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Perceptions of Young People on Young Parenthood from the Ghanaian Community in The Hague, the Netherlands.

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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List of Acronyms

CSE : Comprehensive Sexuality Education

HIV : Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ISS : International institutes of Social Studies

UK : United Kingdom

UN : United Nation

UNFP : United Nations Population Fund

UNFPA : United Nations Populations Fund

LMIC : Lower and Middle Income Countries

WHO : World Health Organization

UNICEF : United Nations Children's Fund

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Abstract

Young parenthood is seen as a global phenomenon. Many countries are faced with the challenge of teenage pregnancy hence becoming young parents. However, this is not the same for many countries in Europe such as Denmark, Switzerland and the Netherlands. These countries have achieved remarkable success in relation to teenage pregnancy. Although the Netherlands has lower rates of teenage pregnancy, teenage pregnancy is high among young people of ethnic minority background. This was intriguing because there is a huge gap between young people from native Dutch background and young people from ethnic minority background. Having in mind the effectiveness of comprehensive sexuality education in the Netherlands and how informed young people are about their sexuality I was curious to find out perceptions of young people from Ghanaian community on teenage pregnancy and young parenthood.

This study used qualitative methodological approach to gather data. Face to face interviews were used to gather rich, informed and deep information from the participants. The findings revealed that young people from the Ghanaian community did not see their position as young parents as problematic but are exercising their agency as a result of the education they have about their sexuality. This according to them has empowered them to make informed decisions about their future. For those young people who were not young parent they also perceived that they have made such decisions as a result of the education on CSE and the various experiences about young parenthood from their family and neighbourhood which has shaped their life choices.

Relevance to Development Studies

Young people are regarded as asset to the future of every nation. This can only happen when the needs of young people are paid attention to including their sexual needs. Sexuality is an important aspect of every human's life regardless of culture, race, ethnicity or gender to avoid health, economic and social injustice. Countries that has diverse people need to provide information on sexuality that includes their needs on sexuality as well. Such information empowers young people to make informed decisions about their sexuality.

This research brings to light the importance of taking into consideration the needs of young people including their sexual needs to enable them make informed decisions about their future hence being productive to their societies and countries which will foster development. This study also aims to bring to attention authorities on how important decisions of young people must be considered.

Keywords

Young people, Sexuality, comprehensive Sexual Education, Young Parenthood.

Chapter 1 : Introduction

1.0 Overview of the Research Problem

The introductory section of this paper looks at exploring perceptions of how young Ghanaians between the ages of 17 and 24 years living in The Hague become parents at a very young age. This issue got my attention as a result of several encounters I have had with a number of Ghanaians during my first three to six months stay in the Netherlands. It is evident that many young people start their family at a very young age when they are still in school acquiring their diplomas or right after secondary school. The paper will begin with a story of how I got to know about young parenthood in The Hague, Netherland among the Ghanaian community. Notwithstanding the successes the Netherland has achieved in dealing with teenage pregnancy making the country one of the few countries in the world that has the lowest rate of teenage pregnancy alongside Denmark and Switzerland there is still incidence of increasing numbers of young people with ethnic minority backgrounds becoming pregnant. Research shows that in 2015, the rate of teenage pregnancy dropped from 3.7 to 3.2 per 1000 births (Dutch News. nl 2016). This has been made possible as a result of the so called double Dutch approach where double protection such as the condom and pills are used together to prevent both pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases which is used in educating the youth on comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), positive attitude towards contraception use and their open mindedness towards sexual education has been major reasons for preventing pregnancy among young people in the Netherlands. CSE is a right-based and gender focused approach to sexuality education whether in school or out of school. This approach uses scientifically proven information about human development, anatomy and reproductive health as well as information about contraception, childbirth and sexually transmitted infections including HIV (UNFPA n.d).

Based on such information that is made available to young people, and with my assumption that lack of information on ones sexuality could be one plausible explanation as to why some young people cannot make informed decisions about their sexuality, I was curious to find out perceptions from young people from the Ghanaian community in the Hague on young parenthood . This may confirm or deny my assumption of how important CSE is or not for the young people of ethnic minority backgrounds in the Netherlands. And understand how it contribute to the gap between people with ethnic minority background and the native Dutch as literature posit (Dutch News .nl 2016, Enk Van 2009). The next session will look at the focus of the study, the contextual background and the justification of the study. This will be followed by research objectives and questions and the structure of the paper.

1.1 Introducing the Research Problem

After spending a few weeks as a fresh graduate student at the International institute of Social Studies, in The Hague which is the Dutch administrative capital, I struggled to find

myself a place of worship preferably my mother church. Lo and behold, I found one which was not too far from my place of residence. It was a great relieve since I saw it as an alternative place to make friends, engage with people from my country and most importantly to practice my faith. Going to church on Sundays had become a normal routine for me which I looked forward to every Sunday. After a couple of weeks I had made acquaintances turning into friends. These friends were middle aged women whom we had conversations with often after church. This had almost become a routine. However, I noticed a couple of times that anytime a particular name came up during our conversations, the conversation ended abruptly or the subject was changed almost immediately. This was not a bother for me since I had no idea what it was about.

On one fateful cold Sunday morning, I had gone to church as usual. There was a youth program that brought almost all the youth in the church together. I had the opportunity to meet most of them because we were introduced as students studying in The Hague. After church there was the opportunity to have conversation with some of them. Upon our interactions, I noticed a pregnant girl in their mist. I was curious to find out more about her, because it was a bit unusual for me since I presumed teenage pregnancy was not a common phenomenon in some parts of Europe and particularly in Netherlands. To satisfy my curiosity, I enquired about her from my middle-aged friends. Initially, they ignored it until I asked them a couple of times before they were willing to open up. I got to know her as Alicia (not real name) an 18 year old pregnant school girl. Alicia became pregnant while in school and therefore has been absenting herself from church which has been the topic for discussion among some members. Surprised as I was, I could not come to terms with the fact that someone of her age would opt to be pregnant while in school in the Netherlands. Reason being the presumed assumption that there is enough information about one's sexuality and information is readily available hence young people have the knowledge on how to prevent themselves from getting pregnant.

Apparently, Alicia, like many other African teenagers in the Netherlands specifically Ghanaians have similar experiences of becoming young parents. According to Dutch news .nl (2016) about 80 percent of teenage mothers were between the ages of 18 and 19 years in 2016 and these mothers belonged to the ethnic minority background which includes Africans, Turkish, Suriname and Antilleans. These groups of people have higher rates of teen pregnancies among them when compared with young native Dutch. Their perceptions for opting for such choices is what this research is all about not forgetting the fact that the Netherlands is one of the countries in the world with the lowest rate of teenage pregnancy as previously mentioned Although studies have been done on teenage pregnancy (Van Enk 2000), not much attention has been paid to the perception influencing these young people to opt for such choices since there may be too young to start a family coupled with the challenges that come with parenthood.

1.2 Review of literature

For many studies done at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University (ISS), attention has been on teen girls becoming pregnant and not young people. The focus has been on girls while in reality becoming pregnant is an act that involves boys and girls. For example, Otuo-Acheampong (2009), looked at views from Ghanaian teenagers on the problem

of teenage pregnancy in the Netherlands particularly in Amsterdam. The study concluded that, teenagers are sexually active and need to be educated on their sexuality. However, their society portray them as being able to handle issues related to their sexuality and its consequences. This has led to many teens becoming challenged with this phenomenon and dropping out of school to face the reality of their circumstances. The study also revealed how a lot of teenagers do not have much knowledge on services on sexuality provided by the various facilities in their community, local and social welfare authorities. Again these facilities are not well equipped hence not serving it purpose to the intended clients.

Mulongo (2006), on the other hand, focused on young single motherhood: contested notions of motherhood and sexuality in policy discourses/program interventions. The study started with the assumption that policies and programs designed for young single mothers must be reshaped in order to serve it intended target group. However, the study did not come out with concrete solutions on the assumptions but elaborated on specific areas that policy makers had to pay attention to such as framing the needs of young single mother, broadening the scope of the needs of young single mother, rethinking motherhoods that being a single mother will not be regarded as being promiscuous and in effect not paying attention to their material conditions and broader structure of gender regimes that subordinate women and girls in Kenya and other part of the world. Thus, a proposed alternative to policy makers to understand and relook at policies that would help benefit it intended vulnerable group as these were the perceptions of the participants.

For Yalemzewud (2010), the focus was on adolescent pregnancy/motherhood from the mothers own perspectives, exploring the attitudes towards the issues that they describe as important to their lives. This research concluded that most of the participants in Ethiopia (teens) were poor who had migrated from other regions in search of jobs and or to further their education which are not available from their home town. Again, before these teens became pregnant most of them worked as house girls with most of them experiencing abuse either form their employers and or their relatives. Furthermore, for these girls, their pregnancies were not planned and unexpected. The significant contributing factors associated with these pregnant girls were rape, poor family relationship, living with foster parents, limited knowledge on contraceptive use and poverty.

According to Van Enk et al (2009), the focus was on pregnancy among young people and ethnicity in the Netherlands: frequency of obstetric outcomes reveals how pregnancy is not common among native Dutch teenagers as compared to other young people belonging to ethnic minority backgrounds. The result from the study shows 13.8% of all pregnant teenagers with obstetric outcomes are native Dutch as compared to 55.2% of pregnant young people who are of ethnic minority background. This comprises of Islamic-Mediterranean and Blacks who were between the ages of 20-24 years old.

Moreover, research in Australia among African migrant women's experiences of pregnancy and early motherhood, with particular support in their experiences of social support suggest that young motherhood brings both joy and regrets. The study further mentions that being a mother brought them closer to their families especially their mothers and siblings. Being a young mother meant having a child that loves you and you loving them back (Chi Watts 2015).

