

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON
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**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON
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HOMETOWN DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA: THE ROLE OF INTERNAL MIGRANT

STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Belinda Ngmenbuobo Bannoenumah, hereby declare that, except for references to other people's work which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is as a result of my own research and has neither in part nor whole been presented.



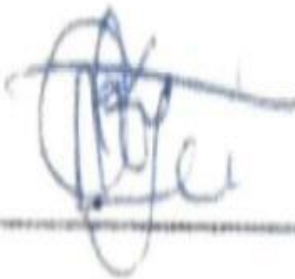
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DR. MARY BOATEMAA SETRANA

30/10/2020

DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the sons and daughters of my motherland.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

What shall I render to the Lord for all His Goodness? Indeed, to Him be all the Glory in the Highest.

I am forever indebted to my parents, Mr. and Mrs Banuenumah for seeing me through school and to my brothers - Bright, Clarence, Bernard and Kelvin - for their support.

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Abusua...Trodooo!

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God bless you all!

ABSTRACT

International migrant hometown associations and internal migrant associations both play crucial roles in the development of their respective communities. Today, Internal Migrant Student Hometown Associations (IMSHTAs) have become an integral part of university life, contributing in diverse ways towards the welfare of their members as well as their respective hometowns. However, despite the numerous studies on international and IMSHTAs have been largely understudied especially in terms of how, as dependents, these students are able to mobilise resources to achieve their welfare and developmental objectives. This study therefore explored the role of these student associations in the development of their hometowns, comparing the activities of Ashanti Students Union (ASU) and the National Association of Gonjaland Students (NAGS) both in the University of Ghana, Legon. The study employed qualitative research in which 22 members of NAGS and 19 members of ASU were interviewed. The findings indicate that IMSHTAs play the role of catalysts in the development of their hometowns, through donations, voluntary teaching and sensitisation of their home people on health and educational issues. It equally indicated that IMSHTAs are hybrid associations between hometown associations and student associations, with interest in contributing their quota back 'home'. They are formed to first and foremost cater for the needs of their members on campus such as providing accommodation, financial and emotional support and at the same time, contribute to their hometowns. They employ different means to ensure the welfare of their members and use the strong and weak ties they have with their social networks to achieve their aims. Their strong ties constitute prominent people from their hometowns and their patrons while their weak ties include their classmates, hall mates and other students. They face challenges such as apathy of members, and limited funds but they are able to leverage unity and their social networks to mitigate these challenges. The study

recommends that the local government authorities in Gonjaland and Ashanti Region and the office of the dean of students - University of Ghana should take keener interest in student hometown associations as a special category of migrants that contribute to human and cultural development especially at the local level.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASU-UG	–	ASHANTI STUDENTS UNION
GSS	–	GHANA STATISTICAL SERVICE
HDR	–	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT
HTA	–	HOMETOWN ASSOCIATION
IMSHTAs	–	INTERNAL MIGRANT STUDENT HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS
NAGS-UG	–	NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GONJALAND STUDENTS – UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
UNDP	–	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Many years ago, emigration for some countries, had a negative connotation (Lutterbeck, 2006) as cited in (Kandilige, 2017). People who left their countries were seen as traitors, tax evaders and ingrates since they were trained by the state to acquire their skills and expertise. Gamlen (2006), cites China, Mexico and Morocco, as examples of such countries. Some countries put in measures to deter their citizens from leaving. For instance, Danish emigrants could not vote after two years and could lose their citizenship for marrying non-Danes (CGA&DW, 2016). According to Dowty (1989), minority groups in Germany were forced to emigrate as their punishment. However, today, there has been a radical shift in this mentality. Kandilige (2017), explains that diaspora communities, previously referred to as traitors are now called development partners, heroes of development, and compatriots among others. Some countries now have diaspora engagement policies to assist their diaspora as well as solicit their assistance. Some examples of these countries include Zambia, Morocco, Turkey and Ireland; (Biligi and Weyel, 2016).

Gamlen (2006), cites Cyprus, Ukraine and Jamaica as examples of countries that have national celebrations with their diaspora, meet up with them often and even elect representatives of their diaspora. India and the Philippines have been able to leverage their diaspora for development over the years (Vargas-Lundius et al., 2008). Countries mainly fall on remittances, especially financial, sent by their diaspora in terms of tapping into their capacity to contribute to development. The World Bank (2006), estimates global remittances to have reached 216 billion dollars in 2004. In the World Bank trends in migration and remittances 2017, global remittances now exceed Official

Development Assistance (ODA). In addition to financial remittances, migrants, internally and internationally, contribute their skills and expertise, introducing new cultural, political and business ideas as well as serve as ambassadors of their places of origin in their places of destination. From 429 billion dollars in 2015, migrant remittances to developing countries shot up to 554 billion dollars in 2019 (World Bank, 2020). This shows an increase in remittance flows of over a 100 billion dollars in only four years.

Migrant groups are formed on many different bases including religion, politics, ethnicity, alumni groups as well as hometown or country basis. These groups have various names which include migrant associations (Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2012); migrant clubs (Duquette and Bada, 2013); Cultural Associations (Tamo, 2014); and hometown associations (Orozco and Garcia-Zanello, 2009).

Hometown associations (HTAs) represent the most common type of migrant groups (Silva, 2006). They are defined as voluntary groups formed in the destination by migrants from the same place of origin (Duquette and Bada, 2013). They are formed based on common roots and can be referred to as indigenous groups due to the composition of their members (Honey and Okafor, 2008). Kandilige (2017), states that a hometown may represent a region, a community or a whole country. This explains how broadly used the term is.

Hometown associations are first organized to meet the needs of members at the destination and then subsequently, pursue development projects in their hometowns. According to Honey and Okafor (2008), hometown associations were responses to the changing conditions resulting from the movement, urbanisation and living away from home and a response to the failure of the state to develop the hometown as expected.

The Ghana Statistical Service (2014:8) explains that ‘all migrants are movers but not all movers are migrants and adds that migration involves a movement outside one’s permanent place of residence for 6 months or more. However, if a person still considers the place of origin as the permanent place of residence with regular return visits and high likelihood of remittances – financial and social- then the migrant is considered a circular migrant. Tertiary institutions in Ghana stay less than 6 months per semester in school. Students in the University of Ghana go back home every three to four months for vacation. The majority of members of IMSHTAs permanently live in their place of origin and therefore, can be considered as circular migrants with the attainment of higher education as their migratory goal. Despite their short stay in school, they come together to form hometown associations. Student hometown associations on various university campuses are formed with the same motive as other HTAs – to cater for the needs of their members on campus while they are away from home to study and to contribute their quota to their respective hometowns.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Indeed, the reasons for the setting up of hometown associations are many and varied. These reasons may depend on numerous factors such as the policies at the destination, the number of migrants from the origin and the needs the HTAs themselves expect to meet. As a result, there have been numerous studies on hometown associations. Kandilige (2017) investigated the collective remittance mobilization strategies of the Kwahuman Association and the Kasena Nankana Development League; both Ghanaian hometown associations in the UK. Antwi-Bosiakoh (2010, 2011, 2012) has done some extensive research on Nigerian hometown associations in Ghana in terms of how they came to be established and the benefits members derive from their participation in these associations. Vargas-Lunduis et al., (2008) focused on the diaspora and their contribution

to development and the deepening relations between governments and their diaspora. Bada (2007) has researched the social and political engagements of HTAs in their destination countries. Some of the above mentioned studies and others focused on south-south migration associations and internal migration associations; Antwi-Bosiakoh (2012) looked at Nigerian hometown associations in Ghana, Tonah (2005) studied Fulani groups in Ghana and how their leadership mediate between farmer and herder issues, provide support for their members especially when they are in the grip of the law; Kayaoglu's (2017) work was based on Turkish internal migrants in Istanbul and their collective remittance mobilization for rural development; Agilinko (2014) focused on Builsa migrants in Maamobi in terms of their integration, coping strategies and how they work generally while away from home; Hart (1973) considered Frafra migrant groups in Accra and their support for members in job search and Zaami (2010), studied Northern associational groups in Madina who provide accommodation and support to their members.

Despite the numerous studies on HTAs, those formed by migrant students in universities remain largely under researched. These migrant student associations exist on many university campuses and function like other hometown associations. Some examples of student HTAs in different universities across Ghana include Volta Region Students Association (VORSA); Upper West Students Union (UWESU); Bolgatanga, Nabdan, Bongo and Tongo Students Union (BONABOTO); Kasena-Nankana Students Union (KANASU) and Ga-Adangbe Students Union. They are formed by students from the same region or community in Ghana who find themselves in the same institution and come together with common objectives and aims. Moving away from home to a new and different environment for educational purposes, these students do not only seek the welfare of their members but also contribute to their hometowns. The study seeks to investigate how students who are mostly dependants and who are constrained financially come together in the

name of their hometown to form an association to cater for their needs on campus and with an agenda to contribute to their communities back home. It also seeks to prove that internal migrant student groups do contribute to development. This study focused on IMSHTAs in the development of their hometowns. The National Association of Gonjaland Students (NAGS) and Ashanti Students' Union (ASU) in the University of Ghana, Legon are used as cases.

1.3 MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to explore the role of internal migrant student hometown associations in the development of their hometowns by comparing the Ashanti Students Union and the Gonjaland Students' Union. The specific objectives include:

1. To describe the formation, composition and organisational structure of the National Association of Gonjaland Students and Ashanti Students' Union, University of Ghana.
2. To investigate the activities of the National Association of Gonjaland Students and Ashanti Students' Union in ensuring the welfare of their members on University of Ghana, Legon campus.
3. To ascertain the role of Gonjaland Students and the Ashanti Students' Union as development players in their hometowns.
4. To discover the sources of funds, the challenges and coping strategies of Gonjaland Students and the Ashanti Students' Union.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the structure of the National Association of Gonjaland Students and the Ashanti Students' Union in University of Ghana, Legon?
2. How do the National Association of Gonjaland Students and the Ashanti Students' Union in University of Ghana, Legon ensure the welfare of their members on campus?
3. What are the roles of the National Association Gonjaland Students and the Ashanti Students' Union in hometown development?
4. How do the Gonjaland Students and the Ashanti Students' Union mobilise resources and cope with their challenges?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are so many governmental interventions concerning the youth of Ghana such as the Nation Builders Corps (NABCO) Programme, Planting for Food and Jobs and the Youth Employment Programme. This research provides the Ministry of Youth and Sports with information on ways in which Student Associations can be engaged to contribute to development at the local level.

The study also draws the attention of the local government authorities, to the potential of student hometown associations as an untapped resource that can be leveraged to promote unity and social cohesion in a culturally diverse country like Ghana.

Furthermore, it provides policymakers and stakeholders with knowledge on the importance of considering student hometown associations as a separate migrant group altogether with different and special interests and contributions and not lump them together with other migrant groups.

This study contributes to the ongoing discussions on hometown associations and the place of such student groups in migration discourse.

It serves as a reference point for student hometown associations themselves on their organization and activities which will enable them to take up space in the governance and development of their hometowns as well as enable them to carve a niche for themselves with the resources and opportunities available to them in the university and the larger destination community.

The study shows that in an academic setting like the University of Ghana, students' extracurricular activities can influence policy if the right environment is created and the needed support is given.

Lastly, this study serves as a reference point for further research in the field of hometown associations in migration research.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The research is divided into five chapters. Chapter one contains the background to the study, the research problem, the research objectives and research questions as well as the significance of the study. Chapter two, is a review of various literature based on various thematic areas relating to the objectives of the study. Chapter three contains the methodology used in conducting the research. These include the sample size, ethical considerations, the research design, the sampling technique and the limitations of the study. Chapter four, delves into the analysis and discussion of the data while chapter five presents the developmental implications of activities back home. Chapter six is about the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a reviews literature based on thematic areas in relation to the objectives and the theoretical underpinnings of the study.

2.2 INTERNAL MIGRATION IN GHANA

Black et al., (2004), submitted that internal migration is a more common type of migration in West Africa. The Ghana Statistical Service (2014) reports that, migration within Ghana has a similar history as emigration. During the precolonial era, there were mass movements of people and entire ethnic groups due to expansion and trade and even years of conquest (Buah, 1980). The absence of borders also made it difficult to tell the difference between internal and international migration. During the colonial era however, the demand for labour in mines and plantations led to the migration of many Ghanaians especially young people to these agricultural and mining centres (GSS, 2014). The majority of those moving were young unmarried males. After colonial rule, the patterns of migration did not change much as the southern parts of the country which were the centres of trade and commerce remained the preferred destinations of most migrants. Northern Ghana, which was the source of labour for plantations and mines in the south still remained a hub for labour to the south (GSS, 2014). Today, the causes of migration are many and varied. Some include trade, better life and opportunities in bigger towns, the demography of origin communities, reduced transport cost and even for education (GSS, 2014). The quest for higher education is another motivation for many young people migrating today. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2014), there is an over concentration of people with higher education in urban centres

because the jobs that require their skills are found in urban centres. Siddiqui (2004) posits that internal migration rather than international migration has a higher chance of bringing down poverty. This is because the origin areas in internal migration are greater than origin areas in international migration and hence a wider spread of remittances from internal migrants which may help bridge the gap between rural and urban areas (Skeldon, 2005)

2.3 HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS IN GHANA

According to Silva (2006), HTAs are the commonest type of migrant associations which unite migrants from the same place of origin that support migrant integration at the destination. Agilinko (2014) posits that Builsa migrants in Accra receive financial and emotional support in difficult times from their HTAs. Integration at the destination reduces dangers and vulnerability of migrants at the destination (Bakewell, 2014). Members of HTAs are able to tap into the social capital they derive from their membership of these groups to be able to mitigate the challenges that come their way. In the opinion of Zaami (2010), northern migrants benefit from their ethnic associational groups in getting access to accommodation and receiving emotional support. She cites an example of a migrant from the Upper West Region who had put up structures in Madina and environs to house members of her associational group. Kusi-Appiah (2018) adds that two-fifths of rural-urban migrants in Ghana join HTAs. This he explains is because they share a form of common identity. This explains what Portes and Jensen (1989) concluded on when they showed that the majority of migrants receive assistance from people from the same ethnic background rather than people from other ethnic backgrounds. Zaami (2010) adds that ethnic associational groups in Madina also meet often to discuss their issues at the destination as well as how they can make things better in their places of origin. This supports Silva (2006) that hometown associations usually operate both at the destination and in the place of origin.

2.4 BACKGROUND TO THE FORMATION OF HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS

According to (Kandilige, 2017), hometown associations are first formed to cater for the needs of their members at the destination. Upon arrival at the destination, there are a lot of challenges that migrants face and hometown associations serve as a way of dealing with these challenges. This confirms the study of Antwi-Bosiakoh (2011), that Nigerian hometown associations in Ghana were formed to cater for the needs of Nigerians in Ghana. Papadopoulos et. al; (2013), corroborates this when they argue that since immigrant associations are formed to help their members at the destination, their principal aim is to represent their interests at the destination. The most important reason for Nigerian Migrants coming together to form an association is to leverage unity in the assistance of individual Nigerians in Ghana to achieve success in their migratory process (Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2012).

Supporting one another in the destination is not the only reason why HTAs are formed by migrants. Kandilige (2012) argues that after forming an association to cater for their needs in the destination, the HTAs turn their attention to home as well. Respondents in the study of Duquette and Bada (2013) agreed that the first reason for setting up their association was to see to their needs and the second was to help their origin. Bada (2007) discovered that some Mexican HTAs come together as a result of a disaster, a lack of some social amenities or even the encouragement of a prominent person such as a pastor in their community. Additionally, Mexican migrants in the United States for instance, after return trips from home realized that the basic amenities and services they enjoyed at the destination were nonexistent in their hometowns and therefore, they sought to address some of these issues back at home.

