to the fact that parents who are educated understand the need for education and are concerned with the future of their children.

Consistent with the findings of this study, Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013) found a significant difference between children of literate fathers and students with fathers having finished only primary school or not. The authors added that for fathers with a university qualification, their wards perform significantly very well and obtain the highest grade in the examination. It is imperative to indicate that several studies conducted have concluded that the parent's education seriously influences the academic achievement of their wards. It has been revealed that parents who are literate do positively affect their wards while 'for the illiterate the relationship was negative. Concerning this, children of educated parents will obtain better grades in school as likened to children of uneducated parents. It's consequently obvious that the parent's education level is very influential in defining the child's academic performance (Jaiswal, 2018).

Discussion for Hypothesis Three

For the third hypothesis, it sought to test whether there is a significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education on the basis of the mother's educational level. It was discovered that female pupils with mothers who have a higher level of education faced fewer challenges whereas those with mothers who have little education had more challenges in basic education. This result may suggest that highly educated mothers, perhaps, have much understanding and knowledge of the essence of educating the girl-

child. Such mothers would go every length to provide for all the needs and make sure that the girl-child obtains all the support she may need in basic education.

This finding corroborates the findings of previous researches. In Jaiswal's (2018) study, for example, it was disclosed that mothers' level of education has a more positive effect on academic involvement of parental than the education of the fathers. Similar to the findings of this study, Samal (2012) found that the household members educational level, especially the mothers, is powerful most important on children and it examines their accessibility to education. Several other findings also concurred that a higher level of education of mothers is associated with increased access to education. (Adeola & Adefunke, 2010; Kimani, Kara, & Njagi, 2013; Wamala, Saint-Kizito, & Jjemba, 2013). Supporting the significant role of mothers' level of education in educating the girl-child, Ampiah and Yeboah (2009) added that the mothers' education level and school retention has been found to be closely related. It was discovered that non-educated mothers cannot offer the support or frequently do not increase in value the profits of education (Ampiah & Yeboah, 2009; Trang, Rolf, & Van der Velden, 2011).

Just like the findings of this study, Jaiswal and Choudhuri (2017) argued that the likelihood of female admissions in primary school was increased by 9.7 percent and secondary by 17.6 percent by her married mother's primary education and it has no significant effect on the enrolment of males. Thus, educated mothers have been observed to give preference to females schooling, and this suggests that mothers have a comparatively tougher preference for their daughters' education and that their education

affords them either increased household decision-making power or increased financial standing.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final chapter of the study consist of the summary of the findings and the recommendations based on the findings of the study. The objectives of the study were to discover challenges the girl-child face accessing basic education and to identify the coping strategies they adopt for the challenges faced in school. The summary of the findings of the study has been presented in this chapter to answer the research questions and testing of the hypothesis developed for the study.

Summary of the Study

Overview of the Study

The study aimed at examining the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education in the Ada East District. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. explore the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana;
2. identify the coping strategies employed by the girl-child to address the challenges they face in basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana;
3. examine the measures the government has taken to address the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana;

4. assess whether differences exist in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education on the basis of age;
5. examine whether differences exist in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education on the basis of the father's education level;
6. examine whether differences exist in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education on the basis of the mother's education level.

The convergent mixed method design was employed for this study.

The convergent design is a mixed-methods design in which the investigator gathers and analyses two distinct databases—qualitative and quantitative — and then syndicates the two data set to either combine the findings (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This design is used when the researcher wants to compare quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings for a complete understanding of the research problem.

The population for the study comprised the Junior High pupils of schools in the Ada East District of Ghana. The district is made up of 22 basic schools for this research. The population of the study was therefore made up of 1,348 female pupils in the district. The population also comprised parents of the pupils, their teachers and district education officers. The stratified sampling technique was used to sample the pupils in the 22 basic schools in the Ada East District as the stratification variable. The parents and teachers were selected using the simple random sampling technique, specifically, the lottery method. The district education officer was purposively sampled.

The instruments used were a questionnaire and interview guide. Ethical issues were considered. The quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, and one-way analysis of variance whereas thematic analysis was

used to analyse the qualitative data. In straightforward terms, the data for the research questions were analysed using thematic analysis, frequencies and percentage. All the hypotheses were tested using one-way analysis of variance.