1.3 Teenage pregnancy As a Social Issue

Teenage pregnancy is a common social issue that many societies can be identified with. According to World Health Organization (WHO n. d), it is estimated that about 16 million girls between the ages of 15-19 years become pregnant every year (WHO n. d). Pregnancy and childbirth complications are the second cause of death among 15 to 19 year olds globally. Recent report from WHO indicate that over 3000 adolescents lose their lives daily bringing it to a total of 1.2 million death yearly. These deaths are as a result of preventable causes (WHO n. d). Moreover, pregnancy comes with many challenges such as health, economic, social and cultural for both the young and old. However, the situation seems to worse for young people since their organs may not be fully developed for the pregnancy (Krugu 2017). Additionally, statistics shows that teenage mothers are more likely to get a low paid job, drop out of school, have poor housing, and live on welfare among others. These characteristics associated with teenage pregnancy is quite terrifying hence why one would want to become a young parent. Many studies have been conducted on complication associated with early pregnancy and it consequences on both the mother and the baby (Krugu, 2017). Health complications that teenage mother suffer include stress that can lead to mental health conditions, maternal mortality, premature births, still birth, obstetric fistula among others (UNICEF n.d, WHO, n. d). There is no doubt that many young adults encounter various degrees of health, economic, social and cultural challenges when pregnant and during their post pregnancy period. This notwithstanding, young people who are faced with early parenthood may find it difficult adjusting their role as young people and parents as well. Being in such position as a young parent may be contextual and influenced by culture that the teen parent associate themselves with (Chi Watt et al 2015). Accordingly, in many societies in sub Saharan Africa, specifically Ghana, becoming a parent at a young age brings shame to one's family and the society at large. This is coupled with financial and social cost associated with taking care of the mother and the baby. Mostly young people who become parent may not have jobs and often drop out of school hence representing a great burden to their family (Krugu 2017).

My interest to undertake this research was influenced by the lack of focus on young parenthood in academia and particularly in the Netherlands and teenagers of Ghanaian origin. The interesting bit of the study is how people of ethnic minorities are mostly affected by this phenomena as compared to native Dutch. It is interesting because the sexual reproductive health and rights facilities are opened to all young people in the Netherlands and information from such centers are offered for free and is readily available. Although, some studies have argued that not all teenage pregnancies are unplanned and has negative consequences. There are some pregnancies that comes with positive consequences Additionally, having a baby come with strong emotional attachment from family and friends to the pregnant girl Others believe that pregnancy brings respect to the woman and accords her the necessary privileges associated with motherhood most especially in an African society (Krugu, 2017, Chi Watt et al 2015).. This research will focus on perceptions of young Ghanaians The Hague on young parenthood since other alternatives that may afford them better opportunities in life.

Armed with this literature, I was operating on a major assumption that there is enough information made available to young people in the Netherlands and therefore being pregnant

at a young age should not be an option for young people in the Netherlands as compared to other countries where most teen pregnancies occur as a result of lack of education on their rights to a healthy, pleasurable sex life and sexuality. My central research interest is to explore the perceptions that young Ghanaians themselves express in relation to opting or not to become parent. This is for me puzzling since my starting hypothesis was that they have more alternatives and opportunities to make a life better in the Netherlands than back in Ghana.

1.4 Contextual Background

"Parenthood in contemporary culture is a tricky, contradictory concept. It is alternately glorified, condemned, avoided, pursued, presumed, and commodified. And, of course, within the tricky term "parenthood" there is both motherhood, and fatherhood, which we know are very different" (Sisson 2011). Adolescent pregnancy has long been a societal concern. Globally, adolescent pregnancy is found in all societies. However, the phenomena differ from country to country. In the United States is estimated that 29.4 births were recorded for every 1000 adolescent female in 2012. Presently, the rate of teen pregnancy seem to be the lowest for over seven decades now yet it is still highest as compared to other Canada and the United Kingdom which are also industrialized countries (Peterson et al 2013). Similarly, in Australia, teenage birth rates fell from 22.1 live births per thousand women in 1992 to just over 15.5 births per 1000 women in 2010 (Chi Watt 2015).

However, the situations is different from the Netherlands, where it will be the focus of the study. The Netherlands has one of the lowest birth rates among teenagers in the world. With 3.7 teenage pregnancies in 2014 among every 1000 girls till the age of twenty, only Denmark and Switzerland have lower rates (Trouw 2016, Brugman 2010). Current research from Rutgers an organization that focuses on sexual reproductive health and rights shows that the average age of having first sex among young people in the Netherlands has increased from 17.1 years in 2012 to18.6 years in 2017 for people under 25 years. This again shows there is a more positive decisions made towards young people's sexuality than before (Rutgers 2017). Additionally, the research reveals that about 70 percent of young people under 25 years use condoms during their first sexual intercourse however, there is a short decline in the use of condom after the first intercourse. Many countries around the world have put in various measures to curb teenage pregnancy hence young parenthood among its youth as teen pregnancy comes with social, economic and health issues for both individuals, society and countries as a whole. It may be noted that there has been some improvement made regarding this issue but there still needs more effort to be directed towards it. Countries like the United States of America, United Kingdom, and New Zealand among other are overwhelmed with rate of teen pregnancies (Brugman 2010). Comparatively Netherlands has an enviable position in the world when it comes to issue of teen pregnancy (Dutch news .nl 2016).

Despite these enviable successes made on sexuality, there is still a worrying trend of teenage pregnancy being high among young people of the ethnic minority group Krebbekx (2017). Teen pregnancy is still high among Antillean, Surinamese and the black community in general (Krebbekx 2017, Van Enk et al 2009). Generically, statistics shows that there is a huge gap between native teenage Dutch and other teenagers regarding young people becoming pregnant.

The findings of the article "Births and abortions among Amsterdam teenagers according to ethnicity: 1996 - 1998" by Stuart Van der Wal (2000) established that in Amsterdam unwanted pregnancies were most frequent in Surinamese, Antillean and Ghanaian teenage girls. Girls from these countries and aged 14-16 years and 17-19 years were found to have a higher abortion rate compared with Dutch girls of the same age. As such this research seeks to explore perceived notions behind the high rate of pregnancy hence young parenthood among young people with ethnic minority background particularly Ghanaians as compared to young native Dutch.

1.5 Justification of the study

In this this section I will explain why I feel the research is worth conducting. There has been various reasons to undertake this research however, the most pressing ones are my personal motivation and to contribute to academia.

My motivation to undertaking this research was out of curiosity. For many young people who find themselves being young parents in sub-Saharan African, it is believed to be a number of socio economic factors such as poverty, lack of information on their sexuality, inadequate knowledge on CSE, peer influence, failure of state institutions to address sexual needs of young people among others(Krugu 2017, Bell 2012,Yalemzewud 2010) . These factors have been the most common I have encountered as a youth advocate on sexual health and rights over the past years. For instances, studies have found out that there are many young people in both rural and urban Ghana that cannot negotiate safer sex with their partners hence becoming pregnant as a result (Awusabo-Asare et al 2004). Others are as a result of the fact that issues of sexuality is considered as a taboo not talked about in their various homes hence not having information about their sexuality. There is a rather worrying cases of young people not having readily access to information on varios contraception and it use. Many young people have little or no idea about their sexuality and how to handle the issues of sex and the use of the right contraceptives. The lack of knowledge on issues of this nature has escalated to challenges for young people which could have been prevented (Krugu 2017, Kirby 2002).

These factors are however different from many advanced countries who have had remarkable successes on dealing with teenage pregnancy. Countries such as Denmark, France and the Netherlands have chalked incredible successes on teenage pregnancy. According to Rutgers (2017) the average age of a child's first sexual intercourse in the Netherlands has increased from 17.1 years in 2012 to 18.6 years in 2017. Additionally, the Netherlands has comprehensive policy on educating its youths on their sexuality through it schooling system. This policy has a youth friendly way of explaining the sexual relationships to the youth and making them understand the importance of love in a relationship (Trouw 2016). This approach of making such information friendly to the youths has resulted in youth making informed decisions about their sexuality. This however cannot be said for all young people as literature shows there is a gap. As it is common to find youths of ethnic minority becoming pregnant as compared to youth with the native Dutch background. This trend is quite alarming hence my interest for this research and focusing on the Ghanaian youth.

For the many literature available, the success of the Netherlands' achievement on their low rate in teenage pregnancy and the informed decisions made by young people on their sexuality are as a result of the effectiveness of the double Dutch approach. The double Dutch approach is the use of both contraceptive pills and condoms at the same time to prevent both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections among sexually active people. Since the Netherlands has a good number of other ethnicities with a total population of 17 million which consist of 78.6 percent Dutch and 22.4 percent of people from other ethnic minority background mostly from all over the world. Studies have concentrated on the difference among teen pregnancy among the other ethnic groups. Based on this, it is interesting to find out why there is a significant gap in teen pregnancy among migrants youth compared to native Dutch. Moreover, being a development studies student with social justice being my focus I would like to know how race or ethnicity can have impact on ones perceptions about sexuality and choices made about ones sexuality.

I draw my further inspiration from academia. Many scholars have worked on teenage pregnancy and young parenthood with the girl being the main focus. Although other studies have involved the male counterparts the few who have worked on both partners gives me a source of inspiration. Teenage pregnancy is generally considered as a social issue worldwide, although other studies have pointed out that not all young parents consider their status of becoming a young parent as a problem. There has been a popular notion on the conservative perspectives that are tagged with teen pregnancy and young parenthood. Hence my interest to explore perception about such phenomena among Ghanaian youth in the city of The Hague.

1.6 Objectives of the Research study

The purpose of the research is to explore how culture, race, and ethnicity impact on the perceptions young Ghanaian community in The Hague, Netherlands.

1.7 Main Research Question.

What factors intersect to define young people from the Ghanaian community in The Hague's perception about sexuality and young parenthood?

1.8 Research sub questions

1. How do young Ghanaians perceive and explain the relevance of family and culture in relation to their decisions regarding pregnancy and sexuality?
2. How does young Ghanaians perceive and explain the role that their relationships with partners and parents in relation to their decisions over pregnancy?
3. How does Ghanaian young parents perceive and explain their socio-economic status in relation to their decisions over pregnancy and sexuality?