2.4.1 COMPOSITION AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS

In terms of the size of HTAs, Duquette and Bada (2013) posit that HTA membership can range between 2 and 5000 members with a general average of 123 members. However, the leadership of Mexican HTAs in the U.S. is predominantly male, mostly married men and the age ranges between 30 and 63years. This confirms Zamudio's (2005) description of HTAs as male-dominated with few women in leadership. Bada (2007) considers women's participation in HTAs as still very uncommon. This is attributed to the fact that many origin communities are still very patriarchal. Women have mostly been involved in the informal knitting together of the group such as the organisation of parties and other events that promote conviviality. The promotion of conviviality is only possible if members are able to put away their differences. Tamo (2014), argues that excluding religious and political affiliation from the group is one way in which Assyrianism is promoted in the group as they are a cultural preservation group. This gives the impression that they are of different religious and political backgrounds and dwelling on these differences only tears down group unity. In promoting this unity, leadership plays an important role. Like many organisations, many HTAs have an organized structure. For instance, Orozco (2006) posits that Salvadoran HTAs often have a board, including some active members that serve as the leadership of the group. Antwi-Bosiakoh (2012b) also perceives HTAs as being well-structured. He explains that the associations function under a well-structured hierarchy of leaders who have a fixed term to serve in the association. Leadership positions in Nigerian HTAs in Ghana are occupied by older migrants who have either become successful economically or have more knowledge on life in Ghana as a Nigerian due to how long they have been migrants and had gained experience over time in Ghana to be of help to newer arrivals. He adds that Nigerian HTAs periodically voted for their leaders who had fixed tenures of office with well-defined job descriptions as secretaries or

presidents or chairpersons. Duquette and Bada (2013) agree when in their research of different HTAs, the majority of respondents said they vote to choose their leaders while the second highest said leaders are appointed. However, the leadership of HTAs may go beyond the small association to a bigger union.

HTAs also join or form confederations with other HTAs in other regions or countries to expand their network and for a larger pool of resources in carrying out projects. According to Kandilige (2017), the Kwahuman Association in the U.K. is a member of Kwahuman Europe. The association also links up with Kwahuman groups in the United States. This he describes as a way of scaling up their ability to finish projects and on time. This is supported by Orozco (2006) who cites Comite Ixchiguan in Delaware as an entity of different Guatemalan HTAs who has become involved in conflict resolution efforts involving two Guatemalan municipalities. Bada (2007) also found out that Mexican HTAs form Confederations. In the work of Agilinko (2014), Builsa migrants in Accra formed an umbrella Builsa association which is a merger of the smaller Builsa community unions.

2.5. FACTORS INFLUENCING PARTICIPATION IN HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS

The activities and objectives of HTAs serve as a motivation for the joining and participation of members as they get to enjoy various benefits as a result of being members. Just like their objectives and activities, the factors that influence participation in HTAs are diverse. One major reason for joining HTAs is to ward off loneliness. According to a respondent in Antwi-Bosiakoh (2011), being in Ghana for the first time and knowing no one was a challenge but since he joined his HTA, he has had support through every hurdle. He also cites an example of a new immigrant whose problem was solved by the association before the second meeting he attended. This reiterates the issue Antwi-Bosiakoh (2012) raises about HTAs having special provisions for new

immigrants who join as there are problems that are unique to new arrivals. Orozco (2006) explains that in talking about Central American HTAs in the U.S, joining a hometown association is a way of showing one's sense of belonging and dedication to one's roots. As a result, participating in an HTA sets them apart from migrants who do not join an HTA as it is possible to establish links with the cultural identity, level of integration, and economic status at the destination. Agilinko (2014), found out that as much as 80 percent of his respondents joined an HTA with financial and emotional assistance as well as pieces of advice being some of the reasons. He adds that Builsa migrants considered the effect of their out-migration as breaking their family ties and drawing them farther away from their Builsa identity. This is because they spoke more of Ga and Twi instead of their native language. Joining an HTA then was a way to keep touch with their unique Builsa identity.

2.6. ACTIVITIES OF HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS

2.6.1. ACTIVITIES AT THE DESTINATION

The objectives of HTAs directly influence the activities they engage in. Studies by many researchers indicate that the reasons for the formation of HTAs can be grouped into two – to assist migrants in the destination and to support the origin community. Each major reason can then be divided into other sub objectives with various activities that reflect the aim or goal of the organization. Concerning the welfare of members at the destination, many sub themes can be deduced.

Firstly, HTAs promote the integration of their members at the destination. Hometown associations are one of the agents of social integration of migrants at the destination (Agilinko, 2014). Antwi-Bosiakoh (2015) posits that Nigerian HTAs assist their members, especially new arrivals, to find accommodation in Accra. This is because as fresh migrants, they are unaware of where to find

accommodation and so they could easily be exploited. The HTA assists in the negotiation and signing of tenancy agreements and immigration procedures. Other Nigerian HTAs such as the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association provide financial assistance to their members at no interest rate (Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2011). This helps cushion members who may otherwise be struggling if left on their own. Kandilige (2017) also agrees with this in his research on the collective remittance mobilization strategies of hometown associations. He found out that the Kwahuman Association in the UK, served as a safety net for members who were living irregularly at the destination. Due to their irregular status, they could not have access to insurance policies to cater for their welfare needs. As a result, the association had their own policy to assist such members.

Another objective is to promote solidarity and interaction among their own. Being away from home, members of HTAs get to have a community of their own which gives them a sense of belonging especially for new arrivals. According to Bada (2007), Mexican HTAs served as a source of companionship for members and the organisation of ceremonies and celebration of festivals promoted solidarity among them. They organize sporting events and those were opportunities for informal discussions. Migrants, especially new arrivals in destination countries, find a new home in their HTAs (Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2011). Members of Nigerian HTAs are advised to participate fully in association activities to ward off loneliness which is often the case for new arrivals hence the organisation of activities to promote social interaction. Tamo (2014) attests to the fact that HTAs promote interaction by stating that networking and meeting often is a way of creating awareness of the association. Social networks here play a vital role for migrants in achieving their migratory goals at the destination. Friendships within HTAs become indispensable in that regard.

An equally important objective of HTAs is to keep in touch with their identity. Bada (2007) sees HTAs as transmitters of Mexican values to the new generation. Although in a different land, migrants move with their identity and culture from their origin towns. Hometown associations are “vessels of socialization and identity formation in host communities” Kandilige (2017:29). As a result, HTAs become a community where their cultural identities can be expressed. Orozco and Rouse (2007) contend that Ghanaian HTAs in the Netherlands focus on funeral traditions while in Chicago, they focus on promoting Ghanaian values among immigrants. Nigerian HTAs see their culture as who they are and so guard it with utmost importance. Their marriages and other celebrations are occasions to showcase their culture (Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2011). Members are advised to continue expressing the beautiful Nigerian culture through the way they dress, the food they eat and the music they listen to so that they can stand out uniquely as Nigerians (Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2011). Tamo (2014), agrees when he cites McClure (2001) who affirms that language among Assyrians represents their ethnic identity and helps in the sustenance of their heritage as a society. HTAs can then be described as catalysts for the transfer of culture and the preservation of traditions.

2.6.2 ACTIVITIES IN THE HOMETOWN

Formed to cater for the needs of members or to contribute to support their hometowns, members of HTAs continue to have interests in their hometowns although they are physically absent (Duquette and Bada, 2013). They describe Mexican HTAs as philanthropic organisations that support their hometowns in emergency situations and see their support as their obligation to their hometowns in their prolonged absence. The contribution of HTAs to their hometowns comes in different forms: the donation of used equipment, construction of schools, funding for scholarships as done by the Kwahuman Association for Kwahu-Tafo in Ghana (Kandilige, 2017). Orozco (2006) also explains that Salvadoran HTAs mainly focus on health – building clinics, donating

ambulances and education- providing educational materials, stocking libraries and renovation of schools. Goldring (2002) cites the example of Mexican HTAs from Zacatecas who in 1995, embarked on 56 projects in 34 towns with an amount of 600,000 dollars. The contribution of HTAs to their hometowns is in the donations of items, funding public projects such as the construction of roads, bridges and parks in Mexico among many others (Alarcon, 2006) as cited in (Barbosa and Alarcon, 2010). In choosing these projects, HTAs may engage their members who visit the origin or through communication with local authorities (Kandilige, 2017). This is also proven by Orozco (2006), who says that Guatemalan and El Salvadoran HTAs embark on projects based on the recommendation of the leadership of their hometowns while El Salvadoran HTAs receive requests from El Salvador on areas where help is needed (Orozco, 2006). In their study, Duquette and Bada (2013) found out that the majority of Mexican HTAs embark on projects independently as an HTA, the second-highest response was that projects are chosen after consultation with members of the community, the third response was that projects are selected jointly with local authorities and very few explained that leaders make decisions alone without consultation. However, consultation is encouraged as it promotes inclusivity (Duquette and Bada, 2013) which promotes unity and progress of HTAs.

2.6.2.1 HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS AS DEVELOPMENT PLAYERS

It has been shown so far that hometown associations are active in both their destination areas and their places of origin through initiating a variety of projects beneficial to the communities. There is therefore the need to consider whether they can be termed as development players. According to De Haas (2009) development is a multiplex concept but can be analysed at different levels and has diverse meanings in different contexts. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) submits that development exists when there is an enabling environment where people can live and

be healthy and creative. (UNDP, 1991). It is basically, among other things, a process of transformation; it involves the social, economic, political, moral, educational and physical structures, value systems and the culture of a people (Alexander 1990:1 as cited by Mahatma Gandhi University). At the heart of development, must be people; development must be built around people not people around development (UNDP, 1991). Sen (1999) corroborates this when he says human development which has people at the heart of it has become an essential part of national development recently. “An increase in human capital through education is a form of human development and increase in human capital raises one’s productivity level which has positive repercussions on economic development of a country” (Peterson, 2016: 48). Kandilige (2017) posits that socio-economic development is becoming more and more perceived as the responsibility of all citizens irrespective of their geographical location. This gives credence to the involvement of HTAs in hometown development. Robinson (2002), states that there are three phases to the relationship between diasporas and development. There is first development in the diaspora which involves the formation of cultural ties and solidarity groups for mobilization; the second which is development through the diaspora refers to how diaspora communities use their global connections beyond the locality to promote economic and social wellbeing; and the third is about the trickle-down effect of ideas, money and support especially politically to the home community. Orozco (2006) argues that the decision to promote cultural, social or economic development, possess the ability to distribute resources, conduct a needs assessment and ascertain the impact of their support are features of an HTA as a development player.

The work of HTAs is necessary for solidifying the relationship with the community and promoting wellbeing. If the project generates wealth, it leads to the economic growth of the community (Orozco, 2006). He equally adds that HTA’s development impact is in two dimensions – the first

being the creation of community activism to tackle the needs of the society; however, this is mostly limited due to lack of funds. The second dimension is when HTAs partner with other organisations to work on projects that eventually have a developmental impact over time. It is important, nonetheless, to note that the economic and social contribution of HTAs to their hometowns cannot solve the structural issues leading to poverty (Orozco, 2006).

2.7. SOURCES OF FUNDS FOR HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS

HTAs employ different strategies in mobilising resources for their activities and projects. Kandilige (2017) considers the payment of dues by members of the HTA as a means of gathering resources for the running of the association and for supporting their hometowns. Orozco (2006) asserts that there are specific activities that are organised by Salvadoran HTAs to raise funds such as raffles, beauty pageants and dinners. He describes the average amount that is raised as 15,000 dollars which is mostly inadequate for projects due to the small numbers of membership and the use of part of the money for running the Association. Orozco (2006) describes fundraising events of some HTAs such as Honduran HTAs as very vibrant and always with a cultural touch. This is supported by Alarcon (2006) as cited in Barbosa and Alarcon (2010) who discovered that Perguerenses HTA in California organise beauty pageants with some 500 attendees to raise funds. Here, their focus is not on the beauty of the winner but the funds that are raised for their projects. Some HTAs are equally able to get access to items for donations through their privileged positions in different institutions and organisations such as churches or workplaces at the destination to support their hometowns (Kandilige, 2017). Like the Kwahuman Association's partnership with a philanthropist in the UK (Kandilige, 2017), some HTAs can mobilise resources through their collaboration with individuals and organisations at the destination. There is yet another way in which HTAs raise funds. This is sometimes through lobbying the government of their hometowns

to support their efforts partnering with them to increase their project capacity and their rights as Mexican Diaspora (Orozco, 2006).

2.8. CHALLENGES OF HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS

Like any organization, migrant hometown associations have their fair share of challenges. Kandilige (2017) talks about how conflict and disputes in the hometown of the Kassena-Nankana Development League (KNDL) are reflected in the internal relationship between members where social networks tend to mirror these conflicts. Another challenge has to do with their access to limited funds. In 2008, the median revenue for immigrants associations was 6,000 euros (Papadopoulos et.al., 2013). This is supported by Orozco (2006), who says that most HTAs are only able to raise an amount of \$10, 000 annually. Lack of trust is another challenge. According to Orozco (2006), transparency and corruption is a very big challenge for most HTAs. For some Honduran HTAs, corruption is one reason why they hesitate to work with local government authorities in the implementation of projects. Vargas-Lundius (2008), agrees that many HTAs do not trust the involvement of the government in the administration of their funds due to corrupt practices of government officials. There are some members of HTAs who do not have trust in the association itself in the achievement of its objectives (Tamo, 2014). This makes it difficult to grow the association since there is very little commitment from these members including when it comes to their financial obligation to the group. Duquette and Bada (2013) found out that for most Mexican HTAs, the major challenges, aside from the issue of access to funds, included how to improve organisational capacity, how to encourage additional participation of members and keep the association organised at the same time. Vargas-Lundius (2008) submits that most HTAs lack the time and expertise in putting together proposals for funds. Orozco (2006) agrees to this when he says that the lack of in-depth knowledge and skills in development and their expectations from

involvement do not match the good intentions of HTAs. Kandilige (2017) also explains that projects by HTAs are sometimes chosen ‘opportunistically’ due to a privileged position a member holds at work or at church. This means that such projects may be carried out although that may not necessarily be the need of their people.

2.9. COPING STRATEGIES

According to Papadopoulos et. al., (2013), a positive point for HTAs is the solidarity between them which enables them to confront the host society and policies. Tamo (2014) alludes to this by stating that responses from the Assyrian HTA suggest that building community trust and consistent community engagement is a way to move the HTA forward.

Orozco (2006) found out that joining confederations or similar HTAs is a way for some groups to achieve more due to the economies of scale they enjoy by being part of a confederation. Other HTAs look beyond their own community of immigrants to help them raise funds. Orozco (2006) adds that some Guatemalan HTAs reached out to the media for funds while others used television and print media to educate people on the situation in Guatemala in order to get donations to achieve their goals. Despite the negative experiences of some HTAs with governments, Vargas-Lunduis (2008) contends that there are HTAs who believe that they will not succeed without collaboration with their government. This may be because they know that their efforts alone may not bring about the needed change they seek in their communities. To deal with the issue of trust, a Honduras HTA in Miami delivers all donations personally to Honduras monthly and brings back photos and reports from beneficiaries as proof to the members. This helps promote trust and increase their credibility (Orozco 2006).

2.10. STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

According to Al-Ansari (2015), Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) refer to activities that students engage in outside their requirements for their degree. These activities could be religious, cultural, social, sports or just hobbies. ECAs are supposed to make the student experience enjoyable. Thompson et al., (2013), posits that students can build soft skills, increase their employability and even cope with stress better when they join ECAs. According to the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement (2019) of Samford University, a recognized club or student organisation comprises current students who do not receive grades for their involvement in the group and such clubs must register every year and have patrons.

Battistich et. al., (1995) found out that students' participation in, commitment to and identification with student clubs has to do with a sense of belongingness and the feeling that they are contributing significantly to the club. Friendships, fun, personal development and having their expectations met are the main reasons why students continually engage in student organisations (Holzweiss, 2007). He adds that some students find study partners or academic advice from seniors and emotional support from joining student clubs. This means that it affected their academics positively.

Battistich et. al., (1995) submits that student clubs focus on areas such as professional skills, subject-specific clubs or specialist groups. They organise activities such as guest lectures, seminar series, panel discussions and networking. Ferrari et. al., (2009), argue that student clubs organize competitions, meetings, off-campus visits or community service projects. They add that youth activities create a sense of identity, provide a platform for building creativity and assist in the harnessing of emotional, mental and physical skills. Youth clubs also help in building teamwork and social competencies Brown (1990).