Key Findings

The following were the key findings

1. The findings of the study revealed that the main challenges girls face in education in the Ada East District are teenage pregnancy, lack of financial support due to poverty and physiological changes such as menstruation. Findings from the parent's also confirmed financial challenge as greatly affecting their ability to cater for the education of their girl-child. It was revealed to the researcher through the interview that there is a challenge in educating the girl-child as some of them turned out to be very stubborn which makes it difficult for the parents to control. This is one of the reasons why parents failed to educate.
2. The study revealed that when female pupils are faced with any of these challenges, the majority of them coped by seeking guidance and counselling from their parents, teachers and other elderly people in the community. It was observed that even though most girls turn to seek guidance and counselling when faced with educational challenges, only a few schools in the district have made special provision for the guidance and counselling for students. Also, some girls indicated that they report the challenges they face to the necessary authorities such as the Police or CHRAJ. It was found that such students do so when the challenges they are facing have to do with sexual harassment, abuse, or neglect from parents.

3. The study revealed that the government has instituted several intervention programmes to reduce the gender inequality gap. These interventions to the girl-child include free education programme and scholarship schemes. These strategies are found at the district level to the national level.
4. The study revealed that there is no significant difference in the challenges facing the girl-child's basic education on the basis of age.
5. The result showed that female pupils having fathers with a high level of education had few challenges in basic education. Those female pupils with father's having low education status, to a large extent, had more challenges. In essence, fathers who are highly educated know the benefits they have accrued for being educated and as such, they would gladly educate their children.
6. It was discovered that female pupils with mothers who have a higher level of education faced fewer challenges whereas those with mothers who have little education had more challenges in basic education.

Conclusion

Girl's education in Ghana has developed greatly over the past decade. Nevertheless, there are still areas of concern that need serious attention as girls in the rural areas especially are facing diverse of challenges in their education, making them fall short in the competition against their male counterparts. Despite education being regarded as a fundamental human right, numerous factors resulted in the low level of girl's education as compared to boys. There is, therefore, the need for the support of the girl-child to cope with the challenges they face to guide them in meeting their academic ambitions.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been provided:

1. Government of Ghana and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) should empower parents in the Ada East Districts through the creation of job opportunities since poverty was found to be a major challenge. The NGOs should, in addition, organise intervention programmes aimed at training community members in Ada East Districts to gain entrepreneurial skills so that they have their own businesses to earn decent living. Also, parents, teachers and other stakeholders should provide sexual education for not only the girl-child and their male counterparts as well. This is to educate them on the dangers of engaging in early sexual activities and how it can lead to teenage pregnancy which can be harmful to their education and life aspirations. Such education will help reduce the instance of pupil-pupil sexual relationships and harassment in the schools. Also, management of various basic schools should have a mechanism in place that will support teenage girls who get pregnant and guide them back into the classroom.
2. Guidance and Counselling coordinators should strengthen counselling services in the schools. The school-counsellors should be exposed to some training to give them the competence and confidence to do their work effectively. Ghana Education Service should ensure that there should be proper development and implementation of guidance and counselling services at junior high school level. Time for counselling should be given special consideration. Teacher-counsellors should also

be given incentives through proper remuneration and promotion; so that they can guide and counsel the students more frequently.

3. The Government of Ghana, NGOs, and stakeholders should design intervention programmes aimed at reducing the inequality gap. These interventions should include scholarship scheme and free education programmes for female pupils.
4. The girl-child whose parents have a low level of education should be identified by the management of schools for special attention. Parents who fall into such category should be given counselling and support services by the school administration and the Ministry of Education to ensure that the challenges experienced by the girl-child in accessing education are reduced and managed appropriately.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The current study has provided a basis for the development of future studies. One key part of the study was the finding which indicated the necessity for guidance and counselling in the school setting as it serves as the main coping strategies girls adopt when faced with educational challenges. Future studies should endeavour to look into the issues of guidance and counselling to investigate the importance of Guidance and Counselling on girls' academic performance, to determine the essence of Guidance and Counselling on the retention of girls in school, to examine the importance of Guidance and Counselling on the vocation prospects of girls and to examine the importance of Guidance and Counselling on girls' attitude towards education.