1.9 Structure of the paper

The research paper consist of six chapters. Chapter one start with a story of a pregnant teen whom I came into contact with, hence my motivation for the study. It continues to look at other relevant review of literature on the issues which brings out the gaps that other studies has not concentrated on. This then follows with the justification of the research paper, research objectives as well as research questions. Chapter two will focus on the methodological journey of the research, and provide information on how primary data was gathered through interviews and characteristics of the interviewees. Accordingly, it will also look the process used in gathering the data, challenges and limitations, reflection from the field, positionality of the researcher, and ethical considerations. The next chapter will focus theoretical framework which is intersectionality, gender and agency and concepts that underpins the study. These include ethnic minorities, young people and teen parenthood. These concepts will contribute to the examination of young Ghanaians perceptions which is the focus of these research. Chapter four will present the findings gathered from the field with verbatim articulations to support it. Chapter five will present analysis with the help of literature to explain the findings. The final chapter will draw conclusions from the data gathered, present main arguments and suggest areas to further research at and recommendation for authorities in charge.

Chapter 2 : Research Methodology

2.0 Introduction the research process

In this study, intersectionality, gender and agency theories will be employed to analyse the various characteristic associated with the perceptions of young people from the Ghanaian community in The Hague, Netherlands on young parenthood. It employed concepts such as sexuality, ethnic minority groups and teen parenthood. These concepts were the best fit for the topic under study. This chapter again focuses on my research journey. It particularly looks at research design and the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach, methods of data collection, techniques and the research   process of acquiring data. As well as limitations and challenges throughout the period. It will also looks at the reflexivity of the research process that is position of the researcher in the research process and ethical consideration. The study was conducted in The Hague, Netherland from the 24th august to 19th September, 2017.

2.1 Research Design and Rationale

The study employed a qualitative research method to gather data. Qualitative research is an approach that examines lived experiences of people in specifics. This approach uses various research methods which includes in-depth interviews, observations, life histories, content analysis, focus group discussions and visual methods (Hennink 2011). This method was required because the approach enables people to voice out issues concerning them, explain people's view and behavior, observe people in their natural setting, address why and how questions of a phenomena, has the ability to study sensitive topics in society, such as teenage pregnancy hence young parenthood, does not make generalization of a given population as compared to quantitative research that deals with large numbers and make generalization of a phenomena. The use of qualitative method is required in this study because it helps explore people's life and social experiences that are sensitive and complex (King and Horrocks 2010: 43). As a result this approach was suitable for this research.

2.2 Sampling Strategy and Participants

Both purposive and snowballing sampling were employed to select study participants. Snowball is a method that is useful in reaching hard to find populations because participants are accessed by means of referral by other people who know the characteristics that are relevant for the research (Bryman 2015: 415). Purposive sampling method was also use as it focuses on specific target group that qualifies for the research. The choice of these two-sampling strategies were appropriate because the study had two category of participants. The first group of participants were those that are between the ages of 17-24 years but have never been pregnant or are parent. The second group were young people within the same age category but are pregnant or have had a baby when they were teenagers. In all twenty-two participants were involved in the

data collection. These included six females, eight males and eight young parents (Four couples). Hence the purposive sampling was used for the former and snowballing was employed to get the latter participants.

Reaching my participants was not too difficult. As I used both formal and informal networks in reaching my participants. I had made contacts with two major Ghanaian associations that I could have easy access to in reaching my participants. This made it quite easy for me. As I already mentioned in the introduction chapter about how I became interested in the topic. Most of respondents were people I had contact with every Sunday at church even though I had not acquainted with them that much. However, prior to the period of data collection, I approached one of them Informant A at church and told her of my intentions and the purpose of my research. I must say I was a bit nervous because I was sceptical about her response. To my surprise she was extremely excited about it. She later told me she will be starting her project next year and was excited to be on board because it will afford her the opportunity to have a first-hand experience of how conducting research is all about. Additionally she was glad to be a participant since it her first experience. I must say she was very helpful as she sent the message on their various WhatsApp platforms informing people who were eligible and will be willing to participate in the research.

For the second category of participants, I did not find them in groups. There, I used the snowballing sampling method. Since I already knew one person informant K she directed me to other people who qualified and were willing to be part. As I had already made my interviews known to quite a few people at the church, they were also quite helpful as some of the parents of these young people introduced me to participants and then asked for their willingness to participate.

2.3 Data collection techniques

The principal technique used in the primary data collection was semi-structured interview guide. Participant observation supported the main technique. The choice of these techniques was informed by the sensitivity of the topic especially for the young people and young parents. Informal, one-to-one, semi-structured interviews enhanced privacy and a flexibility of modifying particulars and order of theme of the interview topic (Bernard and Ryan 2009: 29), as a result some responses enabled me to probe further to ask more questions that I had not planned for before the interview. This enabled me to get more information on the question under study. Besides, they allowed for a relaxed environment that made participants be at ease to share information (King and Horrocks 2010: 44).

Prior to the interview process, I had in mind there was not going to be any language barrier although both my supervisor and second reader had drawn my attention to it since I could not speak Dutch. However, I had assured them that most of the Ghanaians speak both English and their local language which is Twi. As a result, I conducted a pilot study before my actual field work period to ensure that all foreseeable challenges were addressed before the main data collection process. Moreover, conducting a pilot study guided me in reshaping my interview guide (Hennink 2011). I took note during the recording process. This was done through observations I made especially during the interviews that were conducted in their various homes.

Participants' observation confirmed a lot of the information that I was given during the interview process. For instance their body language such as eye contact, non-verbal forms of communication correlated with the conversation which gave me the assurance that the information given me was genuine (Hennink 2011, Cargan 2007: 148). Again, considering the various places that the research was conducted such as their homes, my home, church, on phone (FaceTime), the municipality library that had a serene atmosphere and a comfortable spot was a proof that they had trusted me. The duration of each the interview lasted on the average, between 45 minutes and 120 minutes, although I had anticipated that it was going to last for about 30 minutes. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. This means forming the oral information to a written form (Kvale et al 2008). I coded the transcription manually according to similar responses until I reached saturation. The codes were then grouped under major and unique themes.

2.4 Research Limitation

I admit the limitation of the methodology used as it focused one a particular group. This is because it did not consider perceptions from parents, community members or groups of young people's view point in the form of focus group discussion or survey. This is because the aim of the research was to understand the perspectives of these young people themselves and their various experiences. As such it enabled the researcher to have detailed, rich and deep conversations with the participants. For logistical limitations, although I had already made contacts with most of my participants, finding a suitable time for the interview was a major challenge. This was because some were working extra hours, others had night shifts which meant they had to sleep during the day and prepare for work, others had gone on holidays which I had to wait until they were back and others were working throughout the week. As a result we had to postpone a couple of appointments made, and reschedule it for a suitable date which delayed which the field work process.

2.5 Reflection of the Research

2.5.1 Reflexivity

Researcher's participation in the process of the research work and how the researcher is able to influence the research process is regarded as being reflexive (Nightingale and Cromby 1999: 228). Reflexivity according to (England 1994) is "self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher". Undoubtedly, reflexivity is important in conducting field work; "it encourages self-discovery and can lead to insights and new hypotheses about the research questions". Similarly, it is maintained that research is shaped by who a researcher is, taking in account their assumptions, subjectivity, social background and behavior have an impact on the research process. When a researcher becomes reflexive, it will help shape the process and the people they come into contact with (Bourke 2014: 7). Being reflexive according to Berg (2007; 178 in Hennink 2011), affords the researcher to realize that she or he is part of the social world that the research is being undertaken. Being reflexive for this study meant that I try to understand participants in relation to their family setting. Having in my assumption that the decisions of these young people are as a result of

lack of information about their sexuality and the Netherlands as a developed country having better opportunities for young people which include education among other thank a country like Ghana where opportunities are not readily available. I had an open mind in relation to the day to day experiences. I deemed it right to explain my status as a student and my research purpose explicitly to them for better understanding.

2.5.2 Position of the Researcher

As a researcher, it is important to explain my role in the research because this enhances credibility of the research process, especially when employing a qualitative approach (Unluer 2012: 1). A researcher can take multiple roles in the research (Unluer 2012: 1). The role a researcher assumes can have an influence on the information gathered, how it is communicated and the final report in relation to their participants (Greene 2014: 1).

For this study, my position as a researcher was informed by my nationality as a Ghanaian. Being a Ghanaian and having come into contact with most of participants during my stay here had guaranteed my role as an insider. This according to (Greene 2014: 1), means that the researcher has considerable amount of information about the society that the research will be conducted. This was a great opportunity for me because I had a fair idea of the people involved, their schedule, and language and how I could easily get access to them. This also made me to pre-condition my mind that it was not going to be easy getting access to them as most of them were working and schooling at the same time hence I was not overwhelmed when they told me about their schedules when the data collection process begun.

Again, although I was older than them, their attitude portrayed them as competent social actors hence acting as such. The age difference was not a restriction as we shared more things in common than I thought. These included music, food, and fancy material stuff and with some of them, we had similar university experiences. I had already made contacts with most of them before the data collection period hence having a cordial relationship with them. This created an interpersonal reflexivity as I had such experience. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006 in Hennink 2011, establishing a good rapport between the researcher and the participants goes a long way to create deeper knowledge on the subject. Therefore, our first meeting was more of a friendly meeting than that of an interviewer and an interviewee type of relationship. This cordial relationship we had, created a free flow of conversation between us hence generating rich and detailed information from them.

Similarly, my position as a Maters' student abroad gave participants a certain perception about me. Perhaps they thought my research findings can make a difference when it get to the appropriate authorities. I noticed throughout our conversations that, they had the impression that I could do something about it. Most of my participants opened up to me because they have not had the opportunity as young people to really have a formal conversation about such an issue although they spoke about it once in a while among themselves. This was as a result of my participants sharing with me their various experiences from childhood and young adult and how those experiences have shaped their lives.