Culic (2016), submits that students learn about their clubs from Facebook, from their mates or from teachers and the majority of participants are first- and second-year students. His respondents saw student clubs as environments that promote the cultivation of friendships and socialization, places for expanding interests, developing passions and to develop skills. He affirms the fact that students participate in student club activities to benefit from the advantages of extracurricular activities. Phillips and McLaughlin (2015), also contends that there is a positive relationship between participation in students' groups and professional skills acquisition such as communication skills, leadership skills and decision-making skills. In the opinion of Holzweiss (2007), students become engaged when activities meet their specific interests.

Challenges, however, do exist in student associations. According to Ivey (2016), conflicts in timetables is one reason why students are not able to attend or participate in club activities. Murage (2019) agrees that time constraints, lack of clear vision of the group, apathy and full personal involvement are some other challenges as a result of the workload of students. Culic (2016) considers the high numbers at the beginning of a semester and low numbers at the end a challenge for student associations due to an increase of academic pressure. He adds that recruitment of new members is a challenge when final years leave.

2.11. SOCIAL NETWORK THEORY

In migration, the social network theory explains the fact that migrant social relationships contribute to the perpetuation of migration. According to Massey et. al (1993), the social network theory focuses on the interpersonal relationships between migrants and non-migrants in the home and host communities through links of kindred, alliance and shared community of origin. Boyed (1989) considers migrant networks as a set of social links that migrants and non-migrants share in a network of exchanged duties that can facilitate the adjustment, entry and employment at entry

points. Teye (2013) considers social networks as formed based on dependency. The limited number and availability of resources makes people in the social, economic and political arena fall back on one another to achieve their goals which leads to the creation of social networks. This leads to a reduction in the risks and costs involved in migration. People move to places where they can receive help from other migrants (Kusi-Appiah, 2018). He postulates that migrants receive information from their networks in the origin and host communities and receive support in terms of accommodation, employment opportunities and financial support. “Other experts have argued that migrants in their new environment are able to cope better by seeking out others who share their cultural and geographic backgrounds. Migrants generally consider these cultural associations as substitutes which serve as a form of —creditworthiness in terms of trouble or opportunity” (Agilinko, 2014:13). The mutual exchange of responsibilities and resources in a network, helps to promote the smooth running and sustenance of the network (Kandilige 2017). This is because the actors involved are able to tap into the social capital the network provides. Despite the focus on social network theory, it is important to note that social capital is the fuel that keeps the wheels of social networks spinning. Gudmundsson & Mikiewicz (2012) agree when they state that the major proponents of the social capital theory such as Putnam and Coleman and Bourdieu believe that social capital is rooted in social connections. Putnam (2000) therefore considers social network as an important component of social capital.

In this research, however, the social network theory will be used to explain how migrant student hometown associations achieve their aim of ensuring the welfare of their members on campus, in ‘giving back’ to their hometowns and in their mobilization of resources.

The all-important piece of Granoveter (1973) “The Strength of Weak Ties” explains how weak ties in a social network are able to disseminate information. According to Granoveter (1973), the

strength or weakness of a tie depends on the frequency of contact that led to the acquisition of a piece of information. Studies have shown, according to Liu et al., (2017), that the time span of the interaction, the commitment individuals put into a relationship, the degree of reciprocity of service, and the height of intimacy of a tie determine whether it is strong or weak. Weak ties are seen as those relationships that require less investment – time, resources and involve acquaintances other than intimate friendships and family. According to Granoveter (1973), weak ties are more likely to spread new information as strong ties may be privy to the same set of information. The ability of a weak tie to have access to new and more useful information then becomes its strength. Liu et al., (2017), mention that other studies find social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram as a ground for breeding weak ties as distant relationships seem bridged although only virtually. They add that online ties may promote ‘slacktivism’ since it fails to get actors involved in civic participation. Although both strong and weak ties may contribute to social networks, some scholars do not seem to agree with the strength of weak ties. According to Wellman (1999), strong ties offer emotional support that weak ties will not be able to give. However, Zaami (2010), argues that the context in which an individual is, is a more suitable determinant of the use and closeness of social networks. Granoveter’s (1973) ‘Strength of Weak Ties’ was used to show the kind of ties that exist in IMSHTAs in relation to the activities of IMSHTAs on campus and how they benefit from these ties in the achievement of their objectives.

2.12 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presented relevant literature on hometown associations. The literature reviewed in this chapter broadly discusses hometown associations in terms of their activities at the destination and in their places of origin. However, it failed to consider young dependent migrants who migrate independently. It also assumes that the migratory goal of all members of HTAs is to search for employment. This is a lumping together of all the different categories of migrants into one hence a failure to address the specific issues in relation to different categories of migrants. Theories such as the social network theory, the social capital theory and the social integration theory have been widely used to explain the operations of HTAs both in the host community and back home. However, in this study, the social network theory is the focal theory used in showing how Internal Migrant Student Hometown Associations achieve their objectives, how they mobilise resources as well as how they mitigate the challenges that come their way.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This section entails the methodology employed in conducting the study. It describes the location of the study, the sampling techniques, the data collection and analysis and interpretation methods. Ethical Considerations and the limitations of the study are also discussed.

3.2. STUDY LOCATION

The study location is the University of Ghana in Accra. Accra, which is in the Greater Accra Region, is the capital city of Ghana. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the Greater Accra Region has good infrastructure and serves as the hub of industrial and economic establishments. It attracts migrants from all over the country making it the second most populous region and the most densely populated region in the country with a population of 5,055,883 (GSS, 2020). The University of Ghana is the first and most prestigious university in the country. The university has a population of over 38,000 out of which 32,059 are Bachelor students. There are also international students from over 70 different countries (UG, website). According to the basic laws of the university, all “duly admitted and registered students” are to be represented by the Student Representative Council (University of Ghana, 2012). Despite the representation of students by a council, there exist many different groups that represent the interests of students at different levels. Some of these groups include religious groups, hall affiliations, departmental unions and hometown associations.

The two associations under study, NAGS and ASU, are from the northern and the southern part of Ghana respectively, with a vast number of differences including culture, social-economic status

and religion. The Ashanti students come from the Ashanti Region. They have a near homogenous society with one language, the Asante Twi (GSS, 2013). The Gonjaland Students come from the Savannah Region which until recently was part of the Northern Region. Their society is heterogeneous with different tribes and languages (GSS, 2013).

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative research methods were used to conduct this study. Conducting research qualitatively allows for explanations and deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study Minichiello, et. al., (1995). As such, qualitative research methods were used to conduct the study to gain in depth knowledge about migrant student hometown associations - their activities on campus and in their hometown and how these activities assist members in their integration as well as promote hometown development. This method was helpful in understanding the impact of migrant student hometown association activities on the welfare of members.

This study also employed the case study approach. The case study approach, as explained by Starman (2013) allows for the in-depth and multi-dimensional investigation and appreciation of an issue in its natural context. A comparative research approach was also used. According to Khapour (2012), a comparative research approach creates a greater understanding and awareness of the differences and similarities between two or more entities under study.

3.4. THE STUDY POPULATION

For this study, the membership of the Ashanti Students Union (ASU) and the National Association of Gonjaland Students – University of Ghana (NAGS-UG) were considered. A simple demographic study was conducted which showed that ASU had 43 members and NAGS-UG had 38 members since both groups had no idea how many members they had. These two groups were

chosen because they are amongst the most vibrant IMSHTAs on campus. Another reason for the selection of ASU and NAGS – UG was that they represented two groups from the south and north of Ghana respectively which would enable an easier north – south comparison. The study only considered active members of the two unions because they can better share the experience of being a student member of a hometown association as well as how the association works. Participants in the study were all eighteen years and above irrespective of their gender and level or programme of study in university.

3.5. SOURCE OF DATA

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used. The primary data was from in-depth interviews with members and key informant interviews with some executives from both unions. It also included participatory observation at their meetings and programmes as well as on their social media platforms by the researcher. The secondary sources were from the constitutions of the two groups, books, articles, published and unpublished theses and online sources such as Ghana Statistical Service Data that were in relation to the topic under study.

3.6. IDENTIFYING PARTICIPANTS

Purposive sampling was employed in selecting key informants for the study. Purposive sampling which allows for the selection of participants with in-depth knowledge of the topic (Bernard, 2002) was used to select members. It involves choosing intentionally, respondents who meet the requirements of a given research (Kumekpor, 2002). Fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted with the Ashanti Students Union members and a group interview with two key informants. With the NAGS, a total of nineteen interviews were conducted and a group interview with three key informants. For each group, a list of active members was provided and interviewees were selected

by random sampling. However, key informant interviews were done by purposive sampling of executives as they had more information in relation to all operations and activities of the associations.

3.7. INSTRUMENT

Interviews were conducted with a semi-structured interview guide. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in the flow of the discussion between participants and the researcher (Sarantakhos, 2005). Follow up questions were asked to ensure clarity and for more details. Where participants answered a question before it was asked, that question was automatically skipped to avoid repetition. The interview guide was structured along the same thematic areas based on the objective of the study – the structure of migrants student associations, their activities in ensuring the welfare of their members, their activities in their hometowns and their role in hometown development as well as their sources of funds, challenges and coping strategies. The interviews were transcribed or translated and then transcribed for those conducted in Twi and then manually coded and analysed.

3.8. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Participant Observation as a qualitative study method was used. The researcher attended and participated in the meetings and programmes of the unions as well as joined their social media pages to have an in-depth, first-hand knowledge of day-to-day running of the unions. Participant observation allows for research to be conducted in the natural setting of the group under study (Kawulich, 2005). According to Mullings (1999), the position of a researcher vis-à-vis the participants will determine the kind of information the researcher will get. As a result, the researcher was fully engaged with the associations on their social media platforms as this was the

only means of carrying out participant observation; getting access to information of the group and participating in their programmes and discussions. An exploratory interview was done with some members of the Upper West Students' Union (UWESU) to ascertain their clarity and envisage the kind of challenges that were bound to occur during the interview and how to work around them. Participants were interviewed on phone and the conversations were recorded with their informed consent. Notes were taken for those who were uncomfortable with a recording of the interview. All the interviews were conducted in the language the participant was comfortable with; in this case, English and Twi were the only languages used. Also, a simple demographic study was conducted quantitatively with the use of Google forms. There were a total of 43 responses from ASU and 38 responses from NAGS-UG.

3.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Every research must be conducted with ethical issues duly considered. In this research, all participants were informed of the purpose of the research. Their consent was sought for interviews as well as recordings. Participants were made aware that they could opt out at any point within the interview and they were not coerced or forced to respond to questions if they did not want to provide a response. The participation of participants was a voluntary decision. The confidentiality, anonymity and protection and respect of their rights throughout the study were assured. Therefore, pseudonyms were used for participants to protect their identity. ASU had over 97% christian membership. Therefore, christian names and local Ashanti names were used as pseudonyms. NAGS on the other hand had over 60% Muslim membership. As a result, the majority of names used as pseudonyms were Islamic names. Permission was granted by the two associations to take pictures as well as use their pictures as illustrations in the study. The WhatsApp page of the two associations were observed by the researcher. The leaders of the two groups were first informed.

They then discussed this with their members before adding the researcher after which there was an introduction and explanation of the research. In the case of NAGS-UG, they had already met the researcher in person during one of their meetings on campus before the COVID-19 pandemic. This was to ensure that they were not being observed without their permission.

3.11. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was interrupted by the Corona Virus pandemic. However, virtual means were used for the collection of data such as the use of phone calls and zoom meetings for conducting interviews. As a result of the pandemic, the researcher could only attend one meeting of the Gonjaland Students and one programme of the Ashanti Students. Nevertheless, participant observation as a qualitative research method was still carried out on the social media platforms of both associations. Access to good internet connection was a challenge sometimes. To handle this challenge, interviews were either rescheduled or regular phone calls were used to continue the interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

BACKGROUND AND ACTIVITIES OF IMSHTAS TO ENSURE MEMBERSHIP WELFARE

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the analysis and discussion of the results and findings of the study. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are first presented. This is followed by an analysis and discussion of the data obtained from the interviews conducted on the activities of the National Association of Gonjaland Students – University of Ghana and that of the Ashanti Students Union both on campus and back in their hometowns. The presentation here is in relation to the research objectives as presented in chapter one.

4.2. FORMATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GONJALAND STUDENTS (NAGS-UG)

The National Association of Gonjaland Students – University of Ghana (NAGS-UG) is an IMSHTA formed by students from Gonjaland in the Savannah Region. Although they have no record of when the association came into existence, members believe that the group has been in existence for well over 30 years. One of the members had this to say in relation to the formation of the Association. He said:

Actually, I don't really know the exact date or year it began but I know it dates back to a long time ago. I think it started in the 90's or probably the 80's because some of the people I've met that were ever part of the association. We have a member of parliament right now who was part of this association as I earlier indicated. And when they recount when they were on campus it dated back to a time long ago. (Abu, 24years, from Bole, graduated)

NAGS-UG is primarily made up of Ghanaian students from the Savannah Region of Ghana. However, membership is not restricted to students who hail from the region alone. Despite the

name Gonjaland, the association is not made up of Gonja students alone but anybody who has a link with Gonjaland – it includes persons who had either primary or secondary education in Ghana or anyone having interest in the development of Gonjaland. The NAGS constitution defines its membership as:

- (1) Any Gonjaland student who finds himself or herself in any form of academic institution in Ghana is automatically a member.
 - (2) The association shall be open to all persons interested in the development of Gonjaland who happen to be students but not from the Gonjaland upon a written request. But those persons are not qualified to hold the position of the presidency.
- Source: NAGS Constitution (2014:25)

From the foregoing, it means that by virtue of the fact that a student in University of Ghana hails from Gonjaland, the person inevitably is recognized as a member of the association whether he or she shows interest or not. This automatically gives the individual the privilege of enjoying the rights and privileges that membership bestows. However, no matter how committed a member is to the association, if he or she is not from Gonjaland but desires to be the president, that desire can never materialise. Gonjaland is made up of many different ethnic groups who are not Gonjas – such as the Dagaaba, the Brefo and many others. The varied cultural representation in Gonjaland is reflected in the membership NAGS. An executive of the association expressed his view on the composition of their membership as: “I am from the Upper West Region but I joined NAGS. The Upper West Students Union does not have meetings often so when my friend told me about their association, I did not hesitate to join them” Fazi, NAGS

This response by a NAGS member is proof that the association is open to non-Gonjas as well insofar as they express interest in the association. To a large extent, they do wear their traditional clothing during programmes. They eat their traditional food as well as speak numerous languages among themselves. However, certain aspects of their culture are not always encouraged as a result

of their heterogeneity. This is evident in the language they use at their meetings and programmes. Instead of speaking Gonja, they use English. From the socio-demographic survey of their membership, it was evident that some members do not speak Gonja at all. The vast nature of the land and the settlement of different ethnic groups account for this. In terms of their language, an executive of the association had this to say:

We use English because though we are Gonjaland Students' Association, when you look at Gonjaland, we are not talking about only Gonjas but people who are staying on the land of Gonja. That's why we don't speak only Gonja. Maybe if you attend our meetings, you are a Gonja but if you don't speak Gonja it will be difficult for you to participate in our activities. So that's why we use English so that everyone can understand during our meeting and be able to participate (Inusah, 23 years, level 400, from Bole - Gonjaland)

His response confirms the Ghana Statistical Service Report (2013) that the Northern region, of which Savannah Region was a part, is a heterogeneous society. However, individual members speak to one another in the language of their choice. One can hear them speak Waale, Dagaare, Gonja, Vagla and many others before and after the discussion. The reason for using English during discussions is to cater to the different ethnic groups represented in NAGS. This prevents unnecessary conflict due to the feeling of exclusion in discussions especially when important decisions are taken or when information is disseminated. The promotion of unity is at the core of the existence of the association. This is evident in their slogan *Kishilibi Konwule mata kowu* which is in Gonja and literally means „a single finger cannot pick a grain of millet“. This can be explained as „it is only in unity that strength lies“. Despite the use of English, members of the association who do not speak Gonja or the other languages, try to learn from other members. Zoncat, from Salaga but born and raised in Kumasi had this to say about their experiences; “I have gotten some friends that are actually helping me in some of my projects; I am learning my language so it's okay; that was my aim for joining and I am getting it”.