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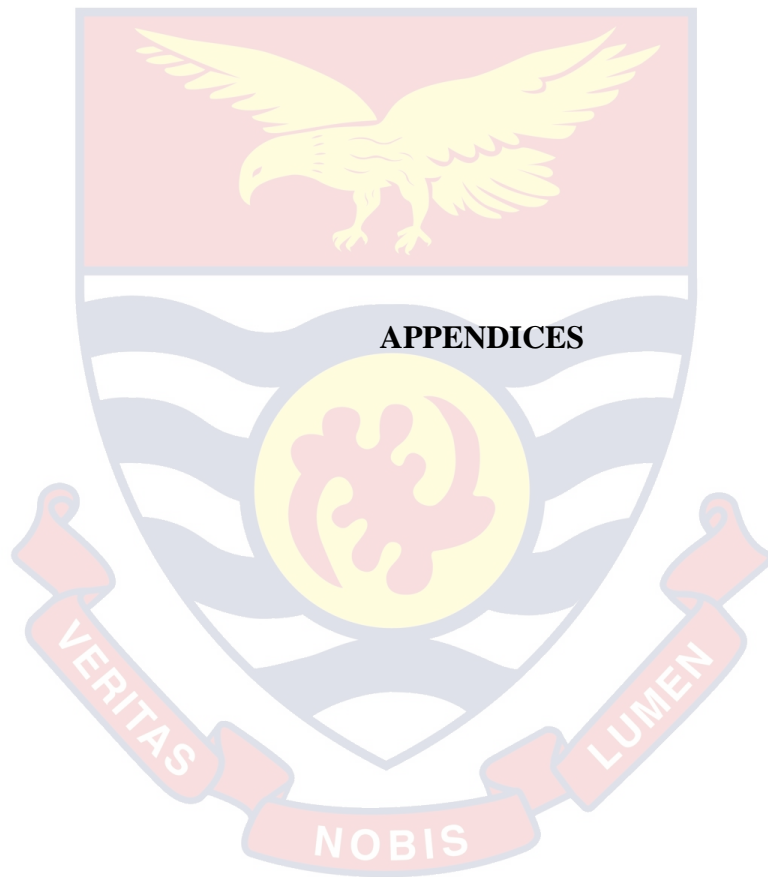
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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

This questionnaire is designed for gathering data on the challenges facing girl-child basic education in the Ada East District of Ghana. The data gathered will be used wholly for research purposes only and will be kept strictly confidential. In order to guarantee your anonymity, your name is not required on the questionnaire. Please give your candid opinion to each of the items on the questionnaire.

Thank you for the help anticipated from you.

SECTION A: BIO DATA

Name of school:.....

Class J.H.S 1 [] J.H.S 2 [] J.H.S 3 []

Age: Below 10 years [] 10 – 13 [] 14 – 17 [] 18 – 21 [] 22 – 25 []
26 and above []

What is the occupation of your parents?

Mother:

Father:

Highest Educational Level of your father:

No formal education []

Primary/Basic Education []

Secondary Level []

Tertiary Level []

Highest Educational Level of your mother:

No formal education []

Primary/Basic Education []

Secondary Level []

Tertiary Level []

SECTION B: CHALLENGES FACING GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION

Directions: Indicate the extent to which you agree with the assertions below by ticking only one of the answers.

Rate the extent to which you rate the following challenges using a 5-point Likert type scale where 1 = to a very smaller extent and 5 = to a very large extent.