Besides having the advantages of an insider that came along with many advantages as seen above, I encountered a few challenges from the parents. Some of the parents were nervous

about the information that their children would give me. This I assumed they felt it will give out their parenting flaws since they know how it is for a child when one has a baby out of wedlock back home. This was because of my position as a "visitor" in the Netherlands and they suspect that they could be judged. Awareness of social setting has to do with the environment under which the research is being conducted. Green and Thorogood (2004 cited in Hennink 2011), explained that researchers need to take into consideration social and political contexts that can control the research. For instance, one of my participants (young mother) whom I interviewed at home where she stayed with the mother, I observed that at the initial stages of the interview the mother was frequently coming to where we were conducting the interview. Upon my observation I realized she wanted to listen in on our conversation and probably find out the detailed information I may ask from her daughter. Based on my observation, I taught it wise to speak a little more loudly to her hearing. As a result she did not come to our end again until the conversation ended.

Furthermore, based on my initial assumption that, lack of information on comprehensive sexual education and coming from a background where most people found pregnant was as a result of lack of education on their sexuality, I presumed that perhaps these are reasons for these young people becoming young parents. I therefore had to be conscious of the fact there could be other reasons and perceptions informing them hence not being biased in the questions I asked since I had the power as a researcher to focus on that. Therefore being reflexive on the personal level according to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006 cited in Hennink 2011) made me reflect on my personal experiences, background and assumptions that could influence the research process. Therefore, I made a conscious effort to allow my participants explain to me their perception and experiences rather than focusing on my assumptions.

2.6 Ethical Consideration

Ethics as pertains social research "refers to the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process" (Miller et al. 2012: 14). Research ethics are important because they contribute towards achieving goals of a research; by promoting values that are important for support between researchers and participants (Renik 2011). In this research, the following ethical stands were observed.

Most of my participants were staying with their parents and as such the probability of bringing the interview up in a conversation at home was likely. There were other participants that I could not reach easily and so I had to seek permission from their parents to be able to get access to them. This therefore, helped me to make my intentions well known to both parents and participants. I was able to explain my research explicitly to them to avoid any contradictions since they were two different sets of people. This was important because it made it easy for me to have their permission. Having participants' informed consent enabled most of my participants to participate voluntarily (Hennink et al 2011). This voluntary participation gave me the opportunity to conduct some of the interviews in their homes and mine as well. This was as a result of the trust relationship we had developed.

Participants were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The research focus was sensitive and therefore not everyone will be willing to reveal such information. Therefore, assuring participants about their anonymity and confidentiality was key. Coupled with the fact that I was an insider. I had to make it very clear that the information was strictly for academic purposes and their names were not needed and would not be tagged with any statement made. Since the interviews were taped I had to make sure that it was not going to be played anywhere. I also made it clear to my participants that the purpose of the research was for my degree and information from participants was going to be shared between my supervisors and myself (Hennink 2011, Kvale et al 2008).

I tried to minimize harm during the research process. I considered both psychological and emotional harm as important to be paid attention to since the topic was sensitive. Minimizing harm according to Hennink 2011, refers to harm beside physical harm. This included mental, social and or economic harm. These kinds of harm were likely to be evident in the type of participants I engaged with and therefore my choice of words were carefully made during the research process. For instance, to prevent economic harm I made sure, interviews were schedules at a date and time that none of my participants were engaged in their work or other activities. Hence most of the interviews were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere and in a suitable location for my participants.

Chapter 3 : Theorizing Young People from Ghanaian Communities

This chapter will present concepts which mobilizes the notion of intersectionality, gender and agency and the core concepts used in this study. In addition to these three concepts, this chapter presents working definitions on sexuality, ethnic minority, and teen parenthood. This will further help understand these concepts and how important these are to the research question.

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3.1 Conceptualizing Agency

Agency has been described in the form of purposiveness, willingness, intentionality, choice, initiative, freedom and creativity. Initiating intentional actions to help achieve goals that are valued is called agency (Alderson and Yoshida 2016:76). That implies that the ability to choose means empowerment and as such through agency choices are made (Kabeer 2001). For many young people there are little or no options for them to choose from in relation to their sexuality. Lack of information I would say has indirectly disempowered them making them make decision that they regret later in life (Bell 2012). For them, deciding about their sexual agency is either something they have no idea about or have very little information about. As explained by Teitelman 2004, sexual agency is solely ones decision to make choices about one's body or emotions that will positively enhance sexual practices.

According to Kabeer (2001), agency comes with two meanings which can be negative or positive in relation to power. For the positive meaning of agency in relation to power it implies how individuals' ability to express themselves about choices in relation to their own lives and aims in life regardless of how others resist thus power to. The negative meaning is in the form of power over which is the ability of an individual or group to prevent, coercion, threaten others from exercising their agency. For this study I will employ the first part which is positive agency thus power to. Young people have over the years proven themselves as people to can take decisions for themselves. This I believe is as a result of many institutions and countries paving way for young people to be heard and as such acting accordingly to their needs. Addressing the needs of young people to an extents boost their capabilities. As Sen explained in Kabeer (2001) that having resources and agency brings about capabilities of individuals. This according to him is the ability of people to live the life they want to live. Such capabilities as a result of resources available and positive agency has manifested in how some young people are able to make choices about their sexuality for themselves. For instances Melrose 2013, explains how young people in the United Kingdom (UK) engaged in prostitution as a survival strategy as a way of exercising their agency. However, prior to the late 1990s the UK government policy makers did not focus on young people's involvement in prostitution hence they assumed young people's actions were as a result of pressure from friends and their socioeconomic circumstances. Nell 2012 also reveals how young people in Uganda also exercise their agency through negotiating with their boyfriends for financial assistance when they engaged in any sexual act.

Arguably, agency in young people has attracted more attention from youth researchers, policies and practice. For an individual to be independent adult, agency is seen as important part to shaping the individual to contribute to society. As Ortiz et al 2012 explains that earnestness attached to young people's agency has resulted in the increased numbers of young people

globally which he calls "youth bulge" and has resulted in the changes in social, cultural, economic and political relations that has resulted in preventing young people to participate to contribute to their society economically or politically. On the other hand, other researchers have regarded this growing young people as "youth dividend". According to them young people are "the promise of our future and makers of your society" (Honwana & De Boeck 2005). This notwithstanding, classifying youth as at risk or dividend to society cannot over rule the fact that agency has to be an essential part of their lives to nature and advance their lives according to the social, cultural and political problem associated with societies (Aaletonen 2013). Accordingly, sociologist and anthropologist focusing on education argue on the likelihood of youth agency to be controlled by structures of gender, class, and racial inequalities in individuals.

3.2 Conceptualizing intersectionality.

Intersectionality approach was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1991. This theory recognizes the multiple intersections in young people with ethnic minority background such as culture, race, ethnicity, educational status, economic status and other life situations. Intersectionality as a way of understanding and analysing various complexities associated in the world in people and human experiences. This approach was used by black feminist to understand the reality of women of colour and black women (Crenshaw 1997). Intersectionality can be used to understand the reality of these young people and explain their experiences. Taking into consideration that they may be part of the larger Dutch society however, a part of them still belongs to the backgrounds of origin. This is because they would have to negotiate between cultures, race, economic status, ethnicity and religion. To them, such social positions are much more important in certain situations and comes with benefits unlike others that brings mixed reactions to them and their immediate society. As a result of these identities, experiences, choices and perceptions have shaped their decisions for one to become a young parent or not. Not much studies have been done on perceptions of young people in relation to parenthood and the intersectional identities that come with it. Many studies have looked at the various consequences that spring from being a young parent. This comes with many negative consequences as a result of certain groups of peoples lived experiences. However, being young cannot be seen as a homogeneous stage in life as many young people from other parts of the world many attribute positivity to young parenthood. A study conducted by Chi Watts (2015) explains how multiple intersections such as race, age, educational background, migration experience, family environment, and socioeconomic status has contributed to multiple faces of intersection in the experiences and the lives of young mothers in shaping their teen pregnancy and early motherhood.

Not many studies have used intersectionality approach to look at perception of young parenthood and young people. Using intersectionality as an analytical tool which encompasses the multiple dimensions that young people possesses including age, race, ethnicity, minority background and social status will better explain the perceptions of young people from the Ghanaian community in The Hague. For this research the above mentioned dimensions were central to the identities of these young people from the Ghanaian community. Intersectionality approaches go beyond ethnicity and age but included some social categories such as religion, neighbourhood, sexual orientation, financial status and educational attainments and other categories that influence individual life situation. Intersectionality approach argue that to be able to understand young people's experiences and social complexities you need to move beyond race and ethnicity. For young people in the Netherlands being open about their sexuality is not a new phenomenon. They are able to express themselves openly and have enough information about their sexuality.

3.3 Conceptualizing Gender

Femininity and masculinity manifest in society through socialisation as a result of social categories that society present. Typically, gendered roles assign what is to be expected of a woman and a man in society. In this research I will use Joan Scott definition of gender to help understand how it can be used in this research. Scott (1996: 167-69) looks at gender using two main elements. First, "social relations that are based on the perceived differences of the sexes" and the second is "relations of power". According to Scott, the first definition contains four other similar elements. They include cultural symbolic representation which influences gendered perception in the past that are constantly referred to. Normative concepts gives meaning to representations in society that categorises femininity and masculinity based on the differences in society. Social institutions on the other hand are normalised concepts of social relations that make society. Lastly subjective identities where gendered identities are made through "social organisations and historically specific and cultural representations". Here, gendered identities are made as a result of the previously mentioned elements (Scott 1996). Social institution concept is what will be employed in this research.

The second element of the definition of gender which is relations of power. Here, power manifest though gender. It represent how power is shared and it effect on gendered normalised situations in society.

There has been changes in the family trends and patterns as the female assumes financial role the family whereas the male role is moving towards family responsibility and care for the children. Most families however, regard the male as the one responsible for instilling discipline in the home (Olah et al 2014). Again, family roles have become dynamic and cannot be tagged with a set of defined roles any longer. This is because both work and family lives have impacts on males and females as both are involved in financial upkeep and caring of their children.