Zoncat said he is able to learn his language from the association means the local languages are spoken as well although the use of English is more frequent. Participant observation also in the group confirmed the use of their local languages informally after their meeting.

In that same spirit of unity, NAGS is made up of both muslims and christians. The muslims in the association make up the majority. As this is evident in the socio-demographic study, it reflects the religious practice of their origin community in the Savannah Region (then a part of Northern Region) in the 2010 Population and Housing Census where over 60% were muslim. As a result, their WhatsApp page has more messages on islam and islamic practices than that of christian and other religious groups. Their WhatsApp platform is the primary means of dissemination of information to their members. Messages about the union are shared there as well as other relevant information from the university administration and the Student Representative Council (SRC). There are jokes, news, motivational messages, internship and scholarship opportunities and messages from student political aspirants shared on the page.

In terms of their composition. The numbers are quite low. Although they do not have data on the number of members they have, they believe they are much more than the numbers present at meetings and gatherings. The majority of their members are males and this agrees with the study of Duquette and Bada (2013) who proved that HTAs are generally male dominated. A member had an explanation for why they had few female members:

I am speaking generally and specifically to females. They prefer going to Nursing Schools because of the allowance. Our people are obsessed with the Nursing Schools, Training Colleges and UDS because of the proximity. So, some of them will have the qualification but are most likely to go to schools closer to this place. The bottom line has to do with the fact that Accra is too far and cost of living in Accra would be very high. They don't want to rise to the occasion to confront the challenge that is in there (Isah, 23 years, level 400, from Bole - Gonjaland)

In terms of their organisational structure, the constitution of NAGS-UG spells out who qualifies to be a leader and how leaders should be selected. Leaders are selected through a democratic process and an electoral commission is set up for the purpose of conducting elections every year. This is in tandem with Antwi-Bosiakoh's study which showed that HTAs have a hierarchical structure and that leaders are elected democratically by the association. An executive responding to a question on the leadership of NAGS said that:

One must be a member of the association and you must also have demonstrated full commitment to the association over the years – commitment to the association's duties and responsibilities and commitment to your financial obligation as well. We check all these and you will be required to buy a form at 5 cedis. A day is then set for vetting and voting and then handing over is done at a later date. Just like every association, we have a hierarchy of leadership. Of course, we have the president, the vice president, the general secretary, the organizer, we also have the Women's Organiser and a PRO. (Inusah, 23years, level 400, from Bole - Gonjaland).

4.3.THE ASHANTI STUDENTS UNION (ASU) – UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

The Ashanti Students Union of the University of Ghana is an IMSHTA formed by students from Ashanti Region. The association was formed 40 years ago at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The aim was to gather the youth of Asanteman to protect the kingdom as there was some "chaos" at the time. However, so many years on, the aim although still very much to protect the kingdom has been extended to provide for the needs of members of the union. This means that the aim of the union is first to see to the interest of the origin and then to cater for their needs as students in second place.

ASU was started in KNUST in 1979. There was some chaos in the school at the time and so there was the need to protect the Asantehene and Sika Dwa Kofi, the Golden Stool... As Ashantis, protecting our Chief was no longer about bows and arrows and guns but rather with education and so there was the need for Ashantis in school to get together... You know that in school we all study different programmes. We have engineers, those in the legal field and others and collectively, they formed ASU to protect the Chief and the Sika Dwa for the Ashanti Kingdom. So, ASU as you know it today, started as a union to protect our Ashanti Chief and our nation. (Akwasi, 23, 400, Ayeduase).

The aim of protecting the chief has not changed but the form has. They study hard to get to top positions to support the chief in his role as head of Asanteman. This shows that aside from directly having activities back home in the origin, taking care of the needs of their members on campus indirectly translates into support for their origin community.

ASU comprises migrant students from the Ashanti Region irrespective of the region of their permanent residence or where they were raised. However, like NAGS, membership is not restricted to Ashantis alone, some migrant students from other Akan communities like the Fanti and the Akuapem consider themselves as Ashantis as well and that they are all one irrespective of their differences. Although the constitution states that “membership is open to all students of the University of Ghana, Legon whose parents are from the Asante Kingdom being mother or father or both parents” (Ashanti Students Union, 2008:5), the current leadership of the union believe otherwise. According to a key informant: “ASU is not just for Ashantis. Some time ago, we had Northerners in ASU so it is not just about being Ashanti” (Akwasi, 23 years, level 400, from Ayeduase – Ashanti Region).

However, some members think differently. For them, ASU is a closed group made up of only Ashantis and that should be the only criteria for membership. Membership to them is as defined by the constitution, by some form of family connection. A sheer desire to join should not be counted as enough reason for admission into the union.

Serwaa, 19-year-old member in level 100 said this; “Eii Ashanti Students union is Ashanti Students Union. Everyone has to be in their zone oh; so the Northern people dem dey their zone so we also dey our zone...we can be friends but not to be a member of us” The response of this member proves that not every member agrees with the membership of non-Ashantis.

Nonetheless, there are members of the union who hail from other regions but see themselves as very much a part of the union as the Ashantis themselves. They see no reason why they cannot be counted as members as long as they are not going contrary to the aims for the establishment of the union. Though the name is Ashanti Students Union, many members consider it a synonym to the umbrella ethnic group Akan which comprises many different people – Fantis, Akwapims, Akyems and others. Membership is however automatically conferred on all Ashanti students on the University of Ghana campus whether one is active in the union or not. This explains the fact that although the union is open to all, one's roots or heritage plays a vital role in how one becomes a member. ASU, unlike NAGS, is very much a cultural group. They promote the Ashanti culture in everything they do. From the language which is Asante Twi to their food and clothing through to their traditional leadership. This is also easier for them to do because there is some form of homogeneity among Akans. This confirms the Ghana Statistical Service Report (2013), that the Ashanti Region is a homogenous society. The Akan language is a continuum and does not have many differences. When one is spoken, members of the other group can understand with little or no difficulty. Therefore, members from other Akan communities rarely feel excluded. At meetings, Twi is spoken. They believe that being a core part of their identity, they must speak their language at every opportunity they have. Even on their WhatsApp page, some members type messages in Twi. There are others who send voice notes in Twi. However, members who do not understand Twi because they lived in an environment where Twi was not spoken are considered and encouraged to use their membership in the association to learn.

„We speak Twi.... Because it is an Ashanti Union. That is the whole thing. To promote the language as well. We don't want to forget our tradition. We also create that avenue where if you don't understand something, you can ask so that we explain to you. Even if it is said in English, we make sure that it is being translated back into Twi so that you will learn and when next time you find yourself in a situation like that, you can use it“. (Agnes, 20years, level 300)

The members of ASU consider themselves a big family of many brothers and sisters. This is evident in their slogan *Abusua...Trodo; s3 wo nua 3ny3 aa wo nua a nono* which means “a family indeed; an estranged sibling is still a sibling”. Perhaps, this also gives credence to the fact that they are all Akans and irrespective of where one hails from, they still are family. This can also explain why membership is automatically conferred on any student from the Ashanti Region even if they do not join or participate in activities of the union. An Ashanti student who needs help can approach the union even if they do not participate in activities.

The membership of ASU is made up of christians. In the socio-demographic survey, only one person identified as having no religious background. As a result, they begin and end their meetings with christian prayers as well as share christian messages on their WhatsApp page. Like NAGS, their WhatsApp page is filled with messages from the university-administration and the Student Representative Council, student politics, nominations for awards, internships and scholarship opportunities as well as jokes and information from and about the Ashanti Kingdom.

Some of the leaders of ASU are elected and others are appointed. The highest office in the union is not occupied by a president but by a chief as a way of mirroring the traditional leadership of their place of origin. Although it is stated as president in their constitution, the title of their leader is chief just as in their origin. When asked why there is this disparity in the title of the head of the association, a key informant explains that:

“When we started, it wasn’t culturally oriented. It was just a normal association and the leader was elected as a president and that is why we have a constitution the way it is. If not, the chief would have been the title unlike President as it is in the constitution”. (Akwasi, 23 years, level 400, from Ayeduase – Ashanti Region)

They have chiefs of the various halls of residence on campus and they are respected and addressed as such. They have a queen mother as it is in Asanteman and the roles of these offices are no

different from what is done at ‘home’. They however consider the fact that, being in an academic environment, they are unable to do everything as it is to be done as far as their culture is concerned and so they infuse their tradition with some “western style of leadership” though it should not be so. The name, title and ‘throne’ of the chief is done in tandem with the practice back home. Therefore, instead of president, he is considered chief and referred to as Nana. Instead of Women’s Commissioner, the head of the ladies is referred to as the queen mother. She is in charge of the welfare committee of the union.

Photo 1 shows the Ohene and Obaa Hema - ASU Chief and Queen Mother clad in their traditional regalia at an event. They are surrounded by other members of the Council of Elders who are equally in their traditional attire which shows how they infuse their leadership structure with their culture



Photo 1: The Chief and some Council of Elders of ASU

SOURCE: ASU

Just like NAGS, a tenure of office for leaders is one year. This is because the majority of leadership positions are reserved for final year students who have one year to leave campus. This is evident

in most student associations. As a result, it is highly important for them to recruit new members regularly so as to nourish the group with the next batch of leadership. ASU recruits members in many different ways. They count on their hall chiefs to recruit members from their halls, they make use of social media and personal contact with other students on campus but the chunk of their membership recruitment is with the arrival of freshmen. Akwasi had this to share;

“normally, during orientation for fresh students, that is where we are able to get a lot of them. That is where we are able to get their phone numbers. And then we hand them over to the chiefs in the halls... We equally have Ashantis in the various departments who collect the contacts of Ashantis there to join the union”. (Akwasi, 400, Ayeduase).

Like NAGS, they believe they have the numbers but they do not have data on the exact number of members they have. Contrary to the male: female ratio, ASU has more females than males. According to a key informant in an informal discussion, the ladies in the association show more interest in activities than the males and that accounts for the male-female difference.

4.4 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MEMBERS

To ascertain the composition of IMSHTAs, demographic background information was gathered quantitatively from respondents of both associations. There were 38 responses from the National Association of Gonjaland Students (NAGS) and 43 responses from the Ashanti Students Union (ASU).

With respect to ages as shown on table 1, 26 respondents of NAGS, 26 (68.4%) were between 18 to 24; 25 to 30 were 11 (28.9%) while only one person (2.6%) was in the 31-35 age bracket. For ASU, a percentage of 95.3% was recorded 41 people who were 18 to 24 years and 4 people (4.7%) were between 25 and 30 years. Looking at the age at which most Ghanaians leave Senior High

School (17-19), this is a reflection of the age range of most young people in university in Ghana. Therefore, IMSHTAs mainly consist of young people.

Table 1.- Age of respondents

Range	NAGS		ASU	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
18 - 24	26	68.4	41	95.3
25 - 30	11	28.9	2	4.7
31 - 35	1	2.6	-	-
Over 35	-	-	-	-
Total	38	100	43	100

Table 2 indicates that in terms of the sex of respondents in NAGS, 23 males (60.5%) and 15 (39.5%) females were recorded. For ASU, 24 males (55.8%) and 19 females (44.2%) were recorded. This reflects the data on Hometown Associations that are male dominated (Zamudio, 2005) while Bada (2007) considers the low number of female participation in HTAs as a result of the patriarchal societies they come from. However, this percentage is the inverse of the Ghana Statistical Service Report (2013) where there were more females nationwide and in the Greater Accra Region as compared to males.

Table 2.- Sex of respondents

Variable	NAGS		ASU	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
Male	23	60.5	24	55.8
Female	15	39.5	19	44.2
Total	38	100	43	100

With regards to marital status, 2 respondents of NAGS (5.3%) were married while the other 36 (94.7%) were single. ASU recorded 100% of its members being single. This is expected as the majority of Ghanaians within this age bracket who are still in school are not married.

Table 3.- Marital status

Variable	NAGS		ASU	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
Single	36	94.7	43	100
Married	2	5.3	-	-
Divorced	-	-	-	-
Widowed	-	-	-	-
Total	38	100	43	100

Table 4 provides the various levels respondents were in the university. From the table, Gonjaland had 7 (18.4%) in level 100, 10 (26.3%) in level 200, 6 (15.8%) in level 300 and 6 (15.8%) in level 400, 4 (10.5%) having completed and 5 (13.2%) as post-graduate students. For those who had completed, 5 (62.5%) have been out of school for 1 year or less, 2 (25%) have been out of school for 4 years or more and 1 person (12.5%) completed 2 years ago. For ASU, those in level 100 were 8 (18.6%), those in level 200 were 10 (23.3%), 16 (37.2%) were in level 300, level 400s were 6 (14%), those who had completed were 3 (7%). For those who have completed, all three of them had been out of school for 1 year or less. This shows that some members of IMSHTAs remain attached to these associations even after school.

Table 4.- Level in the University

Variable	NAGS		ASU	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
Level 100	7	18.4	8	18.6
Level 200	10	26.3	10	23.3
Level 300	6	15.8	16	37.2

Level 400	6	15.8	6	14
Completed	4	10.5	3	7
Post-Graduate	5	13.2	0	0
Total	38	100	43	100

For length of membership in NAGS 16 (42.1%) have been members for 1 year or less, 7 (18.4%) have been members for two years, 6 (15.8%) have been members for 3 years, 1 person (2.6%) has been a member for 4 years and 8 (21.1%) have been in NAGS for more than 4 years. For the membership of ASU, 27 members (62.8%) have been in the union for 1 year or less, 8 members (18.6%) have been in the union for 2 years and another 8 people have been members for the past 3 years. For NAGS, the majority of their members are in levels 100 and 200. This confirms the literature that new migrants tend to be more committed to HTAs as they have not fully integrated into the host community and may need unique assistance which HTAs provide (Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2012). On the other hand, ASU has the majority of its members in level 300 and level 200 but with the length of stay still being 1 year or less as the majority. This may be because fresh migrant students do not find out early enough about the existence of the union and so join much later. However, for both associations, fewer final year migrant students participate and this may be attributed to the fact that they are fully integrated into the university and do not need much support from the associations anymore as compared to the fresh arrivals. This can be attributed to their workload as final year students in terms of their Grade Point Average (GPAs) and assignments. This agrees with the research of Culic (2016) who found out that the majority of members of student associations are the junior years and Hall (2012) whose study showed that low participation of senior year students can be linked to the fact that the workload of students keeps increasing which is not the case from the beginning.

Table 5 Period of Membership

Variable	NAGS		ASU	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
1 year	16	42.1	27	62.8
2 years	7	18.4	8	18.6
3 years	6	15.8	8	18.6
4 years	1	2.6		
Above 4 years	8	21.1		
Total	38	100	43	100

Considering religion, 29 members of NAGS (76.3%) practice Islam while 9 of them (23.7%) practice Christianity. In ASU, 42 members (97.7%) are Christians and 1 person (2.3%) has no religious affiliation. This agrees with the Ghana Statistical Service (2013) Population and Housing Census Report where 62.5% of Ghanaians in the Ashanti Region practice Christianity while 60% of Ghanaians in the Northern Region practice Islam. The religious background of these two IMSHTAs, reflect their origin communities.

Table 6- Religion

Variable	NAGS		ASU	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
Christianity	9	23.7	42	97.7
Islam	29	76.3		
Traditional				
No religious affiliation	-	-	1	2.3
Other	-	-	-	-
Total	38	100	43	100

In terms of employment, 25 members of NAGS (65.8%) are unemployed and 13 of them (34.2%) are employed. Out of the 13 who are working, 8 (61.5%) are in the informal sector and 5 (38.5%) are in the formal sector. Again, out of the 13 workers, 10 (76.9%) work on a part-time basis while 3 (23.1%) work full time. For ASU, 39 (90.7%) are unemployed and 4 (9.3%) are working. Out of the 4 with employment, 2 (50%) are in the informal sector and the other two (50%) also are in the formal sector. Again, 2 members (50%) work part-time and 2 (50%) work full time. The majority of Ghanaians in school are not working as they are still in training to acquire the knowledge and skills needed in the job market and this is reflected in the two associations. This helps in explaining how limited the funds of IMSHTAs are, especially from their personal contributions as students who are themselves dependents with many personal and academic needs.