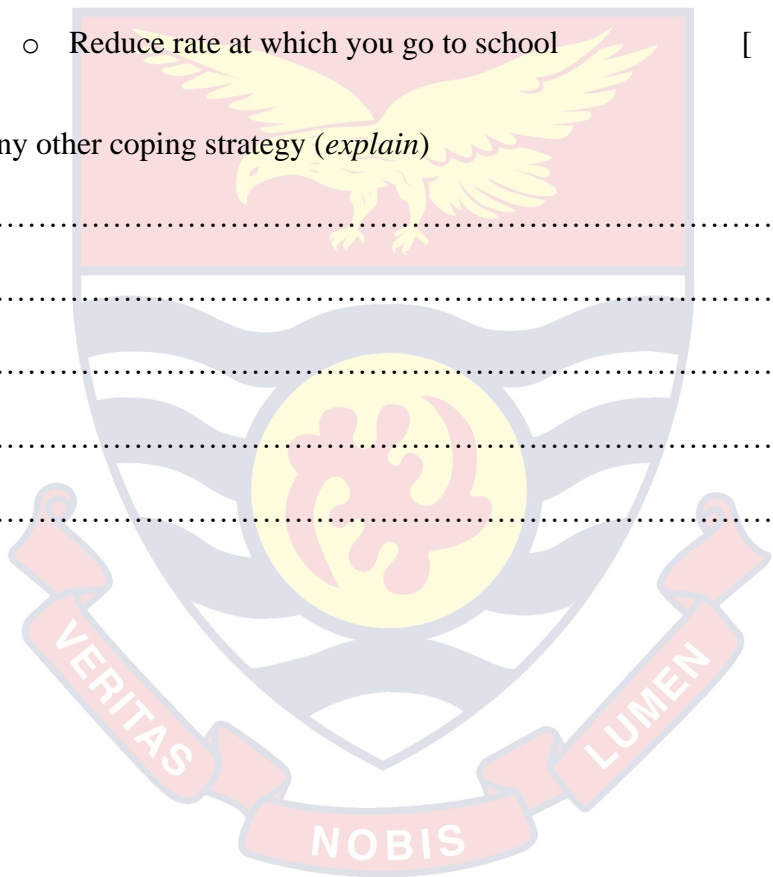
CHALLENGES	1	2	3	4	5
EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES					
Teenage Pregnancy					
Lack of financial support due to (poverty)					
Physiological changes such as menstruation					
Distance to school					
Financial resources of parents being invested in other sectors such as farming and trading.					
Overburdening girls with household chores					
Girls being used for economic activities such as hawking and farming.					
SCHOOL SETTING CHALLENGES					
Lack of self-esteem in school					
Poor Sanitary Facilities in schools					
Lack of Girls' Safety in schools					
Sexual Harassment by counterparts and male teachers					

SECTION C: COPING STRATEGIES

Which of the following actions do you engage in when you are faced with these challenges in your education?

- Seek Guidance and Counselling []
- Report to necessary authorities in school []
- I talk to my parents or guardian []
- I keep it to myself []
- Reduce rate at which you go to school []

Any other coping strategy (*explain*)



.....

.....

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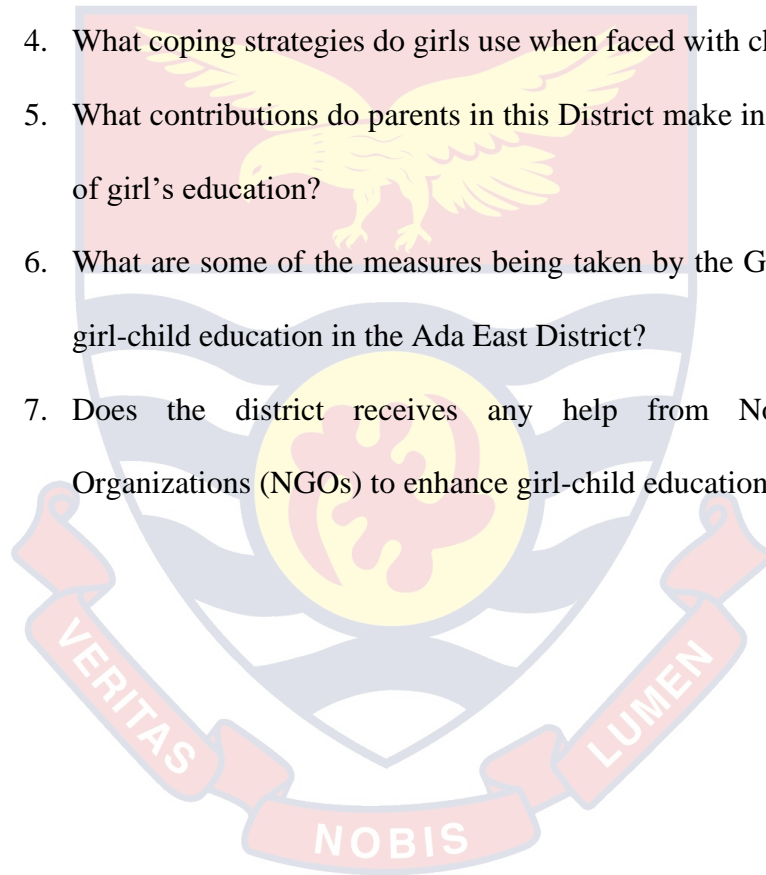
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APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DISTRICT OFFICER