Contrary to what some studies say about both men and women being involved in the financial upkeep and caring of their children, other studies are of the view that conflict in new families are as a result of sharing of the family workload. Even in instances when the male partners are willing to be part of the childcare and housework along the line they both fall back into the traditional gendered roles unintentionally mostly after the birth of their child (Olah et al 2014). Young people have a normalized views on gendered roles that regard males as more powerful in the family than females. Such views relegate women to caring of the children and other household chores whereas men instil discipline in the home (Kabeer 2001, Bell 2012)

3.4 Conceptualizing Teen parenthood

For many global communities, teenage parenthood as a result of teenage pregnancy has been the greatest social challenge. Young parenthood comes with a lot of complications for the young parent and their society at large (Sedgh 2014, Chandra-Mouli et al 2013, Molborn 2007). Young people are seen as both people that bring hope and need to be concentrated (Honwana and De Beock 2005). Different countries have different age brackets for categorizing their youth. In this research, the word youth and young people are used interchangeably. There has not been any defined age bracket for young people globally. This is as a result of differences in cultural position among different continent (Bucholtz 2002: 526). For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, youth refers to any person between the ages of 15 to 35 years whilst in Brazil youth refers to any person between the ages of 15 to 29 years. Accordingly, the united nation refers to young people as those between the ages of 15 to 24 years (UN n.d). In the Netherlands, youths refers to children from 0-25 years of age. In 2015, there were about 5 million youth in the Netherlands with one in every four young person having ethnic minority background (Rutgers 2017). Although young people account for 11 percent of births globally, 23 percent of children born to young people may die or suffer from various degrees of diseases and disability. Again in most lower and middle income countries (LMICs) death of young people between the ages of 15 and 19 years are caused by pregnancy and it associated complications whereas stillbirth account for 50 percent of deaths during the first week and first months of birth among mothers under 20 years of age. Teenage pregnancy has been defined as a girl becoming pregnant between the ages of 13-19 years (UNICEF n.d). This is the period children are transitioning from childhood to adolescent. The period of adolescent is an important stage in young people's lives as most young people will have their first sexual encounter and subsequently marriage (Chi Watts 2015). During this stage many young people have the urge to explore their sexuality and make certain choices regarding their sexuality. For this reason attentions needs to be paid to them in order to enable them make the right choices.

Studies have revealed that teenage pregnancy and early parenthood are influenced by socio-economic background and class (Bell 2012, Smith 2014, Mcquesten et al 2013, Gueorgui-eva 2010). Pregnant adolescents have higher risks on the individual, social and community level as compared to their peers who delay. Young people who find themselves pregnant are more likely to drop out of school at the secondary level, likely to be financially unstable for the first 15 years after childbirth, experience health risk such as fistula, maternal death among others. Again, the new born baby on the other hand is not left out. Children born to young mothers are often at risk of being born as still birth, low birth weight, dying after some few months after birth among other (Krugu et. al 2017, Chi Watts 2015, Martin et al 2014, Chandra-Mouli et al 2013).These consequences may be enough to ward off young people from becoming pregnant. Young people from other parts of the world including United States and Africa may become pregnant because of their socio-economic background and or environmental factors. These factors include poverty, social isolation, and substance abuse among others. Additionally, some risk factors associated with young people from rural areas in Africa includes drugs, using of alcohol, lack of information on their sexuality, lack of communication on sexuality with parent or guardian are major factors responsible for one to become a young parent (Bell 2012, Krugu 2017, Robinson et al 1998).

These instances may be different for young people from some part of Europe who might not identify themselves with these factors as being responsible for becoming a young parent. The Netherlands has been identified as one of the most advanced countries in Europe. This is as a result of their individualism, pluralization of life courses and family patterns and welfare for system for the populace (Bois-Reymond and Kret, 2009). The Netherlands is one of the few countries in the world that does not regard teenage pregnancy as a major social or health issue. Evidence shows that since 1980s the Netherlands has one of the lowest teen pregnancy rate compared to almost all developed countries (Chandra-Mouli et al 2013, Van Enk 2009, Guiraudon et. al 2005). This is because the Dutch regards young people as sexual beings both by their community and parents, thereby accepting sexual intercourse as a possible outcome of an intimate relationship (Krebbekx 2017, Brugman 2010). Similarly, Van Enk 2009, revels how discussions about sex is talked about openly and in an interactive manner where young people are free to ask questions relating to their sexuality. This has resulted in low rate of teenage pregnancy rate in the Netherlands. Studies have been in support of such practice as it explains that good communication between children and parent about sex has an impact in reducing teenage pregnancy (Smith 2014). However, the situation is not the same with people with ethnic minority background. Although the rate of teen pregnancy is low, literature shows that it is still high among ethnic minorities. Teenage pregnancy in the Netherlands is much more common in ethnic minority groups than in the indigenous population, particularly among Islamic-Mediterranean and Blacks (Van Enk et. al 2000). The black community is the second highest in teen pregnancy in the Netherlands after the Islamic-Mediterranean (Krebbekx 2017). This is probably due to the fact that sex is seen as a taboo and is not mostly talked about in various societies including African society. Again, Wekker (2006:76) reveals how sex does not have any significant meaning to the black African descent. According to her, the image of sex to the black woman is associated with high rates of sexually transmitted infections, child born out of wedlock, broken family structure among others. Wekker further explains how both in colonial and post-colonial context black sexuality has been depicted as immoral, animal like, transmitting disease, insatiable as described in euro American discourses. These descriptions associated with black sexuality not only dehumanize sexuality but also discriminated against it.

3.5 Conceptualizing Ethnic minority

The discourse of ethnicity has been in most discussions on developmental issues for some time now. This is due to the varied diversity with human which has culture and or social norms as it root. Ethnicity, during the post-war era in Britain is often associated with minorities hence referring to ethnic groups as minorities. Minorities mostly referred to British citizens whose descendants are from Africa, the Caribbean and Asian sub-continent. Ethnicity is more of having borders for specific groups that one sticks to than identifying oneself with a group. These specific groups can be real or symbolic, visible or invisible. These groups identify themselves with things such as their territory, history, language, and dressing among others (Cohen 1998; Cohen 1994; Mason 2000a; 2000b, Wallman 1979).

There has been changes in history, social, political traditions among others over time on ethnicity and race. For instance, race and ethnicity can be contextualized and goes a long with

specific social identity such as class, gender among others associated with individuals (Knowles 2006, Guibernau and Rex (1999), argue that people who belong to the ethnic groups in Britain are mostly regarded as minority groups and who are seen as inferior unlike majority dominant groups who do not identify themselves with any ethnicity. For some school of thought who belong to the situational theorist, (Fenton 1999) they argue that ethnicity is socially constructed which means once a group of people or individuals have a common history, language, food among others, they hold on to that as something that binds them together. Again, they can be identified with whereas others who deem it as socially grounded have shared interest such as families, schools, economic and political structures that you identify yourself with. According to Guibernau et al (1999), people identify themselves as ethnic when they share physical or cultural characteristics however this can be different from how an ethic group can identify itself.

The Netherlands has increasingly become a country with significant number of ethnic minorities over the last decades. Among these ethnic minorities include their former colony Surinam, migrants with Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds (Kinscheer 2000), Africans and refugees from all over the world. Many a times, migrants from Africa are mostly clustered as one with no specific attachment to their countries of origin. The last two decades of the 20th century was the period most Ghanaians migrated to the Netherlands. Hence Ghanaian migrants being a rather new phenomena. This was a result of both push and pull factors. The push factors includes relocating from Nigeria as they got evicted, mismanagement of the Ghanaian economy and political repression, severe drought, (Mazzucato 2006, 2008; Nieswand 2009). The pull factors was as a result of the Netherlands at the time had a booming economy, "tolerance" and an open minded attitude during the 1990s era (Kloosterman and Rath 2003). The Ghanaian populace became significantly known as a migrant group as a result of an Israeli airplane accident in 1992. The accident that caused the death of many people including Ghanaians in an apartment at Amsterdam –Bijlmermeer. This incident has made Ghanaians well known in the Netherlands. It is also believed that Amsterdam –Bijlmermeer is also associated with many African Americans who were originally form Suriname as a result of it being a Dutch colony in Guyanas. Where Ghana is traced as their origin during the slave trade for the Dutch and others in the 17th and 18th centuries. Apart from that, Ghanaians have gained recognition through establishing of churches in most cities that they found themselves. Churches are a major form of associations for almost all Ghanaians in the Netherlands as it is used as a form of support and networking groups (Dietz et al 2011)

Dietz et al (2011), explains that Ghanaians are seen as hard working migrants in the Netherlands. Although most of them have had formal education they are mostly seen as domestic workers because the Ghanaian communities have the impression that it is difficult to secure jobs with their academic qualifications hence most of them working in lower level jobs in the Netherlands. As a result of not being properly integrated into the Dutch society it has manifested in their low economic status, being raciest against and discriminated (Dahhan, 1993; de Haan, 1999).

This notion is however challenged by Wekker (2006) explaining why the Dutch integration policy has been concentrating on migrants communities. To her, the Dutch policy concentration on ethnic minority rather looks at cultural emancipation instead of economic independence as

she identify such notions in two problematic ways. One, it is evident that racism is very much present in the Netherlands however, this is not talked about. Again, these policies set specific types of cultural norms for people in migrants' communities that covers the economic discrimination they face. The reality of such instances is that people with migrants backgrounds including Ghanaians end up having low paid jobs.

3.6 Conceptualizing sexuality

Sexuality education is an aspect of human life that cannot be downplayed (Aggleton 2001). Different authors have looked at sexuality differently. Truong (1990) describes four views on sexuality. Firstly, sexuality is considered as a biological desire. The combination of biology and social perspectives regard sexual behavior as basics for sexual desire that comes to play as a result of interactions sexual pleasure and certain cultural systems. The second associate sexuality with cultural meanings and symbols on biological sex and sexual practices. The third which is regarded as historical and explains how important the economic roles goes a long way to adjust itself to sexual norms. The final is as well historical but however, it goes against the notion that sexuality is not dynamic but has varied discourses. For this study the first view will be employed. I will employ the first view that draws attention to the fact that sexuality being biological means it an aspect of the human life that needs to be concentrated on. Sexuality is an aspect of human life that cannot be neglected as being part of the human development. It needs to be looked at equally as how other aspects of our lives is taken care of. However, there are many societies that does not either regard such aspect or pays very little attention to. This is as a result of the fact that such societies do not see it as important as it is seen as a personal and private issues that does not need to be talked about in the open. Nonetheless it's an issue that both young and old experience throughout every stage of their lives.