Table 7.- Employment Status

Range	NAGS		ASU	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
Employed	13	34.2	4	9.3
Unemployed	25	65.8	39	90.7
Total	38	100	43	100

Table 8 shows where the respondents migrated from. On that, 22 (57.9%) members of NAGS moved from the Savannah Region, 9 (23.7%) members were already in the Greater Accra Region, 3 (7.9%) members came from the Northern Region, 1 (2.6%) person each moved from the Upper West Region, Brong Ahafo Region, Eastern and Ashanti Regions. For ASU, 29 members (67.4%) moved from the Ashanti Region, 12 (27.9%) members were already in the Greater Accra Region while 2 (4.7%) people came from the Western North Region. This is not surprising as the majority of migrant students do move from other regions and so need assistance in settling in their host communities. Very few members of IMSHTAs are settled migrants who either migrated to Accra at a very tender age – 1.5 generation migrants; or were born and bred in Accra – second generation

migrants. These settled migrants have the opportunity to use that as a leverage in very difficult times on campus.

Table 8- Region of out-migration

Region	NAGS		ASU	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
Upper West	1	2.6	-	-
Upper East	-	-	-	-
Northern	3	7.9	-	-
North East	-	-	-	-
Savannah	22	57.9	-	-
Bono East	-	-	-	-
Bono	1	2.6	-	-
Ahafo	-	-	-	-
Oti	-	-	-	-
Volta	-	-	-	-
Ashanti	1	2.6	28	65
Eastern	1	2.6	2	4.7
Western North	-	-	3	7
Western	-	-	-	-
Greater Accra	9	23.7	10	23.3
Central Region	-	-	-	-
Total	38	100		

Considering the languages, all 38 respondents of NAGS speak English representing 100% while 30 (78.9%) respondents speak other languages including Gonja, the remaining 8 (21.1%) people speak other languages apart from Gonja. For ASU, all 43 respondents representing 100% speak both English and other languages including Asante Twi. For both unions, the language is a part of

their identity and therefore is not surprising that all, in the case of ASU and the majority in the case of NAGS, speak the local language. According to Agilinko (2014) and Antwi-Bosiakoh (2012), members of HTAs consider the speaking of their language an important part of their unique identity especially as they are away from their origin communities. However, the fact that some members of NAGS do not speak Gonja explains why they prefer to use English instead of their local language so as to involve all their members in their meetings and discussions.

Table 9.- Languages Spoken

Language	NAGS		ASU	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
English	38	100	43	100
Gonja/Twi	30	78.9	43	100
Others	36	94.7	28	65.1

Source: Fieldwork 2020

4.5. NATIONAL UNIONS AND PATRONS OF NAGS AND ASU

Mother unions are very much a part of both IMSHTAs. Like NAGS which is a part of NAGS-National, the Ashanti Students Union in University of Ghana is part of the Ashanti Students Union – National. They have certain activities together with them and take decisions in consultation with the national leadership. As chapters of their national bodies, their goals and projects must always align with the national union projects. They receive quotas from the national union whenever there is an activity back in their origin community.

Again, both IMSHTAs have patrons just like other student associations on campus. In the University of Ghana, it is impossible for a student association to be recognised without being registered with the Dean of Students. For such a registration to be accepted, the association in

question must have at least one senior faculty member as a patron. They have many patrons across different departments and from outside the university community who they go to in the roll out of their plans and projects. All their patrons are people from their hometown who are in business, politicians, lecturers or former members of the association. This confirms the rules and regulations for student organisations in Samford University, on the registration of student organisations or unions on campus. Leadership and Involvement (2019)

4.6. REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN NAGS AND ASU

It is of no surprise that the reasons for which migrant students join IMSHTAs are directly linked to the objectives and activities IMSHTAs have. Obviously, if their goal of coming together is to see to the welfare of their members on campus, then they would already be aware of what these needs are and how they can mitigate them. The reasons for joining and participating in IMSHTAs therefore include to have the opportunities available to members, to interact with their own in order to feel a sense of belonging, to know more about their culture and keep in touch with their roots. Just as the activities of IMSHTAs are many and varied, so are the reasons behind the participation of their members. These reasons are the same for ASU and NAGS. When asked the reasons for their participation in the association, member of NAGS said: “Being a level 100 student that was the only family I had on campus because I found people who were like me, talked like me and spoke the same language as I did and that was where I felt like I could belong to” (Alhaji, 22years. Level 100. NAGS).

The response from this participant shows that the emotional support provided by NAGS is very important to its members. He needed a place where he could ward off the feeling of loneliness and joining NAGS offered him that opportunity.

An ASU member responded that,

“I was told that if you want to do an attachment or even after school, they have some benefits as in if you want a job opportunity, they can help you out” (Female, 20years, level 100, ASU).

The response by this participant shows how important it is for some members to leverage the access their association gives them in their search for a place in the job market as far as their career is concerned.

4.7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMING OF IMSHTA SOCIAL NETWORKS

This diagram is a conceptual framework showing IMSHTAs use of both strong ties and weak ties (Granoveter, 1973) for the accomplishment of their objectives. This concept is used to explain the kind of social networks IMSHTAs have as well as when and how they tap into these networks in ensuring the welfare of their members and in the mobilization of funds.

IMSHTAs leverage their social networks to achieve their aims. They either have strong or weak ties with their social networks. This conceptual framework shows that chiefs, MPs, patrons, family members of individual members as well as the national unions constitute the strong ties of IMSHTAs. This means they have a closer link with them through frequent contact and reciprocity of relationship. The periphery strong ties on the other hand, refer to people who IMSHTAs consider to be close because they are from their hometowns or are members only through social media. However, there is little or no form of reciprocity and the frequency of contact is quite low or non-existent. The weak ties of IMSHTAs are those relationships they have with other students on campus – in their halls of residence, in their classrooms and on campus generally. With their weak ties, there is less demand for reciprocity and frequent contact to sustain the relationship. Whereas, IMSHTAs see their relationship with their strong and periphery strong ties as of paramount importance, their weak ties can be severed more easily with little effect on the group.

However, both the weak ties and strong ties contribute to the success of IMSHTAs through the supply of information about accommodation, internship opportunities, and publicity of the association; and resources – financial and in-kind. These relationships ultimately enable IMSHTAs to ensure the welfare of their members on campus and to contribute to development back ‘home.

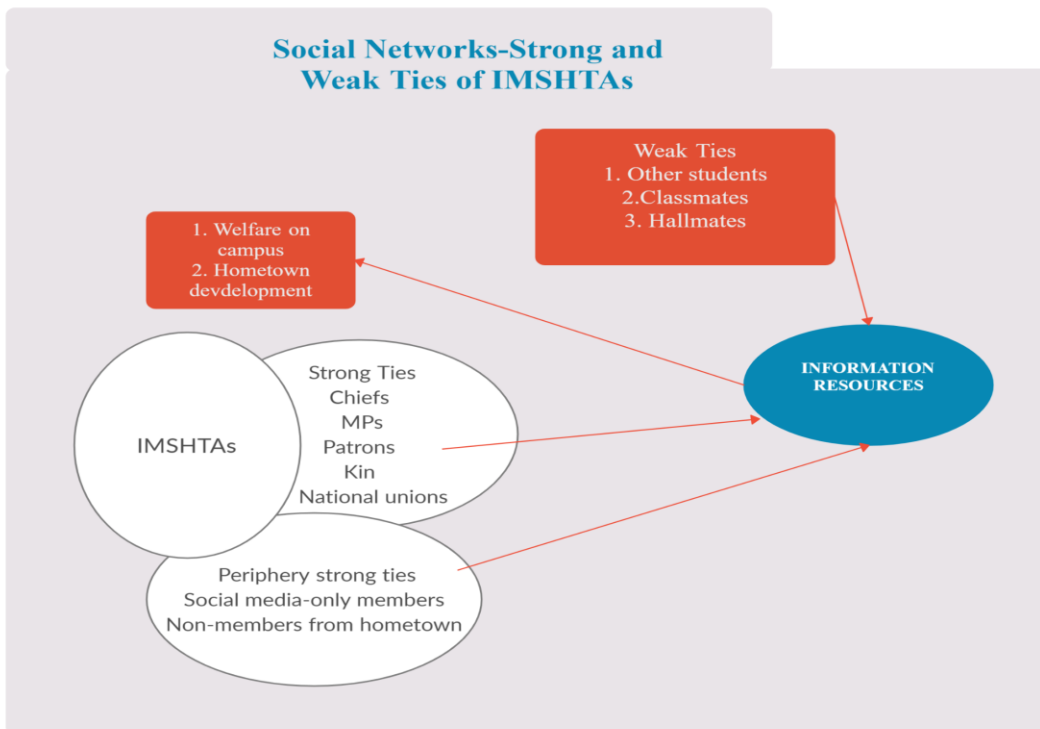


Figure 1: A conceptual framework showing the network ties of IMSHTAs

4.8. WELFARE OF MEMBERS ON CAMPUS: SOME KEY ELEMENTS

This section discusses some ways in which ASU and NAGS ensure the welfare of their members on campus. Some of these key elements include; the orientation of their members, providing accommodation, financial and emotional support as well as helping their members academically. They promote interaction between members and offer career opportunities as well. Here, the study highlights the kind of social network ties IMSHTAs use and how they use them in ensuring the welfare of their members on campus.

Just like other HTAs, the activities of IMSHTAs are determined by their objectives.

NAGS-UG adapts the constitution of its national body to guide its activities on campus. The objectives of the association as stipulated in the NAGS constitution (2014:19) are:

- (a) To foster the spirit of togetherness among Gonjaland students.
- (b) To help raise the standard of education and general welfare of students in Gonjaland
- (c) To assist the District Assemblies in various ways so as to enable them implement their developmental policies.
- (d) To help safeguard the interest and integrity of Gonjaland and the North at all times.
- (e) To give career guidance and counselling to our brothers and sisters both within and outside their respective institutions.

The constitution therefore provides guidelines as to the direction the association should follow.

This then informs the activities and programmes they engage in. A member of NAGS, said this when asked about their objectives:

We come together and our focus is to cater for the well-being of the students. As an association we see to it that every student has a smooth course and is comfortable with life in the school and also discuss issues that are of benefit to Gonjaland not in the school per se but discuss issues that extend to other parts of our region. (Abubakr, 19, 100, Damango)

The Ashanti Students' Union however, have their own constitution. The objectives clearly indicated in the ASU Constitution (2008:4) are:

1. To promote unity and sense of belongingness among the members.
2. To maintain and defend the name of Asanteman at all times.
3. To assist members in times of need when possible.
4. To foster good relations between members of association and the senior members on campus.
5. To foster co-operation with other unions on campus and beyond.

Another member of NAGS responded to a question about their objectives by saying:

The main objective I know of is to bring together the Ashanti people on campus to know each other well, to know their culture well. I think one objective is to help each other in terms of internship opportunities, job opportunities. It is to connect each other, to help each other. It is also to connect the Ashanti people and promote the culture on campus. Manu, 20, level 300

Following the objectives of the two associations above, it can be deduced that like other HTAs, IMSHTAs have the mandate to care for their own on campus and to tend to the needs of their origin communities. IMSHTAs engage in many different activities to ensure the welfare of their members. In the pursuance of their migratory goal, student migrants come up against many challenges. It is therefore a major objective of IMSHTAs to cushion migrant students throughout their stay on campus. Far away from home, many migrant students find it difficult to cope with the changes needed to have a successful stay on campus. It is against this backdrop that the work of IMSHTAs in ensuring the welfare of students on campus gains credence. All the challenges of being a student coupled with the change of environment and distance from family and origin communities make IMSHTAs a vital part of the life of migrant students. This agrees with Papadopoulos et. al., (2013) assertion that the principal aim of such associations is to represent their interests at the destination. As IMSHTAs, NAGS and ASU ensure the welfare of their members in the following different ways.

4.8.1. ORIENTATION OF MEMBERS IN FIRST YEAR

In ensuring a successful stay on campus for migrant students, NAGS and ASU organise orientation for their new members about life in university. They provide them with resources and alternative and complementary support to what the university provides. By organising orientations for freshers who join them on arrival, they seek to prepare them in some way on what to expect – responsibilities, challenges and possible solutions throughout their stay on campus as students. A NAGS member said this about the welfare of new members; “When freshers arrive, we have orientation of freshers on life on campus, when it comes to their personal studies and others” (Alidu, 25 years level 200, NAGS)

This ASU key informant explained how they orient fresh students who join the union by saying: “We have an Akwaaba Night for level 100s when they come where we advise them on life on campus, we link them to our patrons who equally advise them and some of them even read to them the rules and regulations of the university” (Akwasi, 23years, level 400, ASU)

These examples given by participants in the interviews show that IMSHTAs are very much aware and are interested in the successful stay of their members on campus and so deem it necessary to orient them even before they settle. Hence the reason for which it is done on arrival as level 100s. Thus, this proves Antwi-Bosiakoh’s (2012) findings that HTAs teach their members how to live in the new environment. It is worthy of note that many students arrive on campus quite young without parental guidance and monitoring. Even though as young people, many of whom are above 18 years, they are already considered adults, they still need special assistance. Although they may have been through the senior high school system, especially boarding schools which should have taught them some form of independence, the experiences in a second cycle institution in Ghana and a university are wide apart. Students are expected to schedule their own time, be disciplined enough to attend lectures and present assignments on time and figure out many things on their own. Coupled with this new form of ‘required autonomy’ is the use of ICT which is not the case in the majority of second cycle institutions in Ghana. The University of Ghana provides students with the maximum information needed on their website, during orientation as well as in the students’ handbook. Despite these interventions, many are the struggles of students in figuring themselves out as tertiary students. This makes the orientation provided by the two associations very important for their level 100s.

4.8.2. ACCOMMODATION FOR NEW MEMBERS

Accommodation is a major problem most migrants face. HTAs generally serve as a source of help in this regard for their compatriots who arrive in the host community. They may assist them with temporary places to live till they sort out their accommodation problems or they help secure places for them, having been in the destination much longer. The same is true about IMSHTAs. Both NAGS and ASU assist their members with accommodation. This is particularly true for fresh students. A member of NAGS gives some examples of what they have done in terms of securing accommodation for their members by saying:

“In fact, that is also the main reason for the association. Last year we were able to secure about four rooms for the level 100s. The association was able to secure rooms which is not easy in UG and also the perching too which is not legal but we try to do it to help by letting them perch with other friends that are not even from Gonjaland” (Farouk, 23years, level 200, NAGS).

A key informant of ASU says this about securing accommodation for their new members, he said, “Some of our people come and have no place to lay their heads and so we have to allow them perch or we get a room for them” (Akwasi, 23years , level 400, ASU)

From the responses of these participants, it is clear that IMSHTAs also ensure the welfare of their members on campus by securing accommodation for them. Aside from the fact that migrants generally face accommodation issues, migrant students find themselves in a peculiar situation as they are not only constrained by the lack of resources but the majority of them are too young to figure out for themselves what to do in such situations. In both associations, members explained that some students gain admission to the University of Ghana and think they automatically have accommodation. It is therefore a shock for some of them when they arrive with bags and baggage

to campus only to realise they have no place to lay their heads. As a result, they try to secure rooms for their members by registering for halls on their behalf, assisting them to rent places or share their accommodation with their new members. This is in tandem with Antwi-Bosiakoh (2012b) who found out that Nigerian HTAs provide accommodation for their new members. The only difference observed in the securing of accommodation for members of the two groups is that NAGS reaches out to level 100s from Gonjaland even before they arrive on campus. This is what Seidu had to say when he was asked about how NAGS secures accommodation for their members:

As we gained admission, those that already knew people in the association helped them in seeking for accommodation. Some of us did not know about this before coming. They told us that next time when people are given admission, we should inform them so that they can seek accommodation for our fellow Gonjalanders to prevent them from being stranded on arrival. (Seidu, 19, level 100, NAGS)

This story of Aidu's experience explains how coming from the same hometown is considered strong enough to attract assistance with accommodation although this is the first time of contact

In the story of Aidu, the 28 years old level 200 candidate, when he arrived on campus from Banda, he did not know anyone and had nowhere to stay. The first person he met was the president of the association who was from Bole. He took him in and sacrificed his bed for him for the whole time while he searched for accommodation until he found a room on campus because he was from Gonjaland. He would not have done this for him if he were not a Gonjalander. In this case, Aidu had a place to lay his head because he was from Gonjaland. The network ties used here are peripheral strong ties which are 'coming from Gonjaland'.