1. What is your position at the District office?
2. In your opinion, what is the current state of female education in this District?
3. In your opinion, what are some of the challenges facing girl-child education in this District?
4. What coping strategies do girls use when faced with challenges?
5. What contributions do parents in this District make in the development of girl's education?
6. What are some of the measures being taken by the Government to aid girl-child education in the Ada East District?
7. Does the district receives any help from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to enhance girl-child education in the district?



APPENDIX C

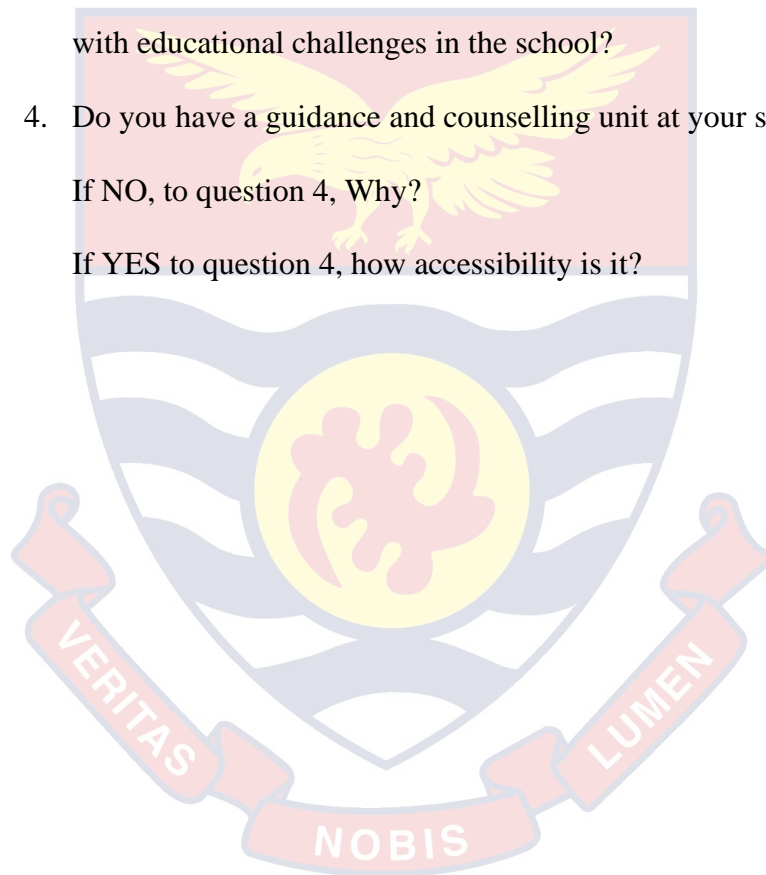
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

1. What are some of the challenges you face as a teacher in female education?
2. In your opinion, what are some of the reasons girls' drop-out of school?
3. What coping strategies do you think are available to aide girls cope with educational challenges in the school?

4. Do you have a guidance and counselling unit at your school?

If NO, to question 4, Why?

If YES to question 4, how accessibility is it?



APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. What challenges do you face in educating your girl-child?
2. What are the reasons that will make you avoid the education of your girl-child?
3. Would you prefer educating your male child rather than your girl-child?

If YES, why?



APPENDIX E

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