For most young people sexual desires are an intriguing part of their young life. It is a period where their sexuality is explored and experienced hence needed attention has to be focused on them. For a society as multicultural as the Netherlands, sexuality may have different meaning to different people depending on their background. Hence keen interest in providing sexuality education to young people so as to educate them on their sexuality.

Sexuality education is a process of having information, beliefs and values about identity, relationships and intimacy. It involves sexual development, reproduction, health and interpersonal relations, affections and intimacy. It looks at sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal affecting intimacy, body image and gender roles (Braeken et. al 2008). Sexuality education when ignored has the tendency that may lead to lack of knowledge on one's sexual health. . The consequence of this is high rate of unwanted pregnancy, HIV and sexually transmitted infections which will disempower them (Breaken et. al 2008). There are many types of sexual education however these two types of sexual education they are the mainstream: abstinence only and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) which is also known as abstinence plus. Comprehensive sexuality education is defined as a right–based and gender focused approach to sexuality education whether in school or out of school. CSE focuses on scientifically proven information about human development, anatomy and reproductive health, as well as information about contraception, childbirth and sexually transmitted infections including HIV (UNFPA, n.d). CSE has been proven to be an effective way of education on sexual health

among young people. Although there have been several debate on whether or not to focus on abstinence only or CSE, it has been proven that using the CSE model, where education programs explore the context and the meanings in sex which results in better health outcome. This is because it leads to having late first sexual activity, reduces risky behaviours, address gender and power issues on the other hand, abstinence only focuses on the discussions of values, character building and in some cases refusal skills (UNFPA n.d, Yetsko 2011, Collins et.al 2002).

In conclusion, this chapter looked at the theoretical framework used and concepts employed in this study. They are young people, sexuality, teen parenthood, ethnic minority and gender. It has discussed intersectionality and agency on how it can inform the analysis of the study. The next chapter present findings of the study and analyses them using gender, intersectionality and agency.

Chapter 4 : Perceptions of Young Ghanaians

4.0 Introduction

This chapter present the findings of narratives of young Ghanaians as obtained from interviews. These findings sort to answer the theme of the study that sort perceptions of young Ghanaians on their decision to becoming young parent or not. These perception include family and cultural settings and how it contribute to the choices they make of becoming pregnant or not. Findings on the influence of partners and parents as well as how their socio economic and neighbourhood influence in their decision to becoming a parent or not will presented. These are raw data gather and will be supported by verbatim contributions to help understand the subtle contradictions of their lives.

4.1 Background and Parental Relations of Participants

A total of twenty-two young people whose ages range from 19 to 24years were interviewed. In terms of formal educational attainment, most of the participants studied had either completed school or still in school. All eight (four couples) participants who were parents had certificates that was equivalent or lesser than a diploma whilst twelve participants who were not parent were in the university with just two participants who were not parents who had dropped out of school. All of the participants, except for two parents, did not have any job. With All participants who had jobs were combining school with work   All participants were third generation young Ghanaians staying with their parent. There was one couple who were staying on their own and another couple staying in the girl's parents' home while one young father was not stay together with the girl's parent, but almost always at the girl's house to support with the care of the baby and household chores.

4.2 Perceptions on Parental Relations and Role of Both Parent at Home

For participants' relationships with their parents, more than two thirds of my participants perceived that it was cordial but not the best. They explained there are no proper forms of communications between children and parents. Many a time's they act independently even though they live with either their mothers and or mothers and step fathers. There are no forms of family conversations or activities that involves both children and parent. Hence no connection amongst them as a family. Admitting that not staying with their biological fathers was a challenge for themselves and their mothers growing up. As some of them had had the fatherly feeling before their fathers left, they explained that it gave them some form of freedom when their parent separated. According to the data gathered, having both parents at home was perceived by twenty out of the twenty-two participants as making a difference in their lives. The presence of both parents to them first of all, makes them feel very fortunate as compared to families that do not have both biological parents at home. For them, but for nothing, it makes

them feel happy at home hence limiting the times they spend outside. This according to them it also meant that the amount of influence that would come from friends will be minimized as seen in the ensuing narratives

> *"I stay with my mom and step dad but it like am on my own. I pay my own bills because I work. I have been working since I was 14 years and my mother is happy and proud that I can take care of myself. I have a good relationship with my mum and I seek advice from her sometimes"* (Young father 22 years)

> *"I have always lived with my parent and am very fortunate and happy about that. I consult my parent on almost everything and most of the time my dad makes the final decision even at this age."*(Not parent, male, 22 years)

4.3 Being in a Cultural Dilemma: Challenges of the Young Person

For perceptions about cultural adaption in the Netherlands, all twenty-two participants confirmed that it can be very tricky in their day to day activities even though they still hold on to what they have been thought at home. This reinforce how strong attachment people have for their various cultures. For my participants, almost all of them were born in the Netherlands and have not been to Ghana very often. However, there is a strong attachment they have for the Ghanaian culture and how important culture can be valued in the lives of people. They admitted that getting to know the Dutch culture from outside their home or what their parent thought them and being in the position to adapt to which one when the need arises can be challenging.

Findings from the study established that culture can have influence on an individual. As they are exposed to that of their home and host country. The following were the responses:

> *"I know I am a Ghanaian but most of the time I prefer the Dutch way of life. I had my baby when I was 20 years and it was ok for me but my Ghanaian society made it look like it was a big deal."* (Young Mother, 21 years)

> *"When I was in high school I had a homosexual teacher. I found it very difficult to respect him which made me very uncomfortable in school because of how we talk about homosexuals in our country. But at school the Dutch culture teaches us to have respect for everyone no matter their sexual orientation and in my culture as well we respect others so based on that I decided to give him the full respect but I must say it was quite difficult initially but now am very cool with him."* (Not parent, female, 24 years)

> *"I have been raised in the Ghanaian way but I have also adapted the Dutch culture during school. First of all the Ghanaian culture teaches you to have respect for elderly people and that is what I take with me and for the Dutch culture it was something I was struggling with because the young one can say whatever they want to say to their parent. Because they feel like if you have an opinion you need to open up. But for the Ghanaian you cannot speak your mind maybe you can do it but you should know how to do it."* (Young mother, 21 years).

4.4 Influence of Socioeconomic Factors

Many studies have illustrated how ones socioeconomic factors coupled with others factors plays a major role for one to become pregnant at a young age. Many attributes it to the challenges they face as young people which could be financial challenges, lack of information on their sexuality and influence from friends. On the contrary, none of these claims envisaged in the current study. None of the young girls alluded to financial benefits that they were enjoying from their partners as the underlying factor for their pregnancy. This was particularly interesting because, instead, they saw their relationship as mutual and being bonded by love and not necessary the material gains that emanates from their relationship.

The following were the responses:

"I actually did not know I was pregnant until my mother saw some changes in me and questioned me. I was shocked, terrified and happy at the same time. My head was blank for a number of days but when I realize it true I informed my boyfriend and told him I was keeping it without considering his view. But he actually supported it anyways." (Young Mother, 19 years).

For participants who had not had a child yet, some owed it to the fact that it will be a big disappointment on their part to be pregnant at this stage of their lives. Although their parents have "scared" them from childhood that they needed to meet a certain standard in life before having a child, they have also grown to realize the importance of such statement from their mothers. Also, others were of the view that they have seen young people around them who have had babies and did not want to be in such a position hence focusing on their education to enable them get good jobs to properly take care of their children. Others also recounted how difficult times have been for their family growing up and as a family. For them, having a baby at this stage when they are not financially stable will compound their family problems as evident below.

"Well for me if I should have a child it will be very disappointing for my parents because we have also been told to get our own apartment, get a good job before you marry and have a child. And for me when you get older you understand these things and get to know that it for your own benefit and that in my option the reason why I don't have a child now. Again, seeing the mistakes my parent have made when raising us I don't want to make such mistakes in children's life and that why I would want to be stable before I have kids." (Not parent, female, 21 years)

For me if I should have a baby at this stage I think my parent will kill me. Am the only child the give me whatever I want and if I should do that they will be very disappointed. I have always been told to finish school get a good job settle down before having a baby."" (Not parent, male, 20 years).

4.5 Neighbourhood influence and relation

Interestingly, about more than half of my participants admitted that their various place of residence had little or nothing to do with the choices made. Becoming a parent or not was not because of where they lived. All participants lived in communities that they considered as slums or ghettos in The Hague. They regard their neighbourhood as such because, such places are populated, and members of households in such context are mostly causal workers or have little or no educational backgrounds. Again, they mentioned that staying in an alternative neighbourhood as well would not have caused any major changes. Decisions made to be a young parent or not according to them were based on personal choices and even family had little on or influence on that.

The following are some of the responses:

> "I feel like my decisions or actions has never been based on where I stay. I don't really consider them in anything. I live here but I don't involve myself with them." (Young mother, 20 years).

> "Well my neighbourhood has not really had any impact but the people I roll with. I know a guy my age who has three kids and he is always struggling and I sometimes feel for him. Because of that it has been a big lesson for me not to have kids when am not ready". (Not Parent, female, 22 years)

Furthermore, a few of the participants who were not pregnant stated that growing up they had seen young people becoming parents and they could see they had difficulties in their day to day activities. Those who became parent at a younger age have always had extremely busy life as compared to people of their age who did not have a family. Such realities, some participants admitted, had been a major reason why they do not have a child as at yet.