The case of Kwabena in ASU shows how ethnic ties or coming from the same hometown is important and strong enough to get a person accommodation.

Kwabena is 22years old in level 200. He met a guy he knew talking to another he did not know. So, he drew closer to say hi and pass by. However, his friend told the stranger to speak to him.

Apparently, the stranger was living with his brother and his wife as a non-resident student. However, he was being mistreated every day. As a result, he decided to leave when he could no longer bear it. He carried his luggage and came to Commonwealth Hall hoping to get a place to sleep. So Kwabena asked him where he hails from and he said he was Ashanti from Breman. Immediately, Kwabena ushered him inside and though there were already many people in the room, Kwabena could not watch his own Ashanti brother sleep outside so he could manage with the little space. Kwabena could not find a room for him so he had to be with him there till they had to go home due to the pandemic. He even left his bag there so when Kwabena went for his things, he carried the stranger's belongings along as well. So Kwabena did this for him because he met his fellow Ashanti brother.

Periphery strong ties are used here as well. The stranger was only offered a place to stay because he is Ashanti and nothing else. The help he received was only offered on the grounds of ethnic ties in the case of ASU.

4.8.3. ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR JUNIOR MEMBERS

Succeeding academically is the goal of every student. One cannot pay school fees, seek accommodation and go through all the hurdles of gaining admission with the goal of failing or not doing well. Migrant students, especially those who miss the orientation of the university are not only mainly at risk of missing out on important information but coupled with their many challenges, may not be able to study or concentrate on their academics as they should. This will inevitably affect their academic performance. In terms of academic support to their members, a key informant explained that;

“We also help our people academically. We implore our people to ask for help if there is any. Those in higher levels come in to help the freshers and the others in lower levels with UGRCS and other courses. So, we come to the aid of our people (Inusah”, 23years, level 400, NAGS)

An ASU member said this in relation to academic support;

I would say yes because just recently before COVID-19, Nana put it out that Numeracy skills and critical thinking, if you have difficulties, he could help you with those UGRCs. Although I do not have difficulties with those two, I still joined. Even the sea still collects rainwater. So far, that is the only help I can say I have received academically (Yakubu, 20years, level 200, ASU)

From the responses above, IMSHTAs as part of their strategies for ensuring the successful stay of their members on campus, seek to assist them with their academics. This confirms Holzweiss (2007), who found out that members of student associations said they found study partners or others who had taken their courses and could advise them. They employ every possible means at their level, to support their own. The associations organise sessions with their members to help them with difficult areas especially those offering the same courses, they may provide their members with pamphlets, websites, and other required materials or general advice on how to go about a particular course or programme especially those that are common to members. The responses of these two participants also show that the beneficiaries of academic support are mainly fresh students although anyone in a lower level can receive academic assistance from a senior. The network ties used here are strong ties as the beneficiaries of these teaching sessions are all members of the association.

4.8.4. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS IN NEED

Considering the fact that many students are dependents and not employed, as shown in their socio-demographic background, their resources are quite meagre in relation to all the responsibilities being in school puts on their shoulders. Coupled with the challenges with accommodation and academics, many migrant students are constrained financially. In times of difficulty, they turn to their families on campus – IMSHTAs - to support them financially. IMSHTAs make available funds to cushion their members in such situations. This supports the study of Agilinko (2014) in

which Builsa migrants received financial assistance from their Builsa Hometown Association. A key informant of NAGS says the following about supporting their members financially; “We also extend support to our members through an unregulated loan scheme. Sometimes, when we have a NAGS member stranded in a very difficult situation, we help them with the little amount in our coffers so that they can pay subsequently when they get the money” (Inusah, 23, 400, Bole)

A key informant of ASU also said this about financial support:

For some, it is their finances. Some come to me saying they have no money. Just that we do not discuss such issues on our WhatsApp page but in our private chats, we do. Not every assistance given to a member is made public depending on the nature of help given. Sometimes, too, in such situations, when I cook, I make sure to share my food with them (Akwasi, 23, 400, ASU)

This shows that IMSHTAs take a keen interest in the financial state of all their members. That is why they make available financial aid to help their members cope in their struggles. This is in tandem with Antwi-Bosiakoh (2011) where Nigerian Brothers Committee provided their members with financial help.

4.8.5. SOLIDARITY AND INTERACTION BETWEEN MEMBERS

Some activities of IMSHTAs on campus are aimed at promoting solidarity and interaction between members. Just like regular HTAs, IMSHTAs also have as their goal to promote cohesion in the group and build a closer bond with fellow migrant students from the origin. As a result, NAGS and ASU organise various programmes and activities from time to time to establish new bonds as well as sustain old ones. Like regular HTAs (Orozco, 2006; Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2012b), some of these programmes may be in the form of parties’ cookouts, regular meetings, visits and even seminars. Abu said; “On campus we have periodic get-togethers, sometimes at Mai Catering in Sarbah Hall or sometimes at the University of Ghana poolside. We go there and the association pays for the food, drinks, the venue and other things that we are going to enjoy out there at the

poolside" (Abu, 24, 400, NAGS). Acheampong also said; "I think we have something like getting to know each other and then Asanteban where we cook and eat together at a durbar." (Acheampong 20, 300 ASU).

From the above responses from both associations, it is clear that promoting interaction among members of IMSHTAs is of critical importance to the survival and continuity of the IMSHTA. The need for interaction is one reason for which some members may join such associations but a closer bond between members is healthy for the smooth running of the association. This helps them to deal with the stress of studying and the loneliness that sometimes characterise their being away from home. This is in tandem with Bada (2007) who found out that Mexican HTAs have celebrations of festivals and ceremonies to promote solidarity and companionship. Also, Culic (2016) opined that student associations are grounds for socialisation and interaction.

The Photo 2 was taken after NAGS members had dined together on the day of their party to enable them to spend a fun time together to get to know one another. This promotes interaction between members and hence solidarity towards one another.



Photo 2: Members of NAGS after a party at the University of Ghana poolside

Source: NAGS

Photo 3 was taken on the day ASU members cooked and ate together on campus as a way to get to know one another while having a taste of food from their hometown. It is equally to promote interaction and solidarity between members



Photo 3: Members of ASU cooking together on campus

Source: Fieldwork 2020

4.8.6. CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS

Other activities of IMSHTAs are geared towards the provision of opportunities for their members outside the university. Students are in school to study and pass with flying colours. However, their efforts in school alone are not enough to equip them with the skills and expertise they need to make it in the job market. As a result, internships are a necessity if students desire to come out of school already possessing the skills employers will need or at least some knowledge sufficient enough for them to start their own businesses.

A member of NAGS speaks of a national service opportunity he had by saying: “Even now the group helps people in terms of national service. I’ve benefited from it myself with the help of NAGS-National ". (Abu, 24, NAGS)

A key informant of ASU explains: “Some of our activities have to do with National Service posting. We help our members to go where they want to. Many of our people (Ashantis) are civil servants, CEOs with their own companies so we are able to send their names and through that they are mentored. (Akwasi, 400, ASU).

The responses above show that IMSHTAs provide their members with these internship opportunities either by searching for places for them or linking them with people and organisations that can provide them with the necessary support. They also assist final year students with national service opportunities. This agrees with Phillips and McLaughlin (2015 cited in Ivey, 2016) who reported that there is a positive relationship between participation in student clubs and professional skills acquisition. IMSHTAs are able to leverage the relationships they have with their compatriots in positions of influence – chiefs, Members of Parliament, lecturers, business people and their mates.

The story of Akwasi is a good example of how patrons serve as strong ties for IMSHTAs: Akwasi just completed his degree. He contacted some of the prominent people from Asanteman who regularly support ASU activities about his National Service. He later received his national Service posting to the place he had always wanted to go to. He moved from Kumasi to Accra on Friday to have his letter validated. Unfortunately, when he got to the office, he was told to go back to Kumasi because they had had too many people posted there but had no slots for all of them. He was not happy about this development and could not afford to go to Kumasi without a solution. Immediately, he thought of contacting one of the ASU patrons who was a minister. After the call, he was called back in and offered a slot and the date to come and begin his National Service.

This worked out perfectly for him because of his strong tie with this social network who supported him as one of his own from Asanteman. The fact that he had his number and received rapid help

explains the respect they have for him as a traditional leader but also as one who has been in contact with him for some time. Therefore, there is the element of frequency of contact and level of intimacy here.

Abu is from Bole who has just completed his degree. He was not happy about his National Service Posting so he contacted the National Executives of NAGS. They took his details and helped him get it where he wanted to do it. Since then, the association takes the names of final years and gets them National Service places of their choice. He considers NAGS as his life and does not see why he would leave the association although he has finished his studies because he knows what the association has done for him.

He made use of strong ties as a member of NAGS and even a former executive. Here too, there is an element of reciprocity because he has served the association well and now, he needs their help. Also, there is a high level of intimacy in the link between them as well as a frequency of contact.

4.8.7. KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH CULTURE

IMSHTAs serve a means for their members to keep in touch with their culture even though they are away from home. For NAGS, although culture is not at the core of what they do, they see the speaking of their native languages, wearing of their traditional clothing during programmes and eating the staple foods during parties as a way of not losing touch with their culture while on campus. However, for ASU, everything they do is about culture. They speak their language everywhere. They teach their members proverbs, organise durbars where they invite chiefs from home as well as prepare their food for special occasions dedicated to the display of their culture.

A member of NAGS said this in terms of cultural expression: “We do not do much of culture but when we go for meetings, individual members speak our local dialect and there are certain programmes we have where we depict our background like the way we dress”. (Shaibu, 22, 100, Damango).

A key informant of ASU also had this to say: “Yes, our activities are divided into three. Academic, social and cultural activities. But the cultural activities are more. We are Ashantis and we cannot leave our culture out in anything we do”. (Akwasi, 23, 400, Ayeduase)

This was evident during the participant observation. Whenever the ASU chief or sub chiefs (hall chiefs) spoke, members would say *piaww* to mean „it is exactly as you have said or what you have said is true“. They called him Nana and gave him accolades like they do the Asantehene. Also, during their durbar, the chief, the queen mother and the elders were all clad in full regalia. The chief was given full respect and members of Faculty present stood up whenever he was approaching as a sign of respect. A member of NAGS explains that accolades from Gonjaland such as “sons and daughters of Ndewura Jakpa” are used to address members at meetings. These go to show that IMSHTAs are grounds for the expression of culture. It supports the report of Kandilige (2017: 29), that hometown associations are “vessels of socialization and identity formation in host communities”

4.9. SUMMARY and CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the formation of the two IMSHTAs as well as their activities in ensuring the welfare of their members. The chapter showed that both IMSHTAs have been in existence for some time now. They both ensure the welfare of their members by providing accommodation, financial and academic support as well as ward off loneliness by promoting interaction and promoting their culture.

In conclusion, both ASU and NAGS ensure the welfare of their members on campus by employing similar strategies. This can be attributed to the fact that they are both Hometown Associations in an academic setting and therefore face the same circumstances. ASU is more culturally oriented

while NAGS is inclined towards harnessing its diversity to promote unity. The social networks of both unions are their basis for ensuring the welfare of their members. Strong ties are their main kind of relationships involved in ensuring the welfare of their people on campus.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEVELOPMENT ROLE OF IMSHTAs, SOURCES OF FUNDS AND MITIGATING CHALLENGES

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the role of IMSHTAs in the development process of their hometowns. It focuses on the sources of funds as well as the challenges they face and how they cope with these challenges.

5.2. DEVELOPMENTAL IMPLICATIONS OF ACTIVITIES BACK HOME

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) refers to development as a condition that creates an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives (UNDP, 1991). Orozco (2006), posits that development players aim to provide solutions to the needs of humans and provide another way of reaching self-sustainability. A decision to promote some positive form of economic, social or cultural development and possessing the ability to determine the needs of their target or beneficiaries, properly allocate resources as well as the impact of their interventions are features of development players (Orozco, 2006). IMSHTAs through their activities can be considered as development players.

In contributing to the development of their hometowns, IMSHTAs engage in different activities back in their communities of origin. These activities are geared towards promoting the goodwill of their people. Unlike other HTAs who have a wide variety of projects, the activities and projects of IMSHTAs are youth centered with special focus on education, community sensitization and making donations. Both associations count on their strong ties in the selection of their projects.

When asked how they choose projects, this member of NAGS said that:

sometimes we may have myriad plans in mind but we often settle on one. Some of these activities come with a cost and we don't have the financial strength to carry them out so we look at an area of interest, we sit down as a team to discuss the issues of our people, then we choose. We don't do an autocratic style of leadership, it's a unanimous decision we take, we don't impose certain things on people. (Inusah, 23, 400, NAGS).

An ASU member said this in response to how they choose their projects:

“So we have Big people(lecturers) before our big people (Chief and other student leaders). So it is not just us. When we decide, we present it to the Big people to finalise it. We are not the only ones who decide for the Association. We have lecturers and even Otumfo sends a representative” (Acheampong, 20, 200 ASU).

The responses from both ASU and NAGS show that they consult their strong ties – members of the association as well as ‘big people’ from their hometowns in taking decisions on what project to embark on.

5.2.1. EDUCATION

The two associations visit schools as part of their activities in their hometowns in terms of education. They organise voluntary teaching in schools back ‘home’ or assist applicants to the University of Ghana with their application process by educating them on how to go about it.

A member of NAGS explains what they do in terms of education when he says:

In 2018, we did an outreach program where we intended to help educate our people. You know back at home, most students at JHS and SHS do not have education on their minds. Some of them also got good grades but what they were interested in was Teacher Training and Nursing Training. They were more interested in those things. So what we did is that we toured most of the Senior High Schools in Gonjaland. We educated them about the opportunities in the university and how to apply and all those kinds of stuff. And as a result, after a year, we had a lot of students being admitted to the universities because of just doing what we did. It influenced a lot of people and they applied and qualified and they are now in the university. Recently, another program was organized for the senior high schools for the same purpose. (Ishak, NAGS member)

Another member explains how members of NAGS assisted him in getting admission to the University of Ghana by saying:

My situation is peculiar. Before I gained admission to the university, I knew some people who were students here and came from Bole. They gave me guidelines and assisted me as

to how to apply what else to do, the courses. Before I came to the university, I knew about the family called NAGS courtesy the very people I met coming from that place. So, the first meeting of that semester I was there. (Inusah NAGS member)

The story of Inusah is a typical example of the use of strong ties. The fact that he is from Gonjaland and more so with the desire to attend University of Ghana, members of NAGS were available and ready to be of assistance to him. Also, the fact that he knew them already suggests some form of frequency in contact and hence some level of reciprocity. Therefore, after receiving assistance from members of the association, he in turn joined them when his aim of getting admission was achieved.

An ASU member explains how they contribute to education back 'home'

When we go for meetings, members talk about the need for us to talk about developing our society in our own little way so you will find some members who come from a particular hometown doing voluntary teaching in their little corner back in Ashanti Region. Sometimes the whole UG ASU, we do it for a month. Abigail, ASU member

Another ASU member adds that:

“Last year we went to rural areas and had a teaching session over there. Because we do it in such a way that the students are not supposed to pay anything. So, you just come with your body and your clothes to come and teach while food and everything is being provided in addition to certificates”. Ofosuaa, ASU member

From the responses of members of both NAGS and ASU, they consider education as a very important aspect of their activities back home. NAGS focuses on educating their people in school on university applications and the need to take their education seriously by encouraging them. On the other hand, ASU focuses on actually going to teach in some schools back home as a way of contributing.

Photo 4 is a photo of NAGS members at a school with some students taken after a session on the need for university education as well as the application procedures for getting into university of

Ghana. In an informal discussion with a key informant of NAGS, he said they equally motivated students and implored them to study hard to be like their prominent people who would not have been considered prominent if they had not received formal education.



Photo 4: NAGS members with some students after a school outreach

Source: NAGS

5.2.2. COMMUNITY SENSITISATION

Both IMSHTAs have activities with the community as the specific target. They sensitise members of the community on different issues including the importance of education as well as health issues.

A member of NAGS had this to say when asked about their community sensitization:

We do go to the radio stations to talk to the general public. For the radio aspect, we educate the general public, that is the whole Gonjaland. We do not consider the age factor. We consider the fact that the parents have a role to play and then the teachers, every worker in Gonjaland and even the youth as a whole in improving education in Gonjaland. (Samuel, 23. 200 NAGS).

An ASU member also explained their community sensitization when she said: “As part of our duty to Asanteman, we go round to some communities to sensitise them on various health issues. Even recently, we educated people on the street about the need to observe the COVID-19 protocols”

Sheila, 19, 200, ASU

These responses prove that community sensitization is important to both unions. NAGS still focuses on education when addressing their people while ASU looks at health. They capitalised on the COVID-19 pandemic to educate their people.

Photo 5 is a photo of a member of NAGS sensitizing the people of Bole on radio as a way to awaken their people to the importance of university education.



Photo 5: A member of NAGS sensitising the people of Bole on radio about University of Ghana applications.

Source: NAGS

5.2.3. DONATIONS

NAGS and ASU give donations back home. Their donations equally differ in terms of the items involved. When asked about their donations, this NAGS member said that:

“As part of our outreach, we normally give out some books and writing materials but this year, we donated first aid kits to five different schools to assist with the administration of first aid when students are sick”. (Abu, NAGS)

An ASU member also said that:

This year, we donated some items to the Ashanti Children’s Home in Kumasi. If I am right, the items we gathered were worth almost 10,000 to 13,000GHC. We also added about 400 exercise books and some stationery, clothes and others. In addition, we also went round to about 6 communities during the pandemic to donate nose masks and hand sanitisers. (Odeefo, ASU).

The responses of both members of NAGS and ASU show donations are very much a part of the activities they organise back home. It can be seen here that NAGS still focuses on schools, hence the educational sector while ASU looks at orphanages.

It is evident from the responses of NAGS and ASU that IMSHTAs consider going back home to embark on projects and have activities as equally important a mission for them. That is why they make time to plan and add this to their activities. This reflects the submission of Duquette and Bada (2013) when they opine that members of HTAs continue to have interests in their hometowns although they are physically absent. It equally reflects their objectives as stated in their constitutions.

A key informant of NAGS had this to say about their contribution to hometown development:

When we talk about development, it cannot just be physical representation or such as in buildings and the like but development has to do with an investment in human resources and as part of the human resource base of the Savannah Region, I can say that when we take it upon ourselves to go to SHS and spend time with the younger ones. I told you that we have the chance of getting in touch with our big men but they are big men because they

had the chance to attain education. They were educated and they had the opportunity to represent their people. In the near future, the older generation would have to hand over their mantle of leadership to the younger ones. When we go by that logic, the people that we want to empower and encourage would be the same ones to take over. So, I think the centre of everything has to do with education. The centre of development of any community has to do with students. Students don't have to be ignored or relegated to the background when we are talking about development. Students will always be the ones to tell you the situation on the ground. So, in every situation you find yourself in, you need a student. I think considering what we have done so far, the association, per my assessment NAGS has done more than good. (Inusah, NAGS)

A key informant of ASU also had this to say about their contribution to development:

The core value of ASU is to protect our chief and our Sika Dwa (golden stool) so if we are protecting our chief then definitely, we are promoting growth in Asanteman because it is the chief who spearheads growth. He is our head... So we support our head (the chief) with our knowledge and education for the growth and development of Asanteman... That is why I said when we decided to make a donation, I didn't do it in Accra. We could have done it at Madina with just 50cedis as transport cost but we spent almost 2,000 cedis to transport it to Kumasi to distribute to our own people. It is a way of supporting our chief to develop our home. (Akwasi, ASU).

From these responses, it is evident that both associations consider themselves integral in the development process of their hometowns.

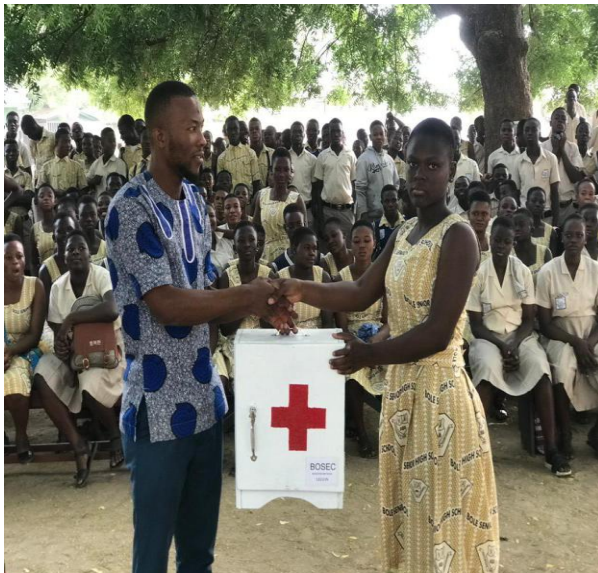


Photo 6: First Aid Box donation to a school – NAGS. Source: NAGS



Photo 7: Items for donation to a Children's Home-ASU. Source: ASU

Although their resources, level of expertise, and projects are not on a large scale, they are not insignificant. They contribute immensely to the development of their hometowns. The various activities they engage in are ultimately geared towards contributing to the overall development of their places of origin. As broad as the concept of development is, everyone can contribute their quota to seeing the kind of development they want to see in their society. IMSHTAs are not left out. As young people and leaders in training, they are the ones to take up the mantle of leadership in the near future. Their activities today are preparing them to be leaders and setting the pace back home for the kind of society they would be leaders over. They believe that development is about putting up structures or constructing bridges likewise the investment in the human capital of their origin communities which would go a long way to contribute to other forms of development. Donating first aid boxes to schools, sensitizing members of the Gonjaland Kingdom about the need to send their children to school, assisting students with their university applications, as well as seeing to the welfare of their members on campus while away from home are seeds of development sowed today and to be reaped tomorrow. As ASU goes back home to organise voluntary teaching sessions, sensitise its people on health issues as well as donate to orphanages they are investing in the development of their hometown. The form of development IMSHTAs contribute to mainly has to do with the development of the human capital base of their origin communities. It is the human capital together with natural and financial resources effectively put to use that will promote development. Human beings are indeed at the heart of the development of their hometowns (UNDP, 1990). Although it is difficult to measure the level of development IMSHTAs contribute to their hometowns, they are more or less catalysts to the attainment of development. Their concept of development shifts from the traditional focus on economic development to more human development hence the concentration on education, donations and community engagement. According to Browne and Millington (2015:2) the UNDP defines human development as “a

process of enlarging people's choices by building human capabilities to lead lives that they value". These capabilities include leading long and healthy lives, being educated, having access to resources and fair employment. "If these essential choices are not available, many other opportunities remain inaccessible" (Nayak, 2018:). Therefore, IMSHTAs serve as the agents to open the eyes of their people to the endless opportunities and possibilities available to them if they pursue higher education; leveraging education for personal and communal development. "Education, in broadening an individual's mental horizons and in creating an awareness of the possibilities offered by increased knowledge of the world around him, arouses expectations that could only be satisfied in ways which are in harmony with his, and his own society's, cultural universe" (Claxton, 1994:38). IMSHTAs, thus, are catalysts in the development of their hometowns as they partake in the awakening of their people to their potential to develop their communities themselves. However, as Orozco (2006) contends, that the work of HTAs back home cannot replace the role of governments in dealing with the structural issues such as poverty. This is equally true for IMSHTAs. As both student associations and hometown associations, IMSHTAs can be seen as hybrid groups weaving together both responsibilities into a unique body. Collaboration with and support for IMSHTAs are thus encouraged to enable them to do more.

5.3. SOURCES OF FUNDS FOR INTERNAL MIGRANT STUDENT HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS

The sources of funds for IMSHTAs are quite limited. As in the socio-demographic background of the two associations, members of NAGS and ASU are not workers and do not necessarily have the resources to sustain the activities of the associations. They rely on their semester or yearly dues from members to carry out their activities and projects. To complement this, they seek funds from their patrons and prominent people from their hometowns as well as their political leaders and past

members of the association. They may organise fundraising programmes and seek assistance from individuals and companies for their activities.

Concerning how they raise funds, a NAGS member explained that:

The funds come from the dues we pay. Every semester we pay dues which is 20cedis. That 20 cedis is not compulsory. If you want to give more than that, you can do that too. Some pay 100 cedis if they can. If we want to do something and the money is not enough, they tell us and we contribute to be able to do it. (Samuel, 20, 200 NAGS)

Another NAGS member said:

Our funds were mainly from the big people from the Savannah Region. We write letters to the officials from the Savannah Region who occupy positions in Accra. Most of the letters go to our parliamentarians. We also go to other companies to distribute letters and invitations. And when you go they can't just let you go like that so they will give you something to prepare for the programme. And if you are lucky and they are able to come, some of them donate and some of them pledge. So I think our source of funds is our big people Sahadatu, NAGS.

The response from Sahadatu, suggests the use of strong ties – these are ‘big people’ from their hometowns who are well-to-do in Accra and can be of assistance to them in raising funds.

This ASU member had this to say about their funds; “For last year’s donation, we went from hall to hall for anything that you can donate be it clothes, food, and even money and then sometimes too those at the regional level when they are doing any programme, we go there and seek for some funds” (Angela, 23, 400, ASU). Angela’s response shows the use of weak ties. Other members of the university in the various halls do not constitute the inner circle of ASU. However, as members of the same university community, the association reaches out to them for assistance in gathering resources for their projects. This ASU key informant added that; “Every year we prepare a yearly budget – our expenses and all that. So, we take it to all our patrons. Each one would contribute something small and cumulatively; we will have quite an amount for our programmes”. (Akwasi, ASU).

These responses reveal that the sources of funds for IMSHTAs are not too different from that of HTAs. According to Kandilige (2017), HTAs raise funds through their monthly dues; and they can mobilise resources through collaborations with individuals and organisations at the destination. Both ASU and NAGS raise funds internally from their members and externally from people from their hometowns as well as from other members of the university community.

In the mobilisation of resources to carry out their activities, IMSHTAs rely on both the strong and weak ties. For strong ties, it is from their members and the dues and donations they give. They equally count on their own who are in top positions such as Members of Parliament (MPs), lecturers, CEOs, and past members. Weak ties also come in handy. They may organise appeal for funds or go from hall to hall seeking funds for their programmes from other students. For instance, in going back home for the break due to the pandemic, an MP from Gonjaland organised a bus to take members of NAGS back to the Savannah Region. Also, in their outreaches and organisation of parties, members are not made to pay. The executives raise funds from the social networks in top positions to sponsor these projects. It is not different from ASU. They rely on their strong social networks such as chiefs, MPs and prominent Ashantis to support the organisation of their activities on campus and back home.



Photo 8: Members of ASU gathering items from students in a hall of residence on campus.

Source: ASU

5.4. CHALLENGES OF INTERNAL MIGRANT STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

The challenges of IMSHTAs are as many as all their plans. They are weak as far as finances are concerned. For both associations, members pay dues of 10cedis every semester which is woefully inadequate considering the magnitude of their projects. As a result, in carrying out projects they need to rely on external sources which may not be cooperative or readily available when they are most in need.

A NAGS member says the following about their challenge with funds and lack of support.

I think the biggest challenge is inadequate support. This is because, the last time we had a meeting, they were discussing how they needed to get funds to aid in the activities they wanted to do back home. So, they asked other people and they had to move from office to office. Some people had to. They went through a lot just to see some big people contribute with money. Unfortunately, I heard it wasn't very successful. They weren't able to hit their target. So, I think that is the major challenge. They don't have adequate help from people in higher positions. (Ngmenteribo, NAGS)

Another NAGS member reiterates this by saying, "Another thing is inadequate funds. Sometimes, due to lack of funds in our coffers, it becomes difficult to organise programmes and even if you organise it, it wouldn't be how you expect it to be". (Alhaji, NAGS). An ASU member had this to say about their challenge with funding; "Finances is a problem. When it comes to payment, some pay but others do not. Yet this is what we use. When they do not pay, we struggle with funds for our programmes yet that is what we use to support one another" (Bosomtwe, ASU). These responses show how constrained they are in raising funds to carry out their plans. It confirms studies by other scholars on the challenges of HTAs. Papadopoulos et al., (2013), reveal that funding is a challenge for HTAs and affects what they can do.

Both associations have issues with the attitude some members put up as far as the commitment and dedication needed to run the association is concerned. Considering the already small size of these unions, an attitude of apathy does not augur well for the organization of programmes and

planning. In an informal chat with a member of NAGS, he complained about how disappointing it is to organise a programme and invite a ‘big person’ only for a few people to show up. Another member of ASU lamented on how annoying it is to plan something such as the printing of T-shirts for a specific number only for others to show up at the last minute and expect you to produce shirts for them as well. However, both associations agree that the differences in their programmes and schedules, and the academic workload during the semester, contributes to the level of apathy members show.

Responses from members of both associations also show that publicity of the association is low and ensuring an active presence on campus has been quite challenging for them. These challenges constrain their ability to achieve the targets they set for themselves.

A member of NAGS had this to say about the publicity of the association: “Making the association known is quite a challenge. There are even people on this campus who do not know such an association exists. If I did not know the president, I don’t think I would have heard about the group” (Sahadatu, NAGS)

This ASU member also had this to say about the awareness of the existence of ASU on campus, “From my point, before I joined the group, there was nothing that showed that there was an association on campus. So, people don’t really know that’s why they don’t join”. (Emily, ASU)

These responses show that both associations struggle with creating the awareness of their existence on campus.

Another struggle for IMSHTAs is apathy and the disinterest of members or people from their hometowns.

This is what a NAGS Key Informant said about the attitude of members

“I think the first and foremost challenge has to do with cooperation, especially how to get members to come for meetings. It is most challenging when we are on campus. Sometimes, we have a meeting and it is common knowledge to all the members that every last Thursday of every month we meet so ordinarily, they should know. However, sometimes you end up calling them ten (10) times and sending WhatsApp messages and then even after the meeting has begun, you have to take the pain to call a number of people to remind them

again. The very same people you had called previously. The last time you came for our meeting, you realized we had to wait for some people to come.”

According to this ASU member,

“People are also not willing to join the Association. There are more Ashantis on campus who are not willing to join it. I have talked to some people but they are not willing to join”. (Odeefo, ASU)

The responses by these members of NAGS and ASU show how difficult it is for the associations to organise their people. This is in tandem with the findings of Duquette and Bada (2013) who equally found out that the challenges of HTAs among many others include how to encourage the participation of members as well as keep the association organized and improve organizational capacity. It also confirms the submission of Hall (2012) that apathy and lack of full involvement as well as time constraints characterize student associations. He also attributed it to their academic demands. It can therefore be deduced from their responses that these challenges put together make it extremely difficult to achieve their aims. Each one of these challenges contributes significantly to the failure of these associations. Just as a lack of funds makes it difficult to organise activities on campus and back home, a lack of publicity and apathy of members affects the size of the associations which in turn affects how much funds can be raised. This is as a result of the fact that the payment of dues forms their primary source of funds. Therefore, a combination of all these stifles their progress on campus and at home.