These were some of the responses;

> "For me, my neighbourhood has both positive and negative impact. I say this because I live in what most people call the ghetto communities in the Hague and it is very common to find young people either pregnant or as young mothers and fathers. And the things they go through I don't think I can handle that and such things scares me and has helped me to stay focused until am ready to take care of my children which is very positive for me". (Not parent, 23 years)

4.6 Influence of Religion

The religious nature of Ghanaians is evidence in most home and is influenced by the way their children are raised. For most homes, the upbringing of their children incorporates Christian teachings where their believe about sexual life is to stay chaste until one blesses his or her marriage in the church.

> "For me religion has been a very big part of how I have been raised in the Ghanaian culture and as the bible say you have to wait before marriage to do it with your husband and to have a child and because am a believer of Christ. Most Ghanaians look down upon you when you are a young parent." (Not parent, female, 22 years)

"I have cousins who are home and are pregnant and is really a big deal for my family. You know in the Ghanaian culture we are expected to marry before we give birth it just recently that I have seen that my family is a little cool when you are after 28 years and you bring your boyfriend home that they will kind of accept it but then it was a big no for you to do that." (Not parent, female, 20 years)

Having a child out of wedlock is not condoned hence these young people decided to get married the proper way before they settle down. This for them brings a lot of respect for themselves and that of their parents and the society at large.

4.7 Information about Comprehensive sexuality education and home school

On knowledge on comprehensive sexuality education, all participants admitted that they had volumes of information on that and were knowledgeable on which decision was best to take as the need arises. Most of these information they had was through school with a few of them who had had conversations about CSE with their mothers at home.

"The funny thing is I have had such information in my last year of my primary school and my mum thought me that like two years before I got the information from school but she didn't go too deep into details. Her focus was you can become pregnant when you menstruate and you need to be very careful. But when we were thought at school that one was plainer and very detailed explanations. I remember we were even told in case you are so happy and emotions flow over during the moment that you don't use protection you can still prevent yourself from being pregnant after the act. But I must say that as a Ghanaian household that was what I missed out. I must say such information has given me confidence that there are ways of protecting yourself regardless. Afterwards I was able to talk about it with my mum and ask more questions because she had set an open door but she was still insisted on waiting until marriage before you have a child." (Not Parent, female, 21 years).

The response on the knowledge on CSE was overwhelming. All participants admitted that they are well informed about information they have received at school on CSE**.** However the conversation could not be sent home as parents were reluctant to have conversations about sexuality with them or in few instances when they did the information given was very scanty and there were no avenue to ask further questions. These were some responses;

'For me the information at school makes a big difference because they give you reasons to everything unlike the information you have at home. I was only told why I should not do it in the Christian way and that was all and my mother put some fear in me. But the information at school was more on how to protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy among others." (Parent, male, 22 years).

4.8 Marriage as a way of being independent

Becoming a parent is essential in most societies. Significantly in communities where dominate gender roles are appreciated. In as much as such societies cherish marriage they are of the view one needs to be in a position that he or she can take full responsibility of their babies. For such reasons parent prefer their children to have a stable job, financially secured and mentally prepared to take care of their babies. However, it is gradually becoming a norm in various societies as young people are opting to be parent at much younger stages which they do not consider their actions as problematic.

The following were some of their responses;

> *"I have become a grown man. I now consider my family in everything I do. They come first always." (Young father, 22 years).*

For these young people becoming pregnant according to them comes with a lot of freedom from their parent. Parenthood they considered way a key reason that one can easily not be under the control of their parent.

> *"For me I was relieved when I got to know I was pregnant. Although it came with mixed reactions. I knew that for sure I can be on my own with my family. Now I am a mother that someone looks up to and society respect so I have to act as such. I have to be responsible so people can respect my family." (Young Mother, 20 Years).*

To them being alone with their partner is enough reason to keep their pregnancies.

4.9 Perceptions on Gender Differences?

According to participants there did not see why the male will be treated differently from the female at any point in time. They believed such treatment might arise if they were not able to take care of their baby. They were treated the same both at home and outside the home. Families did not shame the girls because they acted irresponsible.

> *"Even friends regard us as couples. I have never been called names because I was pregnant. They only gossip because they think I have be married before I get pregnan"t (Young Mother, 20 years)*

> *"We are able to take care of our baby very well. I do not see why my family or someone tell me what to do." (Young mother, 22 years)*

From the responses, participants do not face any specific gendered treatment form both friends and family members and even the public at large.

Chapter 5 : Analysing perceptions of Young People

5.0 Introduction

This chapter present a discussion of key findings from the study. It will talk about the role of perceptions on parental relations and role of both parent at home and it impact, socioeconomic and neighbourhood influence, dynamics of how both Ghana and Dutch cultures plays a role in decision making and how they balance their standards. Family and partners influence in shaping behaviour individuals in their daily activities and decisions religion and gendered norms. These themes came out strong during the data analysis

5.1 Perceptions on Parental Relations and Role of Both Parent at Home

Response from participants reinforce the importance of having fathers at home. This notion depict how gendered stereotypes are manifesting in various homes. Participants explained that they have the liberty to do things as they wish without their family's interference. For example not staying with t fathers offered a pathway for the young people studied to make decisions on their own including decisions about their sexuality. Many young people of today perceive their perceive fathers or men to command more respect in the home compared to mothers (Olah et al 2014, Bell 2012). Such gendered notion about patriarchy in society has had influence on the thinking of young people studied and hence manifesting in their various homes. This finding lends supports to Connell's view about hegemonic masculinity where certain practices of men such as control of households become hegemonic as a result of men having dominance over women. According to him hegemonic masculinity are ideas and practices that are perceived of all men (Connell 1998). As a result of such inequalities resulting from hegemonic masculinity, children tend to ignore the responsibilities of their mothers even if she assumes fatherly roles such as instilling discipline at home. Fathers are perceived by participants to be stricter on their children as a result it difficult for a child to put up certain behaviours at home. This has had an influence in the decisions they makes as young people to be young parent or not. For young parent they believe that there is some sort of liberty on their part to run their own affairs including their decisions about their sexuality. The 'fear' that father instils in them would most of the time deter them from making such decisions. However, staying with their step father does not make much difference as some of the participants mentioned they do not have much influence on them (Chi Watts 2015, kabeer 2001).

This finding further strengthens the view point of young people in relation to woman's responsibility at home, which is to take care of children and the household whereas the main instils discipline and provides financially for them home (Olah 2014, Kabeer 2001, Fenstermaker Berk 1985). Many young people can relate to this view. To them, absences of their fathers at home means lack of control in the household. Adopting Scott's (1996) view on how social institutions as the household as normalising gendered perceptions in various homes and the patriarchal nature of many societies have contributed the viewpoints of these young people

where they believe that only fathers have the right to discipline. As a result young people who do not stay with their biological fathers are likely to overlook the role of their mother who try to take fatherly roles and as insignificant in their family.

5.2 Being in a cultural Dilemma: Challenges of the Young Person

Participants explained how they are able to exercise their agency by deciding on which of the cultures will be appropriate at the given moment. Their ability to negotiate and choose empowers them to make meaningful decisions for themselves with the resources needed available (Kabeer 2001). Here information on both cultures are made available to them hence having the capacity to decide on which culture they preferred. Furthermore, almost all my participants perceived that both cultures did clash a few times however, they preferred the Dutch culture since it is more flexible and comes with less restrictions. According to them, they are sometimes criticized by the Ghanaian community as a result of and apart from that everything looks normal. For young parents, the larger society does not have negative perceptions about their status as parents.

 As revealed by Lee and Kim (1981:233 cited in Chherri 1987) adaptations of migrants in an urban setting might be discussed by using different sets of indices and/or variables, such as residential settlement, housing, occupational adaptation, occupational mobility, family life-cycle change, adaptation, cultural adaptation and attachment to the origin**.**

2.3 Socioeconomic Influence

Various strands of literatures suggest that one key factor that may lead to, young people to become pregnant is poverty, a socio-economic determinant (Krugu 2017, Martins et al 2014). However, perceptions from young people studied were entirely different. None of the young parents mentioned being poor as a basis for becoming pregnant. Rather they explained that having a job at the time when they got pregnant was a part of the reasons why they kept their pregnancy. These perceptions support previous study by (Trouw 2016, Van Enk 2009) that revealed that most young people in the Netherlands see love as an essential part of their relationship hence most of them experience their first sexual intercourse under no pressure from the their partner. Young people are able to negotiate with partners on mutual love as the basics of their relationships (Bell 2012, Kabeer 2001). As a result participants who were parents admitted partners were very supportive during and after their pregnancy. From an intersectionality perspective it can be seen that the multiple intersections such as support from partners, socioeconomic status, and information about their sexuality enabled the youngsters studied to make such decisions about their future and family. To them becoming a parent was not because of intersections such as ethnicity, race, age, or gender but their actions and inactions were as a result of being capable as social beings that have agency to make informed decisions about themselves support of partners, having a job, being informed about their sexuality was rather intersecting to inform their decisions. The support of partners could be a learned behavior from the Dutch culture where fathers are actively involved in the care and upbringing of their children (Bois Raymond 2007). From these perceptions, having a job has been a contributing factor

for having a baby hence making informed decisions about their sexuality. This is contrary to the views of young people in Australia who had experienced people suffer the crude abortion and has deter them from engaging in some (Chi Watt 2015).

5.4 Neighbourhood Influence and Relation

Participants explained that although the lived in a diverse neighbourhood there was no strong attached to people from other ethnicities such as Turkish, Surinam and other Africans other than Ghanaians. These perceptions are in line with a study conducted by the Diversity Commission (2016) at the University of Amsterdam, which revealed that as a result of diverse nature of the university's staff and students, from the study participants with minority background explained how they do not feel part of the system and lacked role models perhaps this explains why these young people also are not attached to their neighbourhood.

Reactions from neighbours particularly the Ghanaian community manifested in two forms. Participants explained that initially when someone is seen pregnant in the neighbourhood the attitude towards them is very hostile. There is a lot of conversation about the individual and his or her family. Families of culprits are most often disrespected and are quick to be cited as a bad example to other children. The situation is different when girl gives birth. They are seen as a matured people who need respect for themselves and their family emphasizing how Africans cherish children and family (Chi Watts 2015). Often times the elderly refer to the baby as their grandchild and offer assistance when the need be. This include occasionally visiting and buying gift for the baby and sometimes the parents. They are also readily offered help both in their home and outside their homes

5.5 Influence of Religion

Participants who were not parents explained that their Christian faith is a reason why they do not have babies now (Manlove et al 2008, Rotosky 2004). They believe that it is appropriate to bless ones marriage before having babies. Using intersectionality as an analytical tool, it explains how multiple intersections such as religion, morality have contributed to young people from the Ghanaian community wanting to wait until they bless their marriage at church before having a baby. This approach explains how religion and their ethnicity intersect to shape the thought of such young people. Many families hold in high esteem marriage and as such would prefer their children to be properly married before having child. To them getting married the right way attract blessings from God and earns you respect from ones society and enables young to find the right partner as compared to young people who become parent at a younger age (Olah 2014, Smith 2013).

5.6 Information about Comprehensive sexuality education and school

Participant admitted they have been educated well enough at school on their sexuality. They explained that they knew who to protect themselves from both sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. These views however contradict the study from Amsterdam that suggest that young people form Amsterdam had difficulties accessing information from various centers that provides sexuality education (Otuo Acheampong 2009). However, most participants were of the view that bringing such conversations on sexuality from school to their various homes would have been an added advantage. This is because for the few who were fortunate to discuss sexuality related issues at home they admitted although was not detailed but it created some sort of a good atmosphere to bring issues on sexuality up anytime they needed clearer explanations. Accordingly, studies have shown that having a good communication including sexual education with parents has a greater chance of reducing pregnancy among people. Although the parents of these participants are people who have stayed in the Netherlands for more than two decades. Linking agency to this findings it can be seen that young people are making informed choices from the many alternatives choices about their sexuality available. These choices allows them to exercise their agentic powers from resources available.

This was very encouraging and affirms why the Netherlands is praised for their achievement on the effective use of information on CSE and the confidence it gives its youth as compared to other young people from countries like the United Kingdom (Trouw 2016). These perceptions are challenging the notion that young people do not have agency to act upon. As a result this finding revealed how young parents explained that there are other choices available to them to prevent pregnancy and even to abort however, they preferred starting a family

5.7 Marriage as a Way of Being Independent

Responses shows how these young people are poised to be good parent in their various societies. Although all my participants who had had babies came from broken homes these young ones are determined to stick together as a family to earn respect and be responsibly in their societies (Boise- Raymond 2007). Research has shown how broken homes are a major factor that contribute to pregnancy among young people (Krugu 2017, Bell 2012). For them, their decision to become pregnant was as a result of the fact that they have the capacity to freely make choices for themselves (Peltola et al 2017). Linking this finding to the use of agency it show how young people make can act as social beings with the ability and capabilities to make informed choices for themselves.

For such young parent, although such agency exercised by have been described as destructive Aaltonen (2013) they considered having a baby had changed their lives in a positive becoming a parent brought them much positive experience way although they admitted it several challenges. Becoming a parent had brought them joy because they could have someone of their own whom they loved and cherished, made them matured as well as focused in life (Chi Watts 2015). Their new situation meant they took decisions on their own for their families.

5.8 Perception on Gender Differences

Gender is societal expected roles and norms that are assigned to both males and females. These expectations differ from one culture to the other. There are various gendered norms from individual expectations, family and the society as a whole. In most societies (Graham 2013), girls who become pregnant at a younger age are shamed by people around them. It is interesting to know that most of these young couples have not had bad experiences with their pregnancy because of their gender. For them, they were only considered to be too young to have a baby coupled with the fact that they were not married. This shows how being independent goes a long was of bridging certain perceptions about gender. Unlike young people form elsewhere in the world where who might not be financially stable, and do not have support from their partners and cannot make ends meet for their family it create the opportunity to gendered norms to be reinforced.

Linking this findings gender, Scott's (1996) view on the definition of gender engaged here may not hold as the differences of sexes was not tagged with any social relations. Participants explained they were not treated differently by society as mostly when young people who are parent are shamed especially the woman where being pregnant as seen as a negative by society. They explained they are both accepted by society as social being capable of shaping their own live and not act according to the perceived relations society associate with gender.

5.9 Comparing Perceptions of young parents and young people on young parenthood.

From the data gathered, it has revealed that young people from the Ghanaian community who are young parent were of the view that the following variables they perceived were contributed to them becoming young parents. These include absences of their fathers at home is a contributing factor to them becoming pregnant as a result young parent because mothers alone cannot control them at home. The freedom in the Dutch culture is also a contributing factor to young people from the Ghanaian community becoming pregnant. They explained the freedom associated with the Dutch society makes them fit hence being a young parent is not judged as compared to the Ghanaian community. Furthermore, the fact that they are able to work at a young age makes them confident that they are financially stable to take care of their baby. Information on comprehensive sexuality education has also been a played a major role in them keeping their babies. The revealed that such information given has exposed them to possible consequences of having an abortion including not being able to have a baby ever again as a result they preferred keeping their pregnancy. Participants who had not had a baby before attributed it to the fact that it would be a great disappointment for their parent especially those who are privilege of staying with both parent. Others explained that they did not want to bring up their children in a way that they were brought up because they faced a lot of challenges growing up including financial challenges and would not want their children to go through the same experience. Participants shared how they saw young parent struggle to make ends meet in their neighbourhood and such experiences has deterred them from having children at younger age. They pointed out that religion has also been a great factor because they believed that it is proper

to bless ones marriage in the presence of God before having babies. They also owed it to the information given at school on comprehensive sexuality education as it has been important in knowing the consequences of any action taken.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed perceptions of young Ghanaians living in The Hague who were parents and those who were not parent at the time of the field work. Here, perceptions from these young parents challenges some stereotypes about young parents. Their perceptions gives a different view on how dominant perspectives society associates with young parenthood and challenges race, socioeconomic backgrounds as factors responsible for becoming a young parent as portrayed in in mainstream discourse of young people and young parenthood.

Chapter 6 : Concluding the Research

This **c**hapter present the conclusion of the study by presenting main arguments. It will also highlight possible areas for further research and propose recommendations based on the conclusion.

6.0 Conclusion

I argue that young people from the Ghanaian community in The Hague are currently are able to make informed decisions about their sexuality and their future. To those who prefer to start their family at a younger age, they are of the view that they are in a better position to start and take care of their family. Again, those who do not have family yet believe it's their decision coupled with various experiences that they have encountered that has shaped their thoughts about being a young parent. For both groups of young people, structures in society in a way has equipped them enough to make such choices for their lives. For those who have a family they consider themselves as capable enough of take care of themselves and their family and live a happy and better life. Although the perspectives of young Ghanaians cannot be a representation of all young people with ethnic minority backgrounds, from the study it can be said that these variable mentioned above could account for the gaps between young people with ethnic minority background as compared to young native Dutch.

6.1 Recommendation

Findings of this study presented how young parenthood is not an issue for young people from the Ghanaian community in The Hague, Netherlands. The findings suggest how young people embrace parenthood even when it was not planned for. The sample of the participant are based on the views of a section of the Ghanaian community and cannot however be used to generalize. Based on the conclusions arrived at the following suggestions are made for recommendation to the following authorities thus the Ghanaian embassy, various Ghanaian association and for future research.

6.2 Recommendation for the Ghanaian Embassy and Ghanaian associations

As the Ghanaian embassy is a representative of the Ghanaian government and Ghanaians in the Netherlands, it will be proper for the embassy to reorient it people through the various associations to understand how the system of the Netherlands works and how important it is for the families to be a part of their children's lives. It should be pointed out that in as much as their host country plays it role in the lives of their children, they as families and communities must make it a point to be equally part of their children's lives especially when they have become adolescent.

6.3 Recommendations for future research

Comparing other studies done on young parenthood, I believe future studies can consider perceptions of other Africans with different socioeconomic status and perhaps consider perceptions of their parents to see whether there will be contradictions raised.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Introduction

My name is Allswell Garbrah Hooper. A student from the international institute of social studies in The Hague. I am studying Master of Art of in Development Studies majoring in Human rights Gender and Conflict studies. My research topic is on young parenthood among Ghanaians in The Hague. This interview will be recorded for later transcription. I would appreciate your willingness to participate. Thank you.

Research Questions

A. Context About their lives

What is your current occupation? Job or work and at what level?

How has your educational background been?

B. How family and cultural settings does influences one to become young parent or not?
1. Tell me about your family background?
2. What is the relationship between mum and dad? Do they stay together?
3. How does family influence your daily decisions?
4. How does culture influence your daily decisions?
5. Do you still hold on to your ethnic background values when making decisions and what influence does it have in your new environment?

C. How does the relationship between partners (Boyfriend or Girlfriend) and or (parent) influence the decision making process of becoming a young parent?
1. What is the ethnicity of your partner?
2. Does it influence you in your decision of becoming pregnant? IF YES/NO GIVE REASONS
3. How old are they? How old are you?
4. How old were you when you got pregnant or made someone pregnant?
5. Did you feel the pregnancy was wanted by both of you? If yes why? If no give reasons?
6. Why did you want to become a parent?
7. Does having a cordial relationship with parent have an impact on becoming a young parent?
8. Do you consider your parent/ partner's thought before making such decisions? (TO KEEP OR NOT TO)

D. What role does socioeconomic and environmental factors play in influencing one to becoming a young parent or not?
1. Does your family has an influence in taking such choices pregnant or not?
2. Does your neighborhood influence such decisions?
3. Could an alternate neighborhood affect such decisions?
4. What impact does CSE has on the individual in making such decisions?
5. School
6. Race
7. Do you get inspired from people from the same ethnic background in your day to day decisions made or not?
8. What is the community's reaction to you when you got or made someone pregnant?
9. What is your community's reaction after having a baby?
10. Has the relationship between you and the community changed after giving? How?