5.5. COPING STRATEGIES

Despite the myriad problems IMSHTAs face, they have ways and means of forging on with their plans. They may look internally or externally for strategies that they can adapt to keep them going. Based on the fact that they are in an academic setting and have rigid timetables as far as their academic work is concerned, NAGS and ASU schedule their programmes and meetings such that they do not clash with the academic calendar of the university. They may have a chunk of their

programmes during times when the academic pressure is low for their members so that exams and interim assessments do not prevent them from actively participating in activities.

Also, the two associations have resorted to social media as an active way of recruiting new members and constantly reminding their members of their activities and upcoming events. As a participant observer, there were countless times, announcements were put on the WhatsApp pages of both associations to prompt members on tasks the association needed them to do. Members also attested to the fact that they are able to overcome their challenges as associations by standing by each other and demonstrating a show of love and respect for one another.

According to a member of NAGS;

Oh, the president and his executives are very good. Sometimes, even the way they relate with us makes us feel that no matter what, even though you have a tight schedule, you have to come. Because of the president and his vice and some of the members. Sometimes, you don't even feel like going but how they will come to you and make you feel happy or comfortable or okay, you can't say you won't go. (Samuel, 20, 200, NAGS).

Another NAGS member talks about encouragement as a coping strategy. He explains that;

It is all about encouragement. Sometimes, you always feel like giving up but we realise that if you give up, I always have a saying that if you are praying and things are not moving well, how do you think that the things will still move. It means that it will be worse. So most of the time we feel like giving up but we realise that no, we have to push on. We seek encouragement from a lot of people ahead of us and then we try to bring ourselves up. So, it's just self-encouragement. (Mashud, NAGS)

ASU members equally encourage and show love to one another as a coping strategy. One member said;

I think when I joined, I met people, all the executives, they will check up on you, they are very nice people so you feel like you belong so that's why I actually stayed. So, I think that's one of the reasons why the group is still in existence. like they are all very nice. If you have any problem, you can walk up to them and they will help you. (Odeefo, 20, 300. ASU)

Another member added that:

“People like Ashantis because of how we do our things. We love one another so encouraging our members and offering support to them is the way we motivate them to attend meetings”. (Kwabena, ASU)

From the responses above, they also visit and call their members from time to time to keep in touch with them and maintain rapport among members. This ties in with the report by Papadopoulos et. al., (2013) and Tamo (2014) that solidarity, and the feeling of community are what help HTAs face their challenges. The emotional support members give one another in the face of challenges equally shows the strong ties that exist between them. Wellman (1999) postulates that strong ties provide emotional support that weak ties cannot provide. In the case of NAGS and ASU, holding on to one another and cheering themselves on in face of challenges that otherwise would have broken them is a way in which their strong ties keep them going.

As far as apathy is concerned, the associations believe that there is not much they can do other than to continue urging their members to come for meetings as well as remind them of the numerous benefits members stand to get if they remain committed and dedicated. They understand that members have so many personal and academic challenges while on campus for which reason they may not participate as much as they should. Therefore, applying sanctions such as payment of fines is not an option as this may only push members farther away which will defeat the purpose for the establishment of the association. This is contrary to what Kwahuman Association in the UK (Kandilige, 2017) and some Nigerian HTAs in Ghana do as far as applying sanctions or fines are concerned (Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2012).

5.6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

NAGS and ASU have different activities back ‘home’. They contribute to education as well as the creation of awareness in diverse capacities through sensitization on the need for education and the need to observe good health practices. They make donations to their communities. As

associations, they face challenges such as a lack of funds, apathy of members, and low publicity. They are however able to mitigate these challenges by sticking by one another and building a strong bond of love and tapping into their social networks for assistance.

In conclusion, both NAGS and ASU play significant roles as catalysts in the development of their hometowns. Since their activities at the destination and the place of origin are dependent on the resources they are able to mobilise, their social networks exert a heavy influence on the kind of activities they engage in and to what extent they can engage in these activities. The Ashanti Students' Union has more support from their 'big people' and so they can organise many different activities. Their tradition being at the centre of what they do also enables them leverage the respect their prominent people have for their tradition. This contributes to how ASU can organise more activities on bigger platforms back home as compared to NAGS.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Internal migrant student hometown associations, although under studied, play a role in the development of their hometowns. Apart from seeing to the welfare of their members, IMSHTAs play a role in the development of their hometowns. Despite the focus on hometown associations, IMSHTAs are an important contribution to research into HTAs. The study had as its aim, to find out the activities of migrant student hometown activities in ensuring the welfare of their members on campus as well as their role in the development of their hometowns. The mobilisation of resources, the challenges and coping strategies were also looked at. This was achieved using qualitative research methods in which 19 members of ASU and 22 members of NAGS were interviewed. Participant observation was employed as a data collection method. This chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

6.2. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The study revealed that both ASU and NAGS are associations that are open to anyone who shows interest. The two groups have been in existence for some decades now; ASU for 40 years and NAGS for about 30 years. The two associations have a well-organised hierarchical structure and belong to mother unions with whom they have activities. It was also revealed that while ASU was more culturally inclined due to cultural homogeneity NAGS, as a result of cultural heterogeneity, does not primarily focus on culture.

It was also found out that both associations have different activities to ensure the welfare of their members on campus. Some of their activities include the orientation of new members, the

provision of accommodation, academic and financial support, provision of opportunities for national service and internships as well parties, durbars and meetings to promote solidarity and interaction among members. The majority of beneficiaries of their welfare activities are fresh students who on arrival face many challenges. In the pursuit of this objective, they make use of their social networks with both strong and weak ties. The strong ties of IMSHTAs involved members of the association, people from their hometown as well as their kinsmen. Weak ties involved their classmates, friends, roommates and other students. This supports the Network Theory and the 'Strength of Weak Ties' Granovetter (1973).

The study showed that both associations are catalysts to the development of their hometown. They engage in activities back home to sensitise their communities on education and health issues as well as make donations. The study revealed that the promotion of education back home is of paramount importance to both associations. They believe they play a significant role in their hometown development. However, ASU can engage in many different projects back home by using their culture as a leverage. NAGS on the other hand has fewer projects and are not on the same scale as the projects of ASU

In addition, the study highlighted the sources of funds for IMSHTAs: payment of dues by members, donations from patrons and prominent people from their hometown as well as the soliciting of money from other students. Some challenges they face include apathy by members, limited funds, time constraints and the effect of academic pressure on their participation. However, soliciting assistance from their prominent people and members of the university community; and focusing on the solidarity between them, can mitigate the challenges they face.

6.4. CONCLUSION

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study:

Internal Migrant Student Hometown Associations are just like other HTAs in ensuring the welfare of their members at the destination. This finding supports Antwi-Bosiakoh (2012b) study of Nigerian HTAs, in which the author highlights the fact that they provide accommodation, financial and emotional support to their members. Moreover, as associations made up of students, they equally act as student associations thereby combining both aspects into one hybrid identity in achieving their goals. They exhibit the objectives, activities and challenges of both types of associations. IMSHTAs offer academic support to their members which is not done by other HTAs. This is because they are in an academic setting. Their migratory goal here is education. This is in tandem with Agilinko (2014), that hometown associations assist their members in their migratory goal.

The study concludes that IMSHTAs are catalysts in the development of their hometown. Although their contribution cannot be overlooked, it cannot change the structural issues that lead to underdevelopment or issues that stifle development. This is in agreement with Orozco (2006) findings that the contribution of HTAs cannot deal with the fundamental issues causing a lack of development and hence the need for governments to do more.

IMSHTAs consider ethnic ties as strong ties; everyone from their hometown is considered kin. Kinship ties are not limited to people they are related to biologically. This is contrary to Granoveter's (1973) study where strong ties were considered as close friends and family members while ethnic ties were considered as weak ties. However, it is the frequency, and level of reciprocity that determines how strong the strong ties of IMSHTAs are.

The study demonstrated that unity and a strong desire to see positive transformation back home is enough as a coping strategy for IMSHTAs to deal with the numerous challenges they face. This supports Papadopoulos et. al., (2013) that HTAs leverage unity in coping with their challenges.

6.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

6.5.1 For the University of Ghana

- Orientation for students of the University of Ghana should include the creation of awareness on the existence of these associations as well as their encouragement to join. This should be coupled with the overall education on the importance of extracurricular activities. That way, they will better appreciate these associations and engage fully and not concentrate only on their books or grades.
- Although the Careers and Counselling Centre has Careers 360 for students, special training should be organized for IMSHTAs as they are not only leaders on campus but even more so back home and exert so much influence.
- Lecturers, MPs and other prominent people from these hometowns should not take for granted the influence they wield over these youngsters. They are encouraged to mentor them and where possible, offer personalized mentorship sessions for them.
- The university can also employ the services of these unions during matriculation, congregation and other gatherings for cultural performances to promote the awareness of their existence, serve as a source of funds for them as well promote cultural cohesion among the different ethnic and cultural representations on campus.
- The associations can make use of the presence of international students, many of whom look for volunteering opportunities while on campus, as volunteers in their projects both

on campus and back home. This will promote diversity, project their culture, create possible partnerships and partners for the future as well as promote interculturality internationally

6.5.2 For other Stakeholders

- The Ministry of Youth and Sports should put in place measures to support the activities of these associations especially in terms of hometown development. Just as the diaspora is engaged, the contribution of these students is not insignificant and the right structures put in place for them can contribute to national development. Consequently, IMSHTAs should not be lumped together with other migrant associations but should be treated as having different and special needs as well as specific contributions for development.
- The government, especially at the local level, should tap more into the wealth of resources that IMSHTAs provide. Local government authorities should collaborate with IMSHTAs on their projects back in their hometowns. This will expand the reach of the impact they make.
- IMSHTAs are agents for cultural transmission and traditional leaders, especially, should take a keen interest in their activities.

6.5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- More research is needed on IMSHTAs. There is the need for studies to be conducted on the same IMSHTA in different universities to compare their activities both at home and on campus.
- It could be interesting to study IMSHTAs in second cycle institutions and what activities they engage in in comparison to IMSHTAs at the university level.
- Mixed methods can also be employed in studying the IMSHTAs to make up for the weaknesses of using only one method.

- There is a need for research in the hometowns of IMSHTAs to ascertain the impact they make back 'home'.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC: HOMETOWN DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA: THE ROLE OF INTERNAL MIGRANT STUDENT UNIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA;

Objectives:

This is research work conducted by Belinda Ngmenbuobo Banoenumah, an MA student of the Centre for Migration Studies of the University of Ghana. This research project is done to examine the contribution of Student Hometown Associations to Hometown Development. I appeal for your participation in helping me answer these questions. Your participation is discretionary and you reserve the right to withdraw or cease to answer at any point in time. Your responses in this study are strictly for academic work only and the confidentiality of your answers and identity protection is highly assured.

Thank you!

Interview with individual members

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Members

1. Name.....
2. Age.....
3. Sex.....
4. Level.....
5. Hometown.....
6. How long have you been a member?.....

To identify the factors that influence participation of members in Student Hometown Associations

- a. Tell me about the Association/history of the formation of the Association
- b. Why did you join the Association?
- c. How did you hear about the existence of this association?
- d. What motivates you to participate in activities regularly?

- e. Where were you born? Where did you grow up? / Do you have family in Accra? Do you live in Accra during vacation?
- f. Has the Association been of help to you in anyway? How?
- g. Does your membership in this association have anything to do with your identity?
- h. Does your academic performance influence your participation?
- i. Are there specific times when you are more likely/less likely to participate in activities of the Association? When?
- j. Does the association help you keep touch with your culture? In what ways?
- k. Do you feel a sense of belongingness in the Association? How?
- l. What language is used at meetings?
- m. Did you grow up in your hometown (Region)/reside there? Does that affect your participation in the association/contribute to attachment to the Association?
- n. Do you feel included in the decision-making process of the Association?
- o. Did you join the association because you had a challenge on campus?
- p. How has that influenced your participation in the Association?
- q. Do you consider your participation in the Association as an extra-curricular activity on campus?
- r. Did the activities of the Association help you integrate into the University? How?
- s. How has the Association helped you make friends on campus?
- t. Have you learnt anything you did not know before from your Association? What is it?
- u. How has the Association contributed to your academic, career and personal development?
- v. Do you have a slogan? What is it? Does your slogan reflect your objectives?
- w. How has your culture influenced the Association?
- x. Does your Association contribute to the development of your hometown in any way? How?
- y. Do you join activities organised in your hometown by the Association?
- z. Does the Association organise activities organised outside campus but in Accra? Do you join such activities too?

APPENDIX 2

Group Interview with Key Informants (Executives)

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC: HOMETOWN DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA: THE ROLE OF INTERNAL MIGRANT STUDENT UNIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA;

Objectives:

This is research work conducted by Belinda Ngmenbuobo Banoenumah, an MA student of the Centre for Migration Studies of the University of Ghana. This research project is done to examine the contribution of Student Hometown Associations to Hometown Development. I appeal for your participation in helping me answer these questions. Your participation is discretionary and you reserve the right to withdraw or cease to answer at any point in time. Your responses in this study are strictly for academic work only and the confidentiality of your answers and identity protection is highly assured.

Thank you!

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

1. Name.....
2. Age.....
3. Sex.....
4. Level.....
5. Hometown.....
6. How long have you been a member?.....
7. Executive Portfolio.....
8. How long have you held this Position?.....

Activities for student welfare on campus and hometown development

1. To ascertain how the objectives of Student Hometown Associations influence their activities on campus
 - a. Tell me about the Association/history of the formation of the Association
 - b. What are the objectives of your Association?
 - c. What activities do you engage in?
 - d. How do your objectives influence your activities?
 - e. In what ways do you ensure the welfare of your members on campus? financially? Academically? With accommodation? When they have health challenges? Seeking to change a programme? /registration of courses.
 - f. How do you raise funds for your activities?
 - g. Are your activities geared towards integrating your members into the University community? Examples of such activities
 - h. Do you have activities geared towards the support of your hometown? What kind of activities are these?
 - i. Do you have programmes/activities with other unions? What kind of programmes?
 - j. Do you select projects in consultation with people in your hometown? Who are they?
 - k. Do you have support from Faculty members/ lecturers? Former Students? Local government/district assembly? Chief?
- l. What is the difference between the activities you organise in Accra and the ones you organise in your hometown?
- m. Does your Association contribute to the development of your hometown in any way? How?
- n. Do you have a slogan? What is it? Does your slogan reflect your objectives?

- o. How has your culture influenced the Association? Do you have cultural activities/events?
- p. How do you make your Association known and ensure an active presence on campus?
How does that serve the Association?

Background, Composition and Organisational Structure

- a. What is the hierarchical structure of the organisation?
- b. How do you recruit new members?
- c. How does one qualify to be a member? Can anyone be a member/join?
- d. Do you have a constitution and is the Association run based to the constitution?
- e. Is the association part of a confederation or other mother unions? What benefits do you derive from this membership?
- f. Are there sub-groups in the Association? How does this influence the Association?
- g. Is the Association linked to bigger unions in other regions/countries? (Gonja/ASU Canada etc)
- h. How does one qualify for leadership?
- i. What is the criteria for selection of officers?
- j. How long does a tenure of office last? Does it affect the impact the leadership is able to make? Continuity?
- k. Which level of students are more active and which level is the majority among members?
What accounts for this?
- l. How often do you meet as an association?
- m. Who makes decisions in the Association and would you say inclusivity is promoted?
- n. Do you have a period where attendance is highest/lowest? When?

- o. Does the size of your Association contribute to what you are able to achieve both on campus and in your hometown?

To find out the challenges and coping strategies of Student Hometown Associations

- a. What are the challenges you face in organising activities?
- b. What difficulties do you face in choosing projects to embark on in your hometown?
- c. How is funding a challenge for the association?
- d. Do you encounter internal disputes within the association? How does this affect decision making?
- e. How does the academic calendar affect your programmes?
- f. What is the greatest challenge for you as leadership?
- g. Is the Association able to sustain plans and projects when leadership changes?
- h. What specific challenge do you face as far as membership is concerned?
- i. How is your Association affected by challenges facing your hometown?
- j. What other challenges do you have?
- k. How do you overcome these challenges